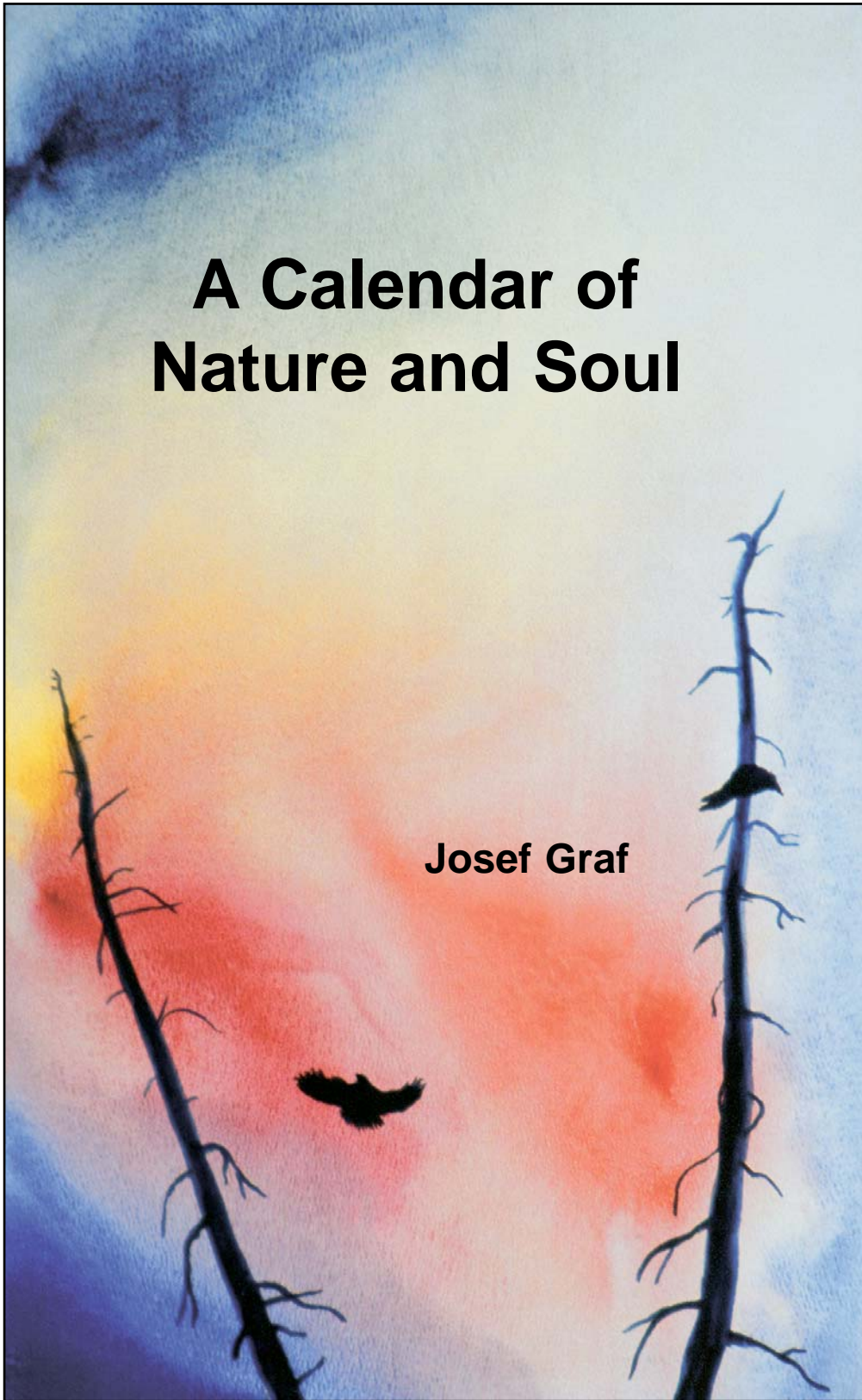


# **A Calendar of Nature and Soul**

**Josef Graf**



## Nature/Spiritual Ecology

According to Rudolf Steiner, “Our inner processes are now less connected to time, to the cycle of the year. But if we bring our own ‘timeless’ soul activity into correspondence with the temporal rhythms of the year, then great secrets of existence will unfold for us. The year becomes the great archetype of humankind’s own soul processes, and thereby a fruitful source of self-knowledge.”

*A Calendar of Nature and Soul*, follows the course set by the first volume. However, the spatial journey has now evolved into a temporal foray, as the 52 weeks of the year are portrayed in a form that counter-weaves nature, soulful biography, and the potent verses of Rudolf Steiner's *Calendar of the Soul*.

*One of the highest delights of the human mind  
is to perceive the order of nature and to measure  
its own participation in the scheme of things.*  
- Le Corbusier

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moving beyond environmentalism

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# Introduction

In EARTH VISION, *a travelogue of spiritual ecology*, a third millennium everyman undertook an exploration into the soul's naturehood to elucidate that we are not the empty beings the psychosis of materialism would have us become. Rather, as his sojourn demonstrated, we are godlings of a feather gleaming goldly who have within a soul akin to a mansion with a thousand rooms. Proprietors of a formidable estate.

Now, the wing of the cormorant is molting. The ascendancy of materialism over the course of his life has been arrested, and his continent-wide spiral into the heart of nature has rendered both a re-framing of his existential angst and a perspective capable of communion with the annual cycle of nature, as well as transcendence of time constraint in the biography of his incarnation.

While his previous journey targeted geographic locations, he now undertakes a journey through time. As a framework, he uses the 52 weeks that spiral through the yearly cycle, taking Easter and spring as a starting point. Week by week, the fabric of the soul's biography, counterwoven with nature's annual rhythms, is

brought to light through Rudolf Steiner's Calendar of the Soul. Although the material has been designed to work without immediate reference to the Calendar, readers may wish to refer to Steiner's week-by-week verses (see Appendix) in tandem with the 52 chapters.

Note for readers who choose to follow the course of the year in "real time":

1) The biographical material does not proceed in a linear fashion, but draws from any point of the everyman's incarnation that is relevant to the dynamics of a given week.

2) Because Easter does not fall on the same date each year, an adjustment is called for. When Easter happens to fall earlier or later than on its median week (April 7-13), the first few weeks can be extended, or overlapped, according to your intuition on the matter.





**Week 1**

*Easter Mood*

April 7-13

In the darkest hour the robin begins its overture, which carries through until dawn draws out an array of avian accompanists. In the morning light, flowers announce restoration. Nature's brassy flora and woodwind birdsong, underpinned by the quiet cello phrasing of a tumbling stream, incite an insurrection in the soul. And from the heart of this fervency, like an inkblack crow against a blue and cloudwhite sky, a vision of enterprise for the year ahead unfolds its wings, an imagineering elevated now by having endured the austerity of winter.

Plying the air with bold strokes, the crows that rally now to nest scold passersby with an intonation abrasive to those not endeared to *Corvus* mannerisms. Marauding bands, combing turf, taking turns as sentries, work all angles of opportunity. The inner crow, like its archetypal raven cousin perched on Odin's shoulder, is sensitively perceptive, cooperating with "cohorts" of the psyche to ensure provision.

Too much gypsy wanderlust can lead to a life shiftless and empty. And there, but for the grace of God, goes the millennial everyman, for the crow that scolds admonishes him to attend his own nest, a roost of creativity now clamoring with fledgling petition. For the soul, holding vigilant through the long winter of nature's dormancy, and enduring the tribulation of seasonal purging, now enters the resurrecting force of spring.

New ventures - joining a choir, improvisational dance, new friends - are initiatives akin to the profuse blossoms on the limbs of an orchard. The blooming becomes a living soul-art, too ethereal to be assigned to the physical world, a crafting initiated from the finer echelons of the inner realm.

And by midday, bearing the resplendence of this blossoming in his soul, he visits with an elderly friend. There, a wealth of memories over eight decades flows through their freeform conversation, like a Charlie Parker recital interspersed with a few poetic interludes of Auden, Wordsworth, and Spender. Though his lifelong companion has taken up residence on an Alzheimer cul-de-sac, with soul-caring wisdom, the aged one uses the social visit as a holiday from grieving, a stance of spring to overcome winterland blues.

From his journal: - - Deep in wilderness, a rodent cloaked in barbs shuffles by. Brother Pine-pig serves up danger to unwary aggressors, and more than once have I found myself in the quandary of extracting quills from my infamous malamute, Kola, full name "Kola D. Moosebreath." Weighing in at a hundred pounds, making extraction a daunting task, my husky causes me to reflect on inner dynamics, times when a domestic part of astrality tussles with a wildling, and the perils of ventures lacking respect for the barbs inherent in untamable forces.

At the same time, this needle-suited being, dining on tree bark and sleeping in the forest canopy, models subsistence on austere provision. Simplifying my lifestyle, I can absorb the vitality coursing now through the earth, in the fullness of one of the finest moods of the season.

A pair of spiritual ecologists strolls through the enchantment of spring flowers, their conversation unraveling around humanity's interface with nature spirits, and the importance of freeing them through effective forms of communion. According to modern Anthroposophists and members of the Findhorn community, humanity and the elementals can work together in a co-creative fashion. But until the human community consciously embraces a grander relationship with nature than the hege-

mony of the day, the elementals remain trapped, caught up in the comatose of the materialistic perspective.

Due to the intense resonance underway now between nature and spirit, spring is an especially powerful ascendancy to fashion an intimacy capable of contributing to the freedom and evolution of earthbound beings. According to Rudolf Steiner, "the entire soul-destiny of mankind has been crucified upon the cross of materialism...and until mankind comes to see how the present way of knowledge, which clings to the senses and to them alone, is nothing but a grave of knowledge out of which a resurrection must take place - until it sees this, it will not be able to experience the thoughts and feelings which truly belong to Easter."

The overcoming of death is now upon the altar of circumspect. Through the doorway of spring, inward resurrection confronts incarnation's formidable peril by means of its victory of spirit over matter. While during autumn, it is the *will* that opens the inner portal, during spring, *contemplation* serves as the key.

In the final hour of his annual spring fast, his attention is drawn to the star-like form of the wild Easter lily, a spring herald that matures into a gracefully curved gesture bending down to shine its six petals upon the earth. At the same time, a sunray center with a star-like periphery ascending within his soul turns to shine back into its shadowy origin, like a lantern in a tomb, an expression of elegant charm rising above confinement.

Now spring buds, responding to the draw of the sun, rise into the effusion of light. Interior songbirds proclaim joy and anticipation. An oratory of freedom swells and rises. Spaces give the impression of widening, foreshadowing an urge to stretch out to furthest limits, as there streams down like a sunray a summons to ascend into summer's oceanic expanse.

The soul, having kept its winter vigil through to the pivotal event of Easter, is suffused with a glow. Late winter was a time of purging, old habits falling in a heap at the foot of mounting resolve, and a time of attending the emptied spaces that offer sanctum. At the end of the year, during Week Fifty-two, *life* reaches down from the heights to the depths. In the beginning of the year, during Week One, *consciousness* strives up from the depths to the heights. The beginning and ending of the year unite and commingle in a harmonious counterpoint.



## **Week 2**

April 14-20

As loons, returning north, sound their surreal calls across an empty landscape, the warming lakes become an amniosis for resurgent life. And with placental forces flowing through the umbilicus between inner and outer worlds, despite the vigor of spring in the natural world, he feels compelled to seek embryonic vigor within his being.

Then, while sitting meditatively with this inner mandate, he can sense that his individuality, though rooted in spirit, is celebrating its being through the mirror of nature. Spring phenomena, such as the transformation of a lake, or the return of a loon, he ascertains, are events that have an interior counterpart. Out on the edge - on the shore of a warming lake or by the aural edge, the sonic shore of an ear attuned to the haunting cadence of a loon, he can sense opportunity waiting to fathom the mysterious bridge between nature and soul.

What he holds to now as ideals shall come to be. And if he holds to nothing, then the gulf of unconsciousness will play its hand, resulting in problematic eruptions of the shadow, especially so to the degree he has avoided the responsibility attendant with the annual housekeeping session, earlier on, through the passage of late winter.

As he rests his consciousness gently into his neck and shoulders, an area of chronic stress, there arises the image of a bride in white, abandoned in a desert. At first, he gives his head a shake - it doesn't make any sense. *Perhaps it's the Mexican food I ate - demasiado caliente!* Then, as he returns to the focusing exercise, he finds himself riding in a vehicle (the body) along a road (the path to the answer) that leads into the desert and directly to the same stranded bride.

Later, when pondering the image, the realization dawns that an inner marriage is due. On some level of her being, the deserted bride, Lady Soul, feels abandoned by the developing ego, or bridegroom. Over ensuing years, the stress in his neck and shoulders begins to moderate to the degree he is able to integrate his ego and soul, principally through creative process and attending to his intuition.

- - I am experimenting with using the power of visualization as a fulcrum of self-determination. During a recent autumn, I had planted the seed of an aspiration, resolving to become active in some sort of energetic pursuit capable of expressing joy and the dance of life. The following spring, I found myself initiating the passion of partner dancing.

Not since childhood had such a playful forum been accessible. What would it take to readily enter such a dynamic level of engagement across the *whole* arena of social life!? This week's verse, I intuit, hints at the answer when it attests, "fruit of soul must within itself be found."

Along shoreline recently rendered ice-free, an exotic being is returning. Patient, unmoving, while further out from shore a bustling group of waterfowl is busy diving, the great blue heron instinctively knows its neighbors will scare fish in toward the shallows.

Within, too, is found an exotic avian, whose lightning strike is preceded by

steadfast vigilance. Foreshadowing summer mystery, broad of span, it plies the sky of instinct with an effortless pterodactyl glide, a few languid beats sustaining sail over base confinement.

Meanwhile, in counterpoint to nature's awakening forces, as it settles into an easy-chair appreciation of a full season's experience, the soul's evening reflection causes him to wonder, *What is it I want to be doing through summer's broad expanse?*

Spring birds query his intention, probing into the budding of over-wintered pursuits. Because inner seasons are the obverse of outer seasons, the soul's summer takes place during winter, and vice-versa. This means that fruits of soul - love, patience, forgiveness, tolerance, compassion - are now ripening. Seeds planted in autumn (inner spring) and cultivated through winter (inner summer), are maturing now through the intercession of a tender but resolute agency.



### **Week 3**

April 21-27

In tandem with the soul's longing for a quieting-down phase, sap now overwells the biotic chalice of the forest canopy. And as cerebral rigor relaxes its hold, he feels moved to turn away from intellectual pursuits - art instead of science, Tolkien rather than Shakespeare, gardening and roaming over the study of Spanish.

The intense glare that accompanies early spring softens now, as any sense of foreboding is counteracted by the sanguine promise of warmth and light. Busy nestings take place. Crows scold intruders. A promise of abundance fills the air. New forms of resolution come to mind, as he looks out across the lightscape of a grander sky, away from lesser conceptions of self-hood.

An earthy bird that seems on its way to a chamber music recital, the grouse simul-

taneously wanders through the forest floor of its mansion woodland and the underbrush of consciousness. Retiring and elusive, despite its velvety manner, a grouse met at close quarters is prone to burst airborne with explosive exhortation, a jarring experience in stark contrast to the soul's need to recede from abrasiveness, the better to meet the requirements of an approaching passage of metamorphosis.

There are times when he finds the chains of selfhood confining, when he feels alienated with the worldly realm. But this week, through spirit's clemency, a greater vision comes to bear than the incarceration inflicted by the inner warden.

Pondering how to live in sync with the annual resurrection phase, focusing on the outer landscape while raising awareness of inner geography, a process takes place wherein the outer terrain is created anew. We use our perception to paint. We choose the decor for our lives - bright, shabby, comforting, surreal and whatever else - a mosaic of aspects at once. And through mindful arrangement of this four-dimensional collage the palette of the heart finds its forum. Within the quarry of vision sculptures are inspired, an inner genesis empowered to the degree the soul is linked to the soul of nature.

With the elemental forces of water dancing in their wake, waterfowl explode from a lake, ascend noisily, and whistle with arrow-straight flight through a brightening sky. Ashore, tiny creatures are born. Softly-furred, the size of a thumb, baby mink come into the world. Out of an intense, instinct-rich pool - the astral pool of Minkdom - newly forming souls are condensed, to gradually inhabit the fetus-to-baby-to-young-mink beings. Also, now, are born finger-long weasels, sleek otter babies, and chubby raccoonlets.

Within, are born impulses similar to these wildlings, astral/feeling initiatives rising as embryonic inclinations that may come to flourish, given adequate care. Or they may simply die away if neglected, leaving a vague striation of remorse in the fabric of the soul, subtle unfulfilled longings for the quiet mystery of mink, the energetic probing of weasel, the playful exploration of otter, or the resourcefulness of raccoon.

- - I find myself taking a risk these days. I have little income - enough to keep the wolf from the door, or the fox from the breadbox, perhaps. However, instead of taking just any job, I am trying the grand experiment of "do what you want and the

money will follow." It feels risky. Perhaps I should rewrite the guideline: "do what you want and the money will follow - but before it catches up it will go off on a few adventures of its own."

My work consists of writing, teaching watercolor painting, and visiting socially isolated people. I feel fulfilled, except for two areas: money, and being truly met in a relationship. Is my life a chalice half-full, or a tin can half-empty? Choosing to sip from the optimist's vessel, I recognize I have a chance to bring awareness into my issues of shortfall.

The further I grow accustomed to camping out on the living edge of exploration, the freer I grow from my bondage to the world of matter. In the arenas of work and relationship with a partner, this means I am ultimately moving toward what I really want. Powerful questions arise: "Who does the work encourage me to be when I am engaged in it?" and, "Who does the potential partner encourage me to be when I am with her?"

An early spring insurgent with vivid green foliage, the skunk cabbage asserts itself with uncommon ardor. Rapid in growth, it rises spear-like from its swampy origin, the canary radiance of its reproductive cup like a brassy horn announcing the overwelling of spring. Little wonder, given such unrestrainable vitality, that the black bear craves its tonic properties after its protracted hibernation.

Meanwhile, where field and forest meet, a plump, round augur top-knotted with a baroque flair makes an appearance. It is the quail, announcing the consummation of spring with a delightful call that both resounds across an impressive distance and harmonizes with subtle etheric hues, a rich green light crowning the upward reaching of plants, and a soft peach undercurrent that hums underground, stimulating roots and the complex symbiosis in the soil.

While the foundation of being is oneness with All, individuality is also real, just as a tree individuates, yet flourishes out of the all of Earth. At this juncture of the Calendar, spirit encourages letting the modern "jewel in the lotus" of spiritual evolution, the Egoic function, move away from center stage, so that it can be picked up again, with renewed intent, through the ironizing forum of autumn and winter.



## Week 4

April 28 - May 4

A woodpecker hammers awake tree-boring insects, sending them scurrying in and out, on and off the menu. Bird messengers call and mate, creating new harbingers that hatch from sky-blue eggs. A freewheeling band of crows throngs a raven, chasing away its nest-raiding notions, while fledglings clamor a tirade of *feed me*. Feed the developing envoys, so they can grow to fulfill their avatar mission.

With the sun reclaiming its throne, darkness diminishing, and the energy of the moon receding, he waxes contemplative and begins to assimilate inspiration in preparation for the light-steeped somnolence of summer.

In pursuit of a fresh-feather trail, a path through the blue terrain of sky, the swan of his psyche limbers up its wings and, after a few turns around home, responding to the tide of destiny's annual rhythm, lofts northward, sailing on a mounting tailwind. May through August in the high north sees a flood of light, an exaggeration of solar effulgence. And though the memory of his many summers in the north draws him now to return to photonic saturation, if not in body, then at least

in spirit, at this lower latitude there are moments when he finds nature equally enchanting.

Now, in this hardwood forest setting, beneath a yellow-green fountain of willow foliage, blossoms of purple camas splash across a bed of luxuriant greenery. In the same way that two opposite souls can enhance each other's qualities rather than diminishing them, scattered amid the camas, intense yellow buttercups serve tiny bowls brimming with mustard fairy-dust.

His heart is both lifted by the blinding mood of the flowers and weighted by a pain of isolation, a longing for wholesome contact with kindred souls, and he finds himself resonating with a shell-less snail, homeless, vulnerable, and slowly plodding, with biotic forces at a minute rate of ebb and flow. In the past, he often sought relief by retreating from discomfort into the prevailing distractions of modern life - addictive or workaholic pursuits. Now, aware that answers wait on the other side of mindful process, he resolves to stay with the pain ploddingly, to face life's business directly.

- - There are times when so-called diversions can deliver me straight to what I need. The path of partner dancing, for example, like anything pursued with concerted commitment, gradually evolves into a metaphor of one's life. To avoid getting caught up in it *too* obsessively, I remind myself that it is a metaphor of the real thing, and that I can use the pursuit to meet issues as they arise, to heighten awareness within a forum useful for working out existential glitches.

Likewise, however, the path of my earthly life is a metaphor for my Greater Life, or my potential life as it can come to fulfillment. While in metaphoric mode, when focused on the bigger picture, instead of afflicting my incarnation with a feeling of weighty importance, I get to play it out with a finer, lighter tone.

By virtue of his newfound psycho-synthesis, he centers himself with an undertone of quiet joy and steadiness in the face of issues that arise, a feeling that embers both in his core and in the light and warmth of the outer world as he meets it.

And in this frame of mind, as a knight on bended knee before a Taurean queen, he addresses his Lady Soul: *Venus emissary with silver musing and copper touch, do you recall the starlight kindled in autumn? Can you hear, now, the mystery wolf howling from heartland wild, urging trust in destiny yet unborn?*

By week's end, saturation of light warms the soul's evening contemplation, imbues its pre-sleep meditation with hope and seedling images. Obscurity entering his thinking now can be clarified through sentience, through feeling at-one with life and the world's newborn light.

And in tandem with this clarity, an aerodynamic being swoops into his world. With streamlined body and deeply forked tail, the swallow careens through an aerial choreography, soaring, veering, diving, rhythmic immediacy the heartbeat of its acrobatics. Glistening, like its prey, with an insectine shimmer, the swallow is almost constantly in flight, even hunting and dining on the wing, living not just in the moment, but in the transit of an instant.

As forces of thinking soften, feeling's time is at hand. Sentience revels in life, the light-filled world, and the many personas that thrive in nature's estate. Mounting radiance steps the soul. The swallow veers and banks, and swallows the inner sky. Light steps. Light floods. A silent fullness streams over the sunlit hills.

And when night descends, moon-wrought chiming rings from out of silver waters, as from still, shallow pools of the forest floor spring peepers emerge. At first a solitary peeper, its bulbous eyes peering from the water's surface, initiates the chanting. Then others join in until, finally, a whole chorus wails away in a recital of uncontained bebop. The choral resonance filters into his dreams, exhilarating, initiating a high spring rite until, awakening to the exuberance filtering through his cabin walls, he rises and steps out into the moonlight to listen to the peeping resound through the forest, as it rides upon the lunar radiance.

That this vigorous carousal derives from an environ of leaf mold and mud-rich earthiness demonstrates spring's capacity to inhabit every niche with vitality, no matter how unlikely a dwelling it may seem to provide.



## **Week 5**

May 5-11

Tikal's greenery, prolific enough to induce envy in a leprechaun, presents a jungle of many moods. The rustle and scurry of morning, the pregnant stillness of a hot afternoon, the eerie throb of night and, overall, the subdued canopy light and muffling warmth of an even-keeled seasonality. Deep summer abounds, evolves a weaving, sprawling lushness, with every possible gesture of verdancy, an ocean of chlorophyll and a profusion of interdependence vast and teeming, occupied by diverse beings in a constantly renewing network.

The earth here, in its state of exhalation, in its sultry and winterless bearing of eternal summer, where copious nutrients are held in suspension of a biomass continuously cycling, leaves little on deposit in the bank of soil, sustains as ultimate an investment as possible. And where the etheric realm fills itself to such singing exaltation, life becomes impassioned. Animals congregate in unusual numbers, like a

band of four or five red squirrels running in tandem along a network of branches. Some plant species harbor elements of the astral world. Flytraps and epiphytes have aggressive, animal-like appetites. Blossoms take colorful flight in the raiment of parrots.

One day, he goes in search of the source of the overflow. A short way into the jungle, he encounters a troop of coatimundis, ring-tailed cousins of the raccoon. He is intrigued by this marauding SWAT team, scurrying up and down the vegetation, scouring every crevasse. Like the jungle, they are possessed of a flurry of intent.

Further into the forest, he meets a cavorting band of spider monkeys. Long-limbed, with a fifth in guise of tail, they scream saucy innuendoes and break off branchy missiles to toss down at him. In contrast to this exuberance, he chances next upon the stern resolve of an unimpedable mission - a network of leaf-cutter ants, armored, resilient, minuscule but mighty, embodying diligence and purpose.

Layer by layer, he penetrates, taking account, species by species until, finally, deepest into the jungle, he discovers an elusive spirit that patrols the very river of daydream, a being of golden-eye instinct woven with night-black mystery. A penetrator of darkness, the jaguar is a shamanic entity with quiet presence, stalking the unwary, shepherding vigilance. As he proceeds to the heart of the jungle, then, with intent to discern beyond the enchantment of its outer layers, his search culminates with a being in stark contrast to the norm - solitary, intense, and demanding wakefulness.

- - I dream of a baby (a new creative project arising from integration between soul and ego) who has been placed on the bank of a powerful river. When the baby falls in, risking myself to save its life, I leap in. After struggling ashore, I give the baby to my lady to feed and nurture. The developing ego protects and the soul nurtures.

I dream, also, of working in partnership with a woman. We take control of a corporation, ousting dysfunctional managers. Soul and ego are working together to modify counter-productive elements.

Another dream, however, warns that I have been choosing to attend my "external" woman at the expense of my soul-woman. Since the dream, I have been careful to guard against externalizing my focus in the realm of relationship.

Later in the week, wandering in West Coast forest, I look up at the last second into the face of a mother black bear at five paces while, directly behind her, two cubs are scurrying up a tree. Standing on a slight rise on her hind legs, she looms

over me like a dark cavern. Her eyes penetrate to my core, as she snorts a warning. Without thinking, spirit kicks in, and I issue a similar snort, not as a challenge, but as an empathic mirroring, and simultaneously make an about-face with neither a break in stride nor change of pacing. Within 30 prayer-filled steps, I breathe a great sigh of relief. Up until that point, however, I feel that I am in a situation of "having my karma tested." In the end, all that remains woven with gratitude and the distinct presence of my guardian angel, is an appreciation of spirit's ready power to respond to unexpected danger.

With restlessness dissipating, and a desire arising to seek refuge in mellow diffusion, there awakens in his heart an urge to share his growing warmth with others. Tangents become appealing, seeds of creativity are being sown to mature come autumn. As the season grows more fervent, hitching a ride in the gods' creative stream becomes an option - in contrast to six months from now, when he will be paddling his own canoe.

Now, openly surrendering to Igor Stravinsky's *Rites of Spring*, a masterful portrait of the vernal season, he lets it carry him into the season's tremendous dichotomy of outward forces of resurrection woven with inward dormancy. Life springing from death and the gestation of potent creative energies are artfully counter-pointed against the quiet twilight pervading the soul.

Waves of impending summer wash upon the shore of a spring now settling into evening discourse. Birdmates loft in unison, winged gestures unfolding an annual epic. High-country snowmelt courses in a pure brook, a fairy tale dissertation bubbling and charming its way toward a consummate destination. Bird parents busy themselves gathering food for hungry hatchlings. The soul, stretching dreamily along a pathway softly forming within the streambed of evening consciousness, is skirted by eddies and murmurs of an easing of constraint. In the warmth of striving upward from the Earth, the momentum of letting go of tiresome notions of the self proceeds, as the soul reaches out to encompass a more ultimate state of being.



## **Week 6**

May 12-18

Feeling at-one with life, anticipation soars dreamily into the multi-dimension within, even while sentience breathes out to farthest limits. And the forest, enriching nature's bank with leafy currency, begins to burnish its solar gold into earthen coffers through the span of summer radiance. Thus, the eagle of soulhood rises, circling on a thermal into a sky steeped in such lucency only the wing of a raptor can consort with.

And while the abundance, born of a provident earth, proclaims itself in a boisterous, every-niche-filled-with-song manner, the forces of spring oppose the silence and sighing of autumn found at the other end of the calendar.

He is bathing through the quiet of early morning in a mineral hot spring in the north, after having spent enough time behind the wheel upon the long ribbon of the Alaska

Highway to meld his spine into the seat, a contour of calligraphy, a la Toyota font. Every moment of immersion in the tranquilizing broth relieves an hour's worth of accrued stress from the long drive.

Bubbling and steaming, conveying fiery purification from its meeting with magma, the vented warmth creates a lush setting of unusual and verdant plant species, summer jubilation in the midst of austere northern terrain.

In addition to moose drawn to the mineral-rich vegetation, a black bear will occasionally visit for a wallow in the tepid soup. Then, hot tub etiquette, wilderness-style, kicks in - everybody clears the pool to make way for Ursa Minor's big dip. From the bruin's perspective, it's a matter of how good it feels when you're stiff from lying around for five or six months and *who invited anyone to my personal spa in the first place?*

- - A small, dome-shaped being with webbed feet emerges now from long hibernation. At home in the pond, cumbersome on land, it is a humble being, like its name. Even the sound of the word *turtle* just plods along phonetically.

My inner turtle, I discover, is an explorer of the subconscious. Slowing the scurry, dampening down the senses, it invites me to delve into the pond-bottom of intention. Submergence in the subconscious helps my exploration of dreams. While attempting to improve communication flow in a building, a roughshod character comes out to bar my way, demonstrating a part of my shadow that will need to be met.

In another dream, my partner and I find ourselves wandering through a desert setting where a witch conjures powerful elemental forces into a tempest. The dream warns of impending dissolution of our relationship. A year later, I am on my own, once again crossing a desert, Aphrodite cloistered in a mirage oasis. Although I once shunned romance-Sahara, I have recently been able to acknowledge austerity as productive in serving the soul's overall quest for fulfillment.

He once had occasion to perform a cesarean on a pregnant snake just after a vehicle had killed it. Out came about 50 babies, half of which, still alive, slithered off to make their way in life. In addition to a capacity for regeneration, serpentine mobility, elusive, flexible, capable of coiling back on itself, can become seductive when snake-like reason is applied to indulge in cravings or obsessions.

These days, he aspires to practice sublimation of body appetites, but in a balanced way, avoiding extremes at either end of the spectrum, neither indulgence nor repression - somewhere between partaking of a monthly Columbian light, and downing six double espressos per day. Moderation, he feels, is the key to moderation, flexibility within an austerity program.

At higher altitudes, winter can return for a final onslaught. Snow temporarily drapes its numbing influence upon alpine boughs and birds pick bits of gravel from remaining patches of un-snowed pathways, swallowing it into their crops to create a mill for the grist. The hardening edge of the wintry relapse holds back the softness of impending sleep, rousing Lady Soul for a moment. She peers about, reveling in the stark beauty, a beauty that melds with the deepening ember of late spring. Melodies of birds sound subdued but still carry across the aural field, as avian instinct perceives the imminence of a final thaw.

As a wild bird, his soul comes to meet his venturing selfhood - curious but tentative, cautiously drawing near. And the posture of his wandering and conquesting ego becomes still and unassuming, as it ventures to learn the language and manner of wild bird ways.

Flowers resist the turn of cold. Reflections of star-beings, they prompt the soul to acknowledge its astral origins. But the human flowering takes place in autumn and winter, as a rising flourish of Self-consciousness. Meanwhile, through the span of spring into summer, despite any temporary setbacks, he is becoming increasingly absorbed in nature-consciousness.



## **Week 7**

May 19-25

Understanding wells in the heart now, as thinking, like a river meeting the ocean, ascends lightward. Flower blossoms are a botanical outcome of the Earth dreaming, which will come to grounding, in due time, by way of seed creation. Similarly, he will birth his own personal grounding on the nether side of seasonality.

Now, a powerful, long-legged being heavy in the withers makes an appearance. Broad of hoof and stout of jaw, disclosing ponderous forces of the will, the moose is a steadfast and robust being, so agile that at the young age of a week it can follow its mother over deadfall, through willow thicket or swampy mire, even keeping up in a cross-lake swim.

The moose within bears power of enduring stamina, of arising on short notice to overcome an array of obstacles, or conversely, of holding ground while perceiving hidden intent of opposing forces.

Duress that has endured for a prolonged time ends up flushing out what he needs to work on. In a year gone by, insecurity regarding his primary relationship arose, as he found himself wrestling with a trust issue that centered on provision and self-care. Through grappling with the issue he was becoming aware of a pattern persisting in his relationships, a tendency to take on a helping role with partners who were needy or afflicted in some way. Giving of himself to a level of excessive self-denial, his Florence Nightingale aspect can grow selfless to the point that there's not much left of him to wave a white (or Red Cross) flag from under the rubble. The difference between enabling and empowering comes to fore when the recipient no longer wants the shirt off his back unless it's a hand-spun silk Cardin, which isn't going to happen since all he's sporting these days is a psychological hair shirt.

Although his current relationship began in a wholesome and productive tone, the writing is on the wall, and he is grieving over its apparently irreconcilable nature. He has been externalizing what is intended for inner process - attending the welfare of a distant realm, while the princess within the ramparts is under siege.

- - To the Lady of my Soul: What can be said of your pearl wisdom, of the azure light of your visioning, of your golden warmth? And to defy death, as you do, to vanquish the a-moral, and to thrive in the heartbeat of Sophia's Drum while choreographing a hundred inner beings upon Spirit's staging? I cherish your Athenian wisdom, the weaving of love's woof across the warp of suffering in this fabric called life, and desire only that your heart's longing come to pass.

I am shifting focus from *addictions* to *body appetites* - an indication of progress in the battle for the soul. In the past, I directed my attention to my struggle with a substance - nicotine, caffeine, TV-ine, and such. But I want to move on to the next layer, dealing with the body appetites that induced the addictions in the first place.

The cravings are a consequence of two significant factors, one of which is inhabiting a body. It seems as though one simply has to experience craving as long as one is incarnated. The other dynamic at work calls for vigilance around emotional issues that intensify the body appetites.

I take some inspiration from Francis of Assisi, who exemplified an intimate connection with nature, giving rise to numerous stories of communication with ani-

mals and birds. Beyond the joy that nature infused, though suffering was also part of his experience, he used his inner resources to meet the pain with transcendent cheer.

Born into a wealthy family, he reduced his possessions to the clothing on his back. Thanks to the existential model of St. Francis, it feels freeing to simplify my lifestyle, to be eating more basic foods, to be less concerned with clothing and image in a social or worldly context. I feel more at home with my minimalism.

While honeybees range far and wide for the raw material of their precious trade we, too, are sailing into an ever-wider realm, into the vault of spirit, with its gentle etheric streaming and warming astrality. Easing up on rigorous discipline, the focus we invest in penetrating the veils of the world undergoes a softening. In a way, the will forces are more resonant with the spirit of the moose, with its apparently ungainly, but steadfast manner. Faith carries one farther than will now, as does the discerning power of feeling, rather than thinking. Like purifying liquid energy, a sun-like process uplifts, and the wisdom of the heart lights our way, as we ascend inexorably into the rarefied meadow of summer.



## **Week 8**

May 26 - June 1

From mystery comes truth and from truth, mystery. During this, his birth week, he ponders how from a vast ocean we are born. A blue celestial womb that births a bold venturing of beings who strive for existential bearing through compelling social and spiritual resolutions. Now, as short previews of an impending dream-scape flicker across his inmost screen, a time has come for resisting the numerous distractions of modernity that can disturb the soul's needed reverie.

Turning his focus upon nature, he discovers a botanic masterpiece in the delicate whorl of the wild rose. Its calyx, a green star supporting five heart-shaped petals, upholds a pink galaxy centered by a golden sun. Rarefied and delicate, perhaps, but the rose is also armed to repel the abrasion of the world. He is rose-like when he casts not his pearls to the world without protective measure. He is rose-like, also, when he gives to the world the fruit of time spent in a season of sun-communion.

Later in the week, even while he savors again the rose's metaphysical nectar, thunderstorms begin to mount, signifying the arrival upon Earth of gifts of cosmic origin. The booming and cracking of divine energy electrifies the atmosphere. All doorways swing open. Here and there, petals of a timeless agency fall to the ground, and the process of over-flowering bears a germination of affinity. He becomes what he encounters. He is in the flower, the sky, and the leafing green. He is in the stone and tree, the warmth and rain, and even within the electrical charge of the atmosphere. And, as he comes to realize there is nothing in the created world that he cannot also find within, he passes into the ecstasy of summer, an epiphany pervaded by a feeling that all of this life and warmth is none other than the resplendence called love.

- - By perceiving the lead female as a personification of the developing soul, and the lead male as a personification of individuality aspiring to Selfhood, movies become externalized portraits of inner life. As I explore the intimacy between the man and woman the central drama becomes an unfolding spiritual integration. How do they meet? What shadow aspects are they grappling with? What stands in the way of integration? What issues are they working through to fulfill that integration?

Further cinematic considerations include: who is behind the camera? (The same question pertains to the process of dreaming.) What part of us is doing the editing? Directing? What kind of power resides within the camera of perception, and within the process of production? What becomes highlighted through (memory's agency of) editing? Who are the extras on the set? What kind of synchronicity is at work through key props, in the art of wardrobe and, especially, in the ambiance of the setting?

Blue-green ride the waves upon an immense sea, as they roll toward a distant luminescence. And in that far reach, out upon the billow of sungold, beyond thinking's reckoning, beyond the curving horizon, the soul comes home. There, free of focus, it drifts with heart for rudder, and for sail, a palm-tree musing that opens its fronds to the wind.

While beneath crystal whitecap the emerald depths sound to lonely fathom, above, an infinite coursing of peak and trough upon the bounding main sustains a limitless ardor. And immersed in this cascade of light, the soul, responding, ascends.

Now dusk descends upon the imponderable sea, and gaze of moon silvers the surf like moving torches of a parade sweeping landbound. And as night deepens, the wind in sudden rousings begins to escalate until wild waterhorses race, stamping and charging, rearing and whipping into an untamable frenzy.

And here, as he makes his way along this rampant shore, struggling to fit words to clothe his enamor, he writes: - - I feel beckoned across the compass of a vast and breathing mystery. This treasured realm we inhabit must surely be an arena for the gods, because it seems as though nature offers up her jade wonder as a gift only our inner deities can acknowledge, or dare plumb the depths of, without being overwhelmed by its extravagant synergy.

Now, while billows pour through my senses and sweep across the enterprise of my thinking, my vision sinks beneath the tidal spell, and sentience, overflowing, ebbs the intellect in fading dilutions. And while spring swings shut its portal, surf-steeds from the solar ocean attain to a sweeping, consummate power, champing at reason's bit, and rendering existential notions to so much seaweed, dulce ideals and kelp bed schemes, arame moodiness and wakame whimsy.

And as he closes his notebook, he senses within the resolute atmosphere a growing inevitability, as the storm of light pummels thinking's sodden remnants landbound, beaching them into a strandline for a season, a stretching row, drying and cracking, and sifting into the sand of sanguine divergence. And summer, swooping across the land on broad and golden wings, and all this infinity that alights now, affirms the broad multiformity of the soul's nature, even as the fiber of its being is carried into a hushed and holy dormancy.



## Week 9

June 2-8

Years ago, a quest for a potential home-site for his young family brought him deep into northern wilderness. Paddling and portaging his canoe through early summer boreal waterways, he was encountering wild resonations of inward beings, moose with newborn calves, or mallards with ducklings in tow - a train of five or six bobbing fluff balls twittering and scurrying behind mamma canard. As he pondered the outlay of his incarnation, an inner counterpart rendered flexible perception in any direction, and fluid interface with his retrospect. Waterfowl power, in its talent for shifting easily between fluid and airy realms becomes, in a metaphoric sense, a bridging of spirit and mind.

Having completed what anthroposophist William Bryant, in *The Veiled Pulse of Time*, terms "the Dark Wood" phase, mid-life's deepest cycle (age 42-49), a cycle of

refinement can now begin, in tandem with the onerous quest of integrating the shadow.

But the shadow can wait a little, for it is a time of year to let go of bearings, to wander mapless while light steep, brims over, and filters through all the cranies, lifting the soul to summer glory. Drifting now with nature's forces, ascending to heights finer than comprehension can visit, he is compelled to acknowledge that worldly rationale falls insufficient.

Now, in resonance with summer exhilaration, he longs to trek in mountain tundra, where he can freely mingle with the elements and take in the bounty of the season. "Lose self to find Self," says the week's verse. But what resistance stands in the way, what prevents relaxing hold of an identity so staunchly reinforced?

- - Exhaustion plays heavily, muting my motivation. Fatigue droops the wings of my ardor, as I slump on a quiet perch over-looking the bustle of the world. Nearing the brink of a fearful abyss, a place of emptiness, or smallness in the face of immensity, opportunity arises for me while releasing trepidation, to await, in the light-washed emptiness, a greater destiny.

And so, alternating with my mood of withdrawal, I find myself peering into avatar realms, gazing up to the bearing of the Higher Self. Through holding to this perspective, while drawing from a well of warmth, color, and insight, I begin to rise as though upon a streaming wind.

For, it seems clear now that, as I release myself into the outflow of the season's tide, I will come to trust the heart's compass and the soul's cartography. And with the culmination of this process, I feel, whether plying with waterfowl resilience through summer's hinterland, or wandering mapless over alpine tundra, and losing myself in raptor height, foregoing attachment, I will in course of seasons turning find myself at home within that most ultimate of harbors, the heart of my own being.



## **Week 10**

June 9-15

Through most of the year, the silver and diamond elixirs streaming down from the moon and stars hold sway. And now, against the pyrites of distraction and materialism, gold's authentic tenor prevails. For, as the sun fills the days of summer with aurous light, seconds become gold dust, minutes become nuggets, and the hours are weighed as bullion.

While flowers continue to bloom, petals of older blossoms droop and fall, turning into ashes of their former state. Ashes of passion, the remains of fervor consumed by radiance.

At this time, so near the apex of the season's ascension, he reaches to the outer edges of nature. In a word, he touches the Creator. And the Creator senses, through him, into the world, experiencing Itself as an extension, like a divine scout ranging into a personal frontier.

He observes otters cavorting in a river, how their streamlined bodies, webbed feet, and powerful tails are adapted to a life of exuberance. Playful, dexterous, the wildlings counsel him to engage in his environment, as opposed to passively resigning himself - to explore watershed tributaries, to revel in rapids, to partake of the staple of spirit currents. When he assumes the otter's stance, discerning prosperity, apprehension around provision falls away until, from a place of trust in supply, he can allow play to expand its influence in his life.

There have been times, he reflects, when I've been so engrossed in work that, while the experience may have seemed rewarding for one part of my being, it caused a withering to take place in another. Care of the soul was over-ridden.

By observing the antics of my otter companions, I am inspired to live in balance. But then, after a moment's deliberation, I want to temporarily suspend the whole issue. Perhaps this is not a time of year for working answers over the coals of spirit, more so a time for floating questions and inviting resolutions to enter at their own pace. Meanwhile, I feel the presence of the otter, there within myself, and know its medicine has already begun to work.

Later in the day, hiking a trail behind the otter's playground, he mounts the crest of a hill, and encounters a charismatic being whose home, once the entire northern hemisphere, has been reduced to less than a third its former range.

Emerging from a hermetic enclave, with acute hearing receptive to wildland sounds, and eyes of a penetrating gaze, the wolf's gifts revolve around discernment. He and the wolf see each other at the same time, their vision scanning across twenty paces, reading common ground and, for the duration of a sacred moment, in open curiosity, there takes place a meeting of inner and outer wolfdom.

- - My prime task as a human being is to wrestle the darkness of the past into light. However, during this time of year, to the extent I flounder in by-gone murk, I override awareness of newborn agencies. As reflected in the animal kingdom, it is time to celebrate the evolution of wild niches within.

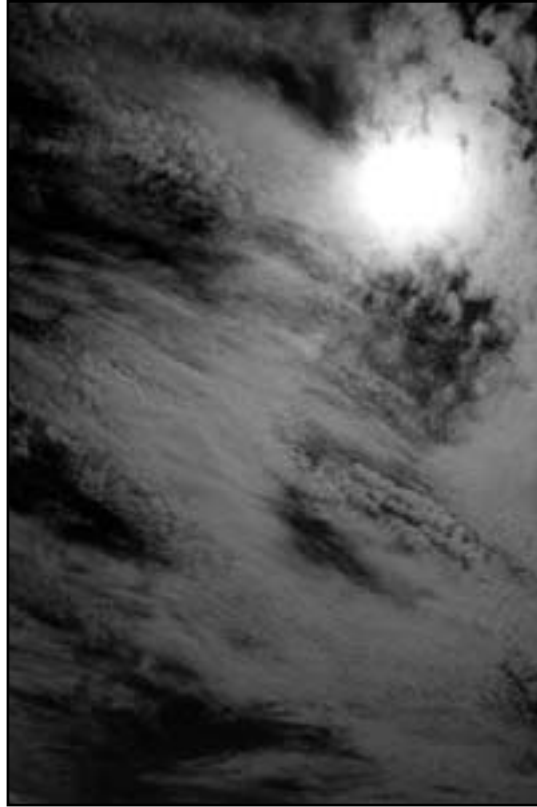
Life is intricate. Everywhere I encounter paradoxes. Arbutus leaves fall not in autumn, but in late spring. Hummingbirds are sublime, yet hummingbirds are sugar junkies. The light that reflects off the surface of the glorious but tranquil sea of Spirit shines with a heated sear, warming vision to a point of transmutation. How

could the mind alone possibly comprehend what is fully entailed in being incarnated on Earth? I need my whole being to grasp such profound synergy.

Dawn lights itself, rising over an isle of destiny and, streaming down upon the placid waters of a quiet bay, a harbor is won from the tumultuous buffeting of worldly transgression. In this sheltered cove many lie dormant, slumbering in the hold of a vessel drifting on a rising tide. Some, it is true, are up and active, tending tattered sailcloth, while in the pale light of the bridge the captain holds to anchor, awaiting tide's license to sail above the density, yet glide beneath the sparsity. And balance becomes so beautifully symmetric, so delicious, so delivering.

The moment of harvesting from the past is not yet due, let it come in its own time. Mark the impending lessons, the increase in understanding, as fear dissolves into the illusion it ever was, and love rises to the understanding it ever is.

And, as the Creative Force now gives of Itself to human experience, plant life, having traversed as far as possible from its state of seed-dom, expels its etheric energy unto the heights. And the plant kingdom turns now upon its axis and sets to creating new gems of life, next year's tiny whorls of compacted biotic universe we dare label, merely, "seeds." Meanwhile, nature's wakefulness enwraps and shields, cocooning the soul, now floating, day-by-day, deeper and deeper unto its hushed and holy slumber.



## **Week 11**

June 16-22

Through the sea of space the sun sails, down upon its island horizon, embering the firmament to color softly. And beneath lily-pad cloud a salmon wash swims, while sunbeams hammer ruby coals across the mantle of the mountains. Higher up, in turquoise depths scudded by searing clouds, a lonely emissary drifts, a seagull lit by a northern sun so near to midnight as to set fire its brassy pinions.

And there he sails, also, in a renegade sky-ship, Icarus II, unanchored in the harbor of the sun, keeping the metaphoric course of his vessel by the brink of singe. Becalmed, ghosting in the heights with neither list nor heave, out where that tide eddies its solar brine through the current of his longing, he falls adrift. Embraced by eternity, lacking bearing of mortal compass, out where Mercury guards its threshold to the sun, his sky-ship lades its hold. And in this quicksilver interval, when the ecstasy of the swallow soars unchecked, up where the gull folds just prior to the sun's annual stall, the soul's agenda is found dissipating into the apex of the

season.

- - Although high summer is a time for outward activity, I have a friend who carries it too far. He works 30 hours a day, nine days per week, and forty-one days per month. It's a boot camp for the soul and, like any military operation, bears an element of self-sabotage (the enemy as a projection of the self). Not having seen him for a while, I call him up. His response to my suggested visit is an enthusiastic, "Sure - put on a pair of coveralls and come on over!" In his world, socializing has been reduced to recruiting friends to share the day's work. Meanwhile, he is building into his life a shadowy persona, an adolescent coyote that wants to play, and be lazy and irresponsible. The longer he sustains this militant regime, the bigger will grow his shadow aspect until, one day, an insurrection will erupt.

On the subject of shadowy beings, the bear and the lynx appear on the scene this week. The bruin, an assertive powerhouse that travels unimpeded through most any terrain, projects a viable model for summer living, when outward movement and fearless ranging in the wilderness of spirit become appropriate.

While the lynx, also, is powerful, it is more elusive than brother bear. Stealthy, yet lithe, the grizzled feline is possessed of owlish vision, a shadow hunter capable of routing prey from dimly lit recesses.

What angelic being created yarrow? Whose handiwork resides in the gold and white of its celestial bearing? Durable fronds spiral up a sturdy stalk that divides through three stages to culminate in a whorl of blossom. With closer observation, the branching flower-head is actually a crown of tiny blossoms converging in a composite dome, blossoms that number close to the magic of 360, a number divisible by the greatest compendium of common numerals - 2,3,4,5,6,9,10,12,15,20, and so on - and a number representing that which embraces the wholeness of the horizon.

He dreams of carrying a woman on his back through a dark house, where she disappears, leaving him with a growing sense of loss. Pondering the dream, he links the absence of his Soul Lady to the summer state of repose. And so, he elects for the duration of the season to wax mindful of the soul's aspirations, ideals, and unfulfilled longings. He will keep an eye on any dreamscapes that lend credence to a feeling of existential uncertainty.

While observing these reveries, he chooses not to over-invest in reflection and analysis, as yet, having learned how the potency of introspection appropriately rises as summer wears on. Just as the spirit of yarrow exemplifies wholeness now, so the soul calls to pass on by reductionist tangents, in favor of a warm, holistic approach.

Rudolf Steiner said of this season: "the human being flowers with the flower, seeds with the seed, and fruits with the fruit, and thus unfolds in himself a finer sensitiveness to nature throughout the spring and summer-time. He thereby prepares to live, above all in the midsummer season, in devotion to the Universe, to the starry heavens. Then every little brightly colored beetle becomes for him like a mysterious revelation of the cosmic life upon the stem of the plant, and every breath in the atmosphere at midsummer-time becomes a harbinger of the Cosmic life within the earthly life."

She blossoms in the flower. She germinates. She wings with the swallow. She courses in the sap of a tree and the chlorophyll of greenery. His Soul Lady dreamily rides in birdsong melody, or follows a breeze through sunlit fir boughs, gentling any aspect afflicted by turmoil.

Now she knows languor without indolence, now indolence without vice, now vice without excess, now excess without dissipation, now dissipation without loss, now loss without regret, now regret without languor, now languor without indolence. . . and the world turns on its whole-making axis.

And by week's end, drawn to upper regions of the earthscape, to elements roiling in the ocean of radiance, attention becomes transfixed. Clouds whipped by solar wind become billowing surf, and the sky's swelling tide brims to a near nightless wash as retreating stars, aloft in their ghostly chariots, are overcome by the sun's mighty presence. With the uncloaking of divinity the Creator's hand moves unchecked. And the sun, from its commanding position, enflames the very air that we breathe, and heats the very ardor of the heart, beckoning release, that we may let ourselves flow out into the light.



**Week 12**

*St. John's Tide*

June 23-30

The mood of the week, like violin music streaming down from a cirrus castle, is of saturation in the river of spirit. While from solstice altitude there gleams a promise of regeneration, celestial secrets, encoded in the rapture of high summer, stockpile as germinal inspiration that will be sown within the quiet cache of mid-winter. There, on the other side of the calendar, its seedling momentum will be swept under drifting snow to await the thawing force of human fervor.

In nature's more earthen sphere a festival is proceeding, as a community of fireflies suffuses a green glade with gliding fairy lights. Painting the midsummer eve with a soft version of solar radiance, this incendiary moth lights the atmosphere with its incandescence.

The nature of the firefly embodies contradictions. Though languid in flight, it emits fiery charges. On one end of its body it carries a bright lamp, while the

other end bears a coal-black eye of mystery. But then, it is part of the way of many of nature's beings to grow so comprehensive that they overwell into paradox.

- - The posture of my partner, a lovely Taurus woman, is shifting dramatically, since she, less enamored now that the honeymoon phase of the relationship has ended, is beginning to dim her affection (My first clue came when she shifted from addressing me as "Bright Star" to "Lollapalooza" - Taurean for "Gumby's sidekick").

It comes down to this: to experience self-esteem, the valuation is going to have to take place where it counts the most - in the context of my *Being* - not in association with my work, relationship, or position in the world. In the same spirit that asserts that losing sight of shore can lead to the discovery of new terrain, it would be productive to let go of relying on my partner for what I need.

In the midst of this process that is bound to demand a steadfast bearing, understanding and acceptance come to me in the guise of a lowly plant. For, as much as light's glory thrives now in the brilliance of stratospheric cloud, prisms and glaring unchecked, similarly, below in its green bower, there is a flower that proclaims that same splendor. Before the onset of its blossom, the morning glory may appear to assert its presence in a rather subdued manner, but with its long tendrils twining, stretching, over-laying broad arrowhead leaves, embellishing the co-opted greenery with its own distinct signature, the flower's assertion is steadfast and tenacious.

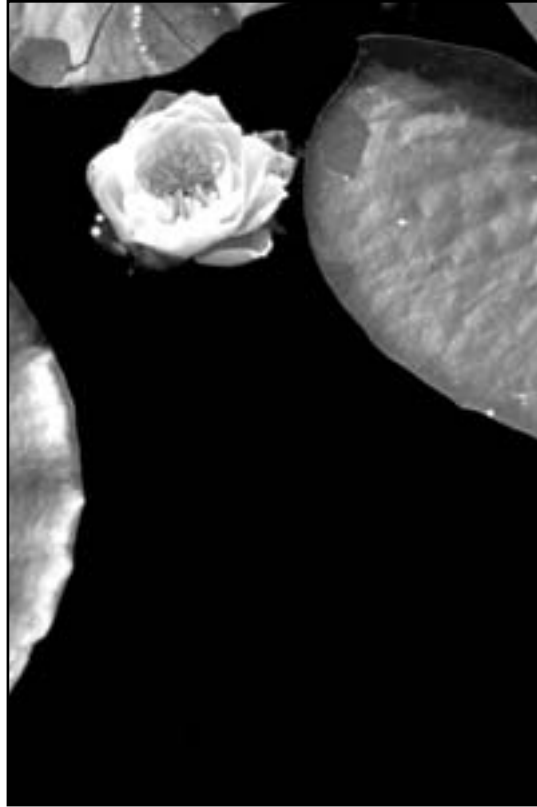
One night, he dreams of entering a warehouse and meeting disturbing forces in the gloom of the basement. Within the night of mid-life, though his conscious experience is pervaded by summer light, shadowy forces are lurking in the subconscious that will inevitably need to be met. But, not now, not now - there will come, soon enough, a more appropriate time to address such matters.

The following day, as if to counterpoint the dark aspect of his soul, a roving anti-shadow in the guise of the largest of North American butterflies, the monarch, breezes by on regal, stain-glass sails, lucent orange and enigma-black. In the Greek language *butterfly* and *soul* share the same word: "psyche." A fitting etymology (and entomology), considering how powerfully rebirth is exemplified in the monarch, through its cocooning metamorphosis, its laying of copious eggs, and its capacity to survive upon mere fairy dust resources, the very nectar of the gods.

While inwardly a part of him flits over a floral meadow, sampling nectar, fluttering on seemingly erratic, yet graceful wings, he can sense how the sun that fuels the butterfly creates, in a similar manner, the flower blossom. In a way, the butterfly is a mobile blossom.

Living on the edge of physical endurance, between working and dancing his body is having a hard time keeping up. He is faced with a choice: to either seek balance between physical activity and rest, or to awaken hidden resources while pushing the edge of endurance. And because nothing out-rises summer's intoxicating passage, he finds himself reaching out beyond the self's bounds, as the darkness overheats then subdues itself into quiet mystery.

Akin to a dove's flight, integrity inhabits high summer, a light-steeped gesture descending over time to meet the grounding force of Earth. And in that juncture, virtue will commingle with human error, and hearts will be sifted, as that which we struggle with comes to the surface, to be set aside until its day of reckoning during the iron days of autumn.



## **Week 13**

July 1-6

Now, power of thought ebbs, and sentience wakens. And, while the soul ranges the alpine meadow of the sun, a harvest of aspiration is encoded and poured into a sacred chalice, to be decoded in the grounding stage of autumn. For now, the spirit of summer, intent on committing its legacy to the estate of winter, bears the soul aloft through the sanguine realm of the gods.

Meanwhile, within the house of nature's lake, leaves like green plates stretch flat upon the ebon surface, receptive to the sun's streaming warmth. Buried in the depths, within the bottom ooze, the water lily conceals its gold, over time channeling it through a long rising stalk, stretching to reach the surface, then leafing out, pan-round on contact with the atmosphere. With the advent of high summer, the lotus-like crown of its effort comes ablaze with ivory petals, resplendent, yet woven with silent intent.

Taken into account of the soul, often in nature an evolutionary contraction

foreshadows a crowning phase. In early stages of development we may sense the presence of such gold within our depths, a treasure under containment, shining, but with a muted gleam.

In the late Sixties, while hitchhiking westward across country, by embracing the ideals of counter-culture he increasingly found himself pondering resolutions for living in a world gone astray from the forum of spirit. Midway on his journey he hopped a freight and, while riding the rails, experienced an epiphany that became a pivotal juncture in his biography.

Upon arriving at the West Coast, fed up with the dysfunction of established society, he took up residence in the office of an alternative press, selling enough issues of the paper to get by on, day by day. As he roamed the streets, he ranged, also, an inner sociological terrain, a visionary world of alternative scenarios. In his idealism, the opportunity to create meaningful community felt limitless. But of course, *implementing* such lofty social transformation was a challenge akin to a raccoon aspiring to perform a Chopin recital.

Though his reverie, driven by a feeling-intuitive engine, took a broad view, the achievement of vision and its grounding in the world were leagues apart. In hindsight, he senses there was much secondary purpose in his nascent inspiration. Had he known about the Calendar, he may have recognized himself as being, at the time, in a state "akin to spirit," focused on a trail leading "in grounds of spirit" to ways of living aligned with the warmth and beauty of higher wisdom.

As it stands now, he perceives his passage through the concrete and human labyrinth of the urban landscape as a kind of social materia medica. The gold of his discovery, far from pyrite, though confined within the limits of his own personal root-and-stalk phase, would later on in life rise from its dormancy in the understorey of the heart, to be recapitulated in such activities as Waldorf teaching, holistic counseling, and writing from a social activist agenda. Through due process, incentive, in rising to the surface of the pond would, from time to time, strive to unfold its blossom.

In the dragon-heat of a summer evening, as I sit watching a squadron of "mosquito hawks" performing complex aerial maneuvers, I am struck once again by the synchronicity of soul and nature. Silhouetted by the setting sun, dragonflies are picking off small silver moths fluttering across an opening in the dimming forest. The strike force works with coordinated efficiency, hauling their booty off to cache in

fir boughs, pilots navigating with confidence, their precision flight assisted by the alternating rhythm of a double-wing design that serves to reduce air turbulence. Observing the aerial feats in the waning light, I find myself pondering how within the soul's extensive array a wonderful quality lives, an aspect that can maneuver with refined agility through tenuous realms.

I am also learning that the soul's dreaming is not the same as common sleep-bound dreams, although there are times when the two may converge. While lucidity is due to arise during the last phase of summer and deepen into autumn, at this point in the progression of the Calendar the ruling nuance is that of a soft-image dreaming.

The reverie can be cushioned within an eddy of languor, or it can surf the fore-wave of a gusting wind, or billow in the streaming light of a far horizon. Whatever form it assumes, here, at season's height, the sun speaks to the soul in a burning cadence, issuing no commands, seeking no control, just streaming forth an enrichment of light. And the soul, if attended in a way appropriate to the season, is able to respond with masterful piloting skills akin to those of the dragonfly.

Evidence abounds of a lofty will ruling within nature, behind the world of incarnation. And now, as *excarnated* as the yearly cycle gets, there is felt in remote heights the striving of a Great Presence. The pattern of destiny both weaves itself and is willed by spirit, and lucidity will come in due time to enlighten enigma.

Now the voice of the songbird, in comparison with its former vivacity of spring, diminishes to a subdued undertone. He is as impressed by its growing silence as he was by its boisterous articulation through spring. Leaves have attained their fullness and, like fox kits at play, colors bound up from the greenery to announce the crowning of the teeming verdure. As green deepens to chlorophyll-brimmed luxuriance, leaves spread wide their receptive palms, silently grasping the solar bullion. Unfettered, the gold works its alchemic magic, and a wizard dance streams through the emerald pool of the plant kingdom, within that most restful, most intermediate of colors. And nature's bedroom ambiance, shrouding the dreaming soul, induces not a stark dream - for that will come later, in the lucid phase that August promises - but a dream now whose images, seen through a waxy veil, whose sounds, heard through a muffling curtain, whose aromas, wafting out in fading dilutions, converge in the perception of those who are quietly attentive. Or, just as often, in the jade languor of summer, pass by unperceived.



## **Week 14**

July 7-13

This time of year, with the northern hemisphere tilting into the profile of the Milky Way, showcasing the opulence of the universe, starlight contrasts the void with a profound and jeweled immediacy. And an orchestration of radiances reflecting these constellating forces, the masterwork of the inner order, hurtles on with its own timeless momentum. The scientist cites mind-numbing facts pertaining to the dynamics of space, but the poet asserts that the imponderable state of humility that overcomes us derives from beholding an external portrait of the Self. The little i meeting the big I.

- - Struggle with everyday concern continues on its plodding course. Aspiring to keep my heart open, despite the magnitude of disruption in my life, I resolve to pre-

vent myself from unduly withdrawing. The goal of my quest seems as remote as a distant nebula. Facing a change in career path and home, plus letting go of my primary relationship, I need to find a phoenix route out of these Scorpion ashes.

As the old order of perception no longer suffices, the challenge becomes one of redefining myself, of re-constellating my social galaxy, and the key to a successful renaissance lies in keeping the heart open and flexible.

In line with this, the first arena I am drawn to is forgiveness. My perception of the concept to *for-give* translates into giving before attaining full comprehension of circumstances. Through its mysterious agency, I open a portal. Then, on the heels of forgiveness comes self-forgiveness and, as though clemency and sunlight are synonyms, a saturnine veil begins to burn away like morning haze. In the matter of addictive indulgences in my past (nicotine and caffeine), I am coming to realize how, despite my pursuit of a spiritual path, a part of my being remained stuck in a materialist frame of reference. Within the confinement of materialism there is little motivation to quit, so why not indulge away?

However, another side of my being, an Orion-like warrior, leads me to understand that although "we only live once" - it is forever. Thus, every act of striving to overcome addictive patterns holds forth a pay-off. Every ungratified longing endured in striving for moderation is something won over, a lasting acquisition in the treasure-hold of the soul.

Purity of heart resides in the turn of the Calendar now, a quality at odds with the world's darkness. One of his sons was born during this week, a child with a spirit akin to a serene summer landscape, the peace of sunlit reeds by a lake's edge, or the beauty of light breaking through a forest. Unfortunately, along with this steadfast nature the boy was destined, partly as a result of impurities that come with incarnation in this world, to undergo inordinate suffering. Though in the long run, sometimes measured in future lives, such suffering refines and enhances, over the short haul it has the semblance of pointless tragedy.

Souls born this week can demonstrate admirable qualities, expression in creative mediums, or compassion moved by the plight of animals, which, on another level, can translate as reverence for the array of aspects that comprise the fullness of soulhood.

With this week, a dissolution in the fiery heights takes place. The hawk's choleric presence moderates. Saturated by light, dog days of abundance visit, and the fox's larder increases, lending respite from vigilance, and a rest from the rigor of cunning. And, as dusk and dawn closely bracket the duration of night, the owl's "day" is rendered short. Leavings from love's suffusion compost into wisdom's garden, giving intuition rein to graze on unexpected greening. Now, only a few trailing wisps of shadow are apparent, as the sun moves across the inner landscape, blinding itself into all the crevasses of feeling's terrain.

"Cosmic Thought" has been rendering order, as the process of thinking transitions from "thought dreams" to the realm of Universal Mind. In the pause between flowering and fruiting, a creative void is encountered, a transit in which to seek refinement in preparation for what will be coming.

Meanwhile, fervency rides upon the balm of breeze and glowing warmth. Dreaming carries on its ambulatory passage, but within the reverie there begins to occur a *watching* of the dreaming. As the soul sleeps, vision kaleidoscopes through a collage of image and non-image, as marvels painted upon the canyon walls of passage alternate with aspiration lofting beyond seeming impasse, toward a destiny aptly longed for.



## **Week 15**

July 14-20

Wrapped in veils of summer enchantment there broods awareness of the perpetuity of life. Microcosms of genesis, seeds, begin to mature now, encoding within their etheric blueprint the entire expression of a plant. Within each compression that follows closely on the heels of a flower's gesture of expansion there pulsates this dynamo of concentrated life. With etheric forces adrift upon the sea of solarly, encrypted beyond reach of even the charmed language of poetry, the seed's power bides in its containment, a quality that stands in direct contrast to summer dissipation.

During a sweat lodge ceremony, the shaman noted that he carried very little "overburden" - not much material overlay the bedrock upon which the gold of his soul

lay waiting to be mined. Until this revelation, he had been in the habit of pushing himself, enduring needless pain for the sake of spiritual progress.

Traditional indigenous practices, once effective for their time, commonly entailed tenacious endurance - for example, running through the desert until collapsing, or fasting without food and water for a lengthy span, the central intent being to crash through the doorway into the spiritual realm. Today, modern spiritual paths, like Anthroposophy, counsel approaching the Threshold by means of rigorous discipline, but in a conscious, grounded and moderate manner.

In a later year, he became involved with the work of a psychic surgeon. Because of his training in an alternative modality known as polarity therapy, he soon found himself joining a group of secondary healers, reconfiguring the disrupted field of patients' etheric bodies due to the impact of the surgery. With various alternative healing modalities underway and the intensity of prayerful purpose mounting, the energy in the center rose to a rarefied level.

At one point, he worked as the surgeon's assistant and witnessed the remarkable process of flesh fluidly parting and rejoining on a molecular level, painless and remarkably efficient. Despite incredible results, however, he came to understand that the patient's condition was his, or her, own responsibility. The surgeon could remove a tumor, but if the patient didn't change the underlying cause of the tumor, it would eventually grow again.

The week's Calendar verse is exemplified in a setting like this, by virtue of the enchantment that avails itself "in spirit's weaving." For those able to open themselves to the magic of a powerful healing experience, the weaving of spirit brings uncommon power to the ultimate of cures - that of self-healing or, more concisely, *Self-healing*.

- - I feel beckoned to explore alpine tundra, where a thin, light-swept atmosphere and a short, intense growing season ensure plants must undertake development with determination. And later in the week, ranging above tree line, I traverse above the meagerness of my life until, saturated by exhilaration, I can descend like a modern Moses with tablets of rapture to hurl upon the baser aspects of my life.

Hand in hand with this fervor, I have been developing an appreciation for progress I have made in my life, something I usually skim over lightly, and pay for with lower self-esteem. I am also experiencing the gnawing loneliness that accompanies being not truly met in a relationship. Withdrawal escalations are taking place

on both sides, until one of us makes a conscious effort to forgive.

As I peel back the layers, I begin to see that acute loneliness is the principal force at the foundation of my addictive impulses. But I do not descend upon my deficiency with an iron rod. Repression is unhealthy, as is giving way to appetites, which are essentially bottomless. While moderation for us incarnates is typically a challenge, I see it as a reliable means of freeing the soul from bondage to the body.

Cedar waxwings, having held off through spring and half of summer, choose now to nest. Gentle and unassuming, with an unconventional manner and exotic appearance, truly elegant among the avian race, these highborn avatars are possessed of a sweetness akin to the nectar they imbibe, and a refinement not unlike the flower petals they graze upon. Waxwings practice a peculiar ritual in which they pass a berry or petal from one bill to another, eventually ending the social interplay when one of them swallows the ceremonial icon. The labyrinth of one's social life one can always use some waxwing grace and charm.

Late in the week, entering a phase of enchantment, the soul, as in a sanctum gathering strength, can be found building forces for the imminence of a morning. Buffered in its cushioned parlor, within a quiet chamber of renewal, the season's restraining parameters will serve until the season grows ripe for the iron resolve of will to transcend the boundaries.

Meanwhile, the wolf rests from its ranging by containing its wander within the bounds of domestic pursuit, and the spirit of Beethoven's First Symphony, descending from summer-high pastures, both portrays and relinquishes impulse for drama - softening, quieting, mellowing into the heated folds of grassy plains, and curling along the sanguine beach of summer, like a long-sweeping wave finally coming home. Within, a star of hope shines, gleaming despite the broad light of day. Here, in this mid-year stretch where, from afar, first-of-the-year vision once gazed, the inner eye has closed its weary lid. And the inner sensate being rests, now, within the quiet boudoir of summer rapture. The soul lolls upon a hammock strung from star to star, as the season delivers the enrichment of a dormitory renaissance.



## **Week 16**

July 21-27

In dog-day heat, beneath a shadowless sun, an untamed horse ranges across a prairie of cumulus. And while darkness, avalanching softly into the valley of mid-life, counterpoints the heart's yearning for fruits of spirit, prosperity visits nature's food chain. The spider eludes the shrew, and the shrew eludes the weasel - but somehow they nonetheless all find sustenance.

Over and against the bounty provided by summer's abundance - bent on conserving their life-force for fruition, seeds, and heartwood - trees begin to draw nutrients from their leaves. Fruit now comes to fore, with pulpy bodies and thin-skin membranes, ripening, swelling. Raspberries form tiny chalices and darken into their sweetness, and blueberries emerge as cool cobalt orbs.

"If you are supporting someone whose outer life is in crisis [or neediness], you will want to be especially vigilant that you don't get swept away in the drama of outer

circumstances as holding the secret to the person's inner peace." These words from a counselor's guidebook summed up an important lesson he was learning in his relationship with someone in need of more support than he could give. He was learning to pray for her inner peace, self-empowerment, and all-around healing, versus trying to rescue her by endless remediation. In a sense, like the plant world this time of year, he needed to withdraw his forces from an increasingly futile cause.

Meanwhile, he was gaining understanding about the vampirish pattern in the biography of his relationships. Sometimes the drain on him was of a subtle nature. This time, he had allowed it to become physical, financial, energetic and emotional. But he sensed the vampirism and a quest for integrity in his soul life were related in a fundamental way, that before he would be able to manifest a functional relationship, he would first have to make significant headway with soul conditions. Inner marriage had to precede outer marriage.

Related to this, in the world of nature, the outward, showy demonstrators, the flowers, have had their day, and the stage is set for the more foundational process of fruition. Akin to nature's enterprise, while steeped in the fertile streaming of sunlight, he feels compelled to tend his interior garden, that he may revel in a forthcoming bounty.

Within the ongoing reverie of the interior self, *awareness* of dreaming begins to stir. While the soul is enwrapped in, and enrapt by, its foray into summer glory, a cushioning of sorts takes place. Spirit feeds strength into the soul while the soul sustains its hovering pattern in the heights, where it remains for a time provided the cocooning stage is cherished. The queenly function of shepherding virtue into the fabric of volition is underway.

- - On a beautiful August afternoon, sunlight streams through the window as I look out to see my nine-year-old son playing quietly in his sandbox. But a few moments later, I find intuition tugging at the sleeve of my attention, and look out just in time to see a man stomping threateningly toward my boy with a hefty rock in his hand. Rushing out and standing between the two, I practice releasing the fear that's churning within. Letting go as concertedly as possible, I pray to our collective guardian angels, and relax into what peace I can muster. Within that moment, pregnant with spiritual import, I sense a welling of inner light. And, in that pause between events, where will and destiny inter-weave, the assailant drops the rock and approaches in a state that has altered from harmful intent to increasing passivity. By the time we are face-to-face, we share a frame of mind amenable to dialogue.

It turns out there had been a transgression by local children on the man's

property. Now he had gotten drunk, and the lid had blown off. Fortunately, by responding on a whole-some spiritual level, I am able to defuse a volatile situation. In a precarious moment, spiritual fruits are ready-at-hand, indicating that a productive modification of the common "fight or flight" adage might be "fight, flight, or get light."

Warrior patience, silent resolve, and a well of resource for weaving gossamer strands into a precision web denote the refined etheric force of the common spider. Spiders exposed to substances, including caffeine and marijuana, spin poor webs with tattered and aberrant patterns, hinting how substance abuse affects the spiritual constitution of human beings.

The spider's vocation is remarkable. Flies, caught and assimilated, are transformed and spun into silken lines. The spider itself is a silky, proteinacious being that exudes strands of a similar silky protein. The web is an extension of the spider's mesmerizing power. Casting its line into an airy sea, conjuring its very marrow into a net suspended in atmospheric currents, the hunter waits it out. Sooner or later, the harvest arrives of its own accord.

The function of the spider serves as a fitting template this week, as we weave a construction from our own creative forces, then wait for life to bring spiritual sustenance within the circle of the soul's net.



## **Week 17**

July 28-August 3

In summer height feeling soars, loosening fetters, inducing us to take in the widest panorama. And the soul, infused with cosmic warmth and open to the proliferation of its diverse facets, encounters a nuance of the peace that comes with acceptance by the world. Longing to trust aspiration and attend matters of intuition, in a spirit of inclusiveness we are prompted to reach out to embrace all, including shadow aspects that may stand in the way of ideals. With whole-making forces arising to ease any sense of isolation, even the most primal vehicle of creative expression finds a home by the communal hearth.

During the Summer of Love, living in a counter-culture setting in the heart of a Great Lakes city, in the ardor of youth and idealism, all he owned were the clothes

upon his back, including a fringed jacket that served by night as a blanket, and a harmonica to wail upon whenever the urge arose. He was prepared for adventure, come what may.

Early August found him rambling westbound, his notion of hopping a freight stereotypic, limited in classic hobo fashion to leaping aboard an empty boxcar. Parched in the daytime and chilled at night, it wasn't until he learned from experienced rail-riders about boarding the rear of several engines hooked in tandem, that a cushy seat in a sheltered cab and a water jug eased his spartan passage.

Aboard the trains there was no shortage of companionship. Men and women, seniors and youths - even a mother with a baby rode the rails. When hunger gnawed, he jumped off when the train slowed to eat some pilfer of carrot or corn, or to beg door-to-door for a loaf of bread.

Arriving on the west coast, after a couple of nights of sleeping on the beach, his dreams lulled by the rhythm of Pacific rollers, he hooked up with an underground newspaper. He would sell enough issues of the paper to feed himself day-to-day, and sleep in the office by night. Consorting with all manner of people, he ranged wherever his boot heels wandered, living his life by the gust of wind and ray of sun.

This particular venture within the biography of his adolescence, similar to that depicted in a prior week, but from the obverse viewpoint, was an experience not unlike the call of the week's verse to "fill spirit depths with all world wide breadth."

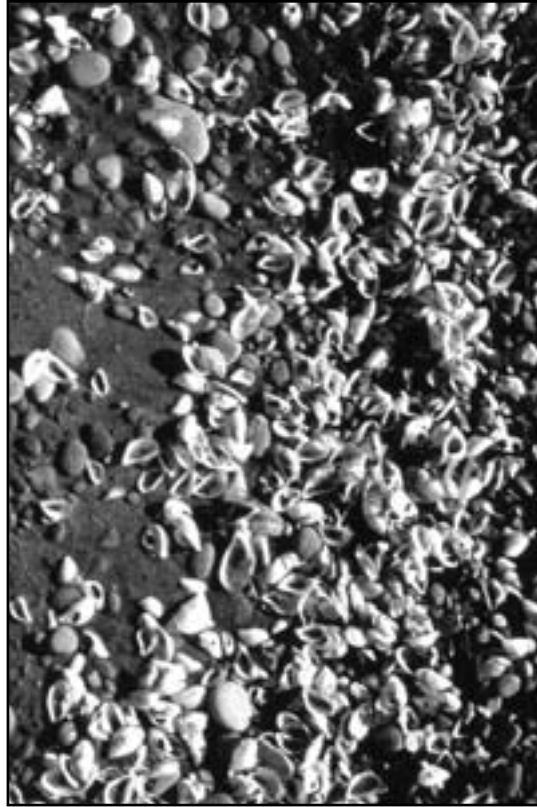
- - I am experiencing astraphobia, a spell of giddiness arising from fear of spaciousness, an uneasiness at being out in the "cosmos of summerland," off floating too much, too long. I am also feeling vulnerable and inadequate at meeting the demands of the world, and sense that if I cannot keep myself centered on my own agenda, I will be left open for others to exploit for their own ends.

Underneath it all, working away in the subconscious, I detect a fear of letting myself relate to others in an open, dynamic way. Essentially, I am afraid to develop and use my multi-colored palette. This experience differs from past experiences in that I now understand that the forces of the spiritual world are calling for significant growth on my part. Although I am not feeling up to meeting the challenge, life is giving me a chance to flourish.

Furthermore, in *apparent* contradiction, I feel that in order to more effective-

ly comply with the conditions of the season, I will first have to awaken to the aspirations of my individuality. I am convinced that fulfillment of my goal of authentic community is increasingly hinged on assertion of my own distinct unfolding.

This week, we are occupied with crossing a bridge, a segue to accessibility of every nuance of being. Called upon to fulfill the inner world, the soul now begins to rouse a little from its almost ceaseless reverie. But not too abruptly. The dreaming continues, but begins now to alter its state of dormancy with subtle streams of awareness of a mildly lucid nature.



## Week 18

August 4-10

The year he turned forty he undertook a weeklong trek through pathless wilderness, an initiation ordeal that flirted with the threshold of the next world.

With dusk of the first day drawing down, weary but euphoric from the day-long struggle, the hiking had become pleasant. No more mosquito-blessed swamps to mire through, no more willow thickets or deadfall. Just a stroll through beautiful highland meadow surrounded by rugged peaks. And in such an open, treeless landscape, it was strange that he didn't notice the grizzly until too late.

As he passed by a clump of alders barely sufficient to provide cover for a bear, sensing a presence, hearing a rustling, he swung around to the great hulk erupting from the brush and running full steam, *away* from him, thank God! But close enough for its rippling muscles to trigger a wave of terror. Then, releasing the fear, an image came to him of a being hovering overhead, emitting shafts of light at the bear, and he was filled with gratitude for the intervention of his guardian angel.

Second and third brushes with death followed the next day while negotiating cliff faces, and coming twice within a heartbeat of a high fall. What is it about, this tango with mortality, this seductive element in the dance of excarnation? In the throes of mid-life, with inner-outer dynamics out of kilter, in a deeper place of his being he began to wonder to what extent ascertaining mortality's inner modality could avert his compulsion to meet death externally. But these questions resided, for the most part, below his attention, in a semi-conscious realm, awaiting further experience to draw them out in the open. Meanwhile, the following evening, a fourth incident arose as, with sun setting, he faced five channels of river delta churning ice cold from melting glaciers.

The first, over his head, called for hoisting a log to offset his pack. After laboring across to a sand bar, legs numb, hobbling back and forth to return feeling, he began to seriously doubt the viability of survival.

Channel by channel, four times waist-deep, falling deathly numb, all but swept over by icy current, somehow, in hypothermic daze stumbling to an abandoned cabin, doffing his wet clothes, he climbed into his sleeping bag and lay shivering and chewing on a handful of trail mix. In that moment, he became one of only a handful who had overcome the formidable terrain surrounding the fortress known as Ben My Chree, an exotic shangri-la of lush vegetation amid boreal austerity.

The next morning, the stage was set for his fifth near-death folly. After a 3,000-foot ascent to escape the endless downpour, opting for snow over rain, as he topped the mountain shoulder, he encountered a blizzard that quickly mounted to a deadly whiteout. Instinct for survival insisted he retreat to the cabin.

The following morning, he made his way up the valley onto a massive raft, crossing thousands of years of sublimation, a water-journey suspended, compacted, grinding stone, sculpting underlying bedrock. Rain had pitted the surface of the glacier, rendering traction that allowed him to study the turquoise palace in earnest, with its rivulets coursing through aquamarine channels and dropping into cobalt cups, radiant with a moon-like glow.

The larger crevasses, however, though mesmerizing in their beauty, proved a risky enterprise in a setting where winds can funnel to blasts that give credence to stories of dogs being hurled 50 yards. And, although death portal number six opened when the winds lifted him off his feet while leaning into a particularly enchanting crevasse, it was only after hunkering down on all fours and beating a hasty retreat that it dawned on him he had been peering into a grave 70 feet deep.

Looming ahead, however, lay his seventh, and most ultimate brush with death. If he had opened his etheric eye as he made his way off the ice onto solid rock, he might have noticed the Grim Reaper, himself, perched upon a nearby boul-

der, sharpening his scythe and eyeing the sands of time in his hourglass.

From the journal of his iron journey - - My concentration flagging, I pick my way forward over the glacier-strewn debris. It is early evening as I round the shoulder of the mountain and look down on a 2,000-foot descent that appears too formidable for my limited mountaineering experience.

To test the terrain, I begin working my way down a small stream that falls in ten-foot steps as it carves its way toward the valley floor. Then, negotiating the fourth ledge, exhausted, I slip and my arm comes out of its socket. Tumbling a few feet to the ledge below, I writhe in pain as the realization dawns on me that I will die a slow agonizing death from hypothermic exposure if I am unable to negotiate the terrain.

After several failed attempts to push my arm back in, and with night's curtain drawing down, I surrender, crawling into the only shelter available, the underside of a huge boulder wedged in the stream cut. Wrapped in my sleeping bag like a mummy in a crypt, I feel the acuteness of the symbology. It is a classical initiation scenario. I will either die or, if I survive, my incarnation will almost certainly continue in an unprecedented way. For a time that loses sense of duration, I do not know whether the claustrophobic space that I am lying in will prove to be a tomb or a womb.

Exhausted, praying for intervention, I hover on the edge of consciousness, as a fine spray of water flying off the cascading stream works its way over the boulder onto my sleeping bag, threatening to soon render it useless. I think of friends, aware of my trek, but not which specific route I have taken. Knowing that by the time I am found I will likely be dead from exposure, I dampen into despair.

Then, after several hours of enduring the agony of a dislocated shoulder, my arm slips back into its socket, generating a ray of hope. A short bout of fitful sleep is followed by the gray veil of a northern dawn washing through my stupor. Crawling out of my sphinx-like chamber and improvising a sling for my arm, I abandon my sodden sleeping bag and everything else besides food and matches. The prospect of hoisting any weight in my condition is untenable. Clearly, my remaining hope lies in making a run for civilization before night falls.

I know that in my condition, however, I will have to find a less arduous route down to the valley floor. Despite my infirmity, I am able to negotiate a way back up the ledge I have descended - the first of several trying obstacles I will face on my way out. To make a long story short, I am able to find a way, though precarious, down the labyrinthine face of another aspect of the mountain and nightfall

finds me hobbling along railway tracks leading to my destination in coastal Alaska.

Looking back on my adventure, I give thanks for several points of grace, much of which I attribute to angelic intervention - that my arm came back into its socket, that the rain, that constantly renders mountain faces treacherous in that area, held off long enough to permit my disabled traverse, and for intuitive guidance through my descent, all of which allowed me to entertain further chapters of my incarnation.

The adventurer's brush with death, as this week's Calendar verse asserts, is akin to seeking "strength to shape the soul worthily as a garment for the spirit." Awakening now to the undercurrent of the season, he can discern his obsession with independence as a weak link - like a person who feels a need to outwardly demonstrate autonomy due to a shortfall within, as opposed to developing genuine self-strength. In fact, he senses now that his existential duplicity is directly related to a dysfunction between his soul and his developing ego. There is a point of balance in this independence business. Neither seven, nor seventy-seven, dances with death will resolve the need for autonomy, without there taking place the inner work associated with the outer dynamic.

While in the summery stage of ascension, even when oblivious to what is happening, Destiny still plays its hand. In need of wholesome bearing, there will come a reckoning. Sailing the ethereal ocean with the captain of Spirit at the helm, up where the vessel of astrality lists heavenward, all things become possible.

Looking neither ahead, nor behind, but staying with a moment-by-moment unfolding, living in the arena of the elements, even as wandering wolves do so well, we make our way, and sustain ourselves within the formidable terrain found upon summer heights.



## **Week 19**

August 11-17

As wolf howling becomes more common, early migrators prepare to journey south - among them flycatchers, sandpipers, and some of the warblers. Now the aging of summer is graced by ferrous missiles, in whose wake rousing sparks of iron assail Morpheus, god of sleep. And in her celestial bedchamber, the Perseid shower begins to radiate lucidity into Lady Soul's slumbering dreams, for with the waning of summer's fullness, memory begins to take hold of an event impending at year's end, on the other side of the Calendar.

Water lapped gently on the side of the vessel, and he could just make out the muffled roll of waves a mile away on shore. But, enough of mellow bliss. Seized by an adolescent impulse to fly again, leaping up to start the engine, he grew impatient

as he struggled with a motor that failed to start right away. Not very rigorous in those days at attention to detail, as he channeled all his might into the pull-cord he failed to observe that the throttle was set on high. Ignition became a violent surge, tossing him into the lake. With cold water numbing, kicking off boots and flailing to keep afloat, the stretch of water between him and the shore lay out of reach.

However, racing in an outward-moving spiral, the boat just might offer a way out, if he could head it off before its orbit gyred beyond reach. Flailing toward the hurtling vessel, at the last second seizing the transom, he was able to shut the motor off and clamber aboard, shaken but grateful for salvation.

About twenty years later, a little older and a little wiser (though not by much, he readily admits), as he sat by a campfire, he reflected on the passage he'd just taken into northern wilderness. After a full day of paddling and portaging, he had made some short forays on foot the following day into the surrounding hinterland. But his time for ranging was limited by his work schedule. In fact, even as he calculated how long it would take to retrace his odyssey, he realized there was no possibility of getting out in time for his next shift.

He went to sleep resigned to his predicament, but awoke the next morning with fresh hope, as a wind with a fierce clip was gusting down the lake. Inexperienced at canoe-sailing, it took him a little trial and error to fashion a mast and crossbeams out of willows. But in short order, with tarp as sail and paddle for rudder, he found himself flying down the lake at a brisk pace.

Out on the foment, spray whipped off the caps, and his craft listed and heaved through valleys and peaks of a deluge growing ever madder. As he rode upon the rampage he estimated he could cover the lake in a tenth the time it had taken on his way in. He also reckoned, however, that under these conditions one slight error would land him in the middle of a lake whose average onset of hypothermia is clocked at about ten minutes.

Choosing not to dwell on danger, he exhilarated at merging with wind and wave in a glorious all-or-nothing charge down the frenzied gauntlet. Instinctively, he knew that it was in the very act of becoming one with those wild elements that preservation lay, that he must not only sustain the vigilance of a sailor on the brink, but must become the brink.

As the turbulence mounted, though all self-respecting members of the avian clan had long ago retreated under cover to weather the tempest, there appeared alongside a rather compelling creature.

The arctic tern, an aerodynamic wonder by any standard, with its deeply forked tail and long, angular wings, can transform into a four-dimensional surfer in the winds of chaos. Now, eyeing the unbridled sport of a mariner's adventure, the

tern celebrated mutual abandon in the face of squall and swell by diving into billows alongside his craft.

So swift and engaging was his traverse that before he could prepare for its climax he found himself crashing in a tumult of surf upon the lake-end sands. Leaping out and heaving the canoe out of the rollers, he gazed back over the furious marine tract. Reveling in the glory of the tempest, he felt a primordial communion with the power of an untamable storm spirit, a power, it seemed to him, that would become accessible in moments when he needed courage, in moments when life might require him to move through chaos of a similar vein.

- - My 17 year-old son and I paddle half a day and camp on the remote end of a northern lake. The following morning, as the chill gives way to the warming rays of an August sun, we break camp and load our canoe.

It's the first time we've gone fishing together in a few years. On our last venture, my son had caught a lake trout. However, being small, I had released it, only later realizing that it was his first fish and had actually been big enough to treat as a ceremonial catch. I had missed an opportunity to implement an important initiation, a life-passage to mark the function of food provision.

Now, though I am hoping for an opportunity to redeem myself in some measure for my inconsideration, we are on a promising lake that so far has not even born a nibble.

As we journey on, a quaking rumble sounds from a dark and solitary cloud atop a mountain across the lake. We find it odd that although the thunderhead billowing toward us does not seem big enough to emit a growl, it cannonades like a dinosaur. Halfway across the lake, as if to assert its potency, it unleashes a down-pour, sweeping a tremendous wall of rain our way. After a thorough soaking, the deluge ceases as suddenly as it began, the cloud passes on and, half its former size and as pale now as sheep's wool, floats off to join a flock of ivory mates docilely ranging in blue pasture.

Drenched by the episode, we can't help feeling that a force intent on targeting us had possessed the cloud. The atmosphere feels charged and, a few moments later, as we line our canoe along the shore, my son casts into the water, and immediately hooks a hefty trout.

This evening, as we roast trout garnished with wild chives, I cannot help wondering if we had encountered an elemental power in answer to my prayers.

Several years later, Week 19 finds the father and son on another canoe trip in a southern location. Night falling, a moonless dark far from urban light-wash renders a vivid and primal starscape. After letting the campfire go out, as they sit on the sand gazing up at their immortality, clarions of light begin to blaze across the deep in white-hot lines.

Though able to penetrate darkest depths, meteors are remarkably tiny, averaging the size of a grain of sand. It is in spatial magnitude that their true drama resides, insofar as they travel for an eon to fulfill their destiny in an instant. Star-born seeds, from blue-white birth to cinder-red death, for the duration of a second's passage they germinate the soul with deep-felt aspiration.

Under the spell of the meteors' surpassing enchantment, the father and son seek a broader view. But venturing out on the lake by canoe is like thrusting into an inky, bearingless realm. For his son, it feels a little *too* insubstantial, so they head back to shore.

There is a mysterious terror associated with a tractless realm, an immeasurable discomfort that can be elicited while adrift in a black and timeless void.

Unlike animals, who must obey the directive of instinct, we are blessed with an individuality of wakeful consciousness. We have a pilot within to steer our course. Venturing out on the edge with powerful elemental forces, memory strives to make harvest so that spirit can carry on through the next layer of soul work presented, whether it be a lesson in patience or respect for the gift of life, or about maintaining vigilance in the face of adversity, or trust in the divine forces operating behind nature's at times unfathomable elements.

In the hour before dawn, the most winter of inner moments, Venus rises to foreshine its Valentine celebration half a soul-year away. As the light of summer softens, and the season's trumpet gentles its brassy flare, a prelude is rendered to the sonata of autumn. Conception of the soul is made fertile, now, by the wisdom of cosmic order being germinated within the dynamic power of memory.



## **Week 20**

August 18-24

What host of angels parades on high, exposing divinity before the naked eye? And what symphonic masterpiece could frame this unpaintable wonder? Born of two tides, aurora borealis is a product of spiritual intercourse between Sun and Earth, as solar wind and the magnetic field of Gaia converge. Despite scientific research, mystery still prevails, for in its spirit-like soaring it seems a lamp burning across a metaphysical threshold.

Artist of light, Aurora may paint a caravan of gossamer camels sojourning across ebony dunes. Or a gallery of constellation pieces - veils flexing as fins of Pisces, or the bold mane of Leo ruffling in an African wind. Or the lights might soar as wings of Cygnus, or become the rippling brawn of Ursa, now cascade as etheric water from the vessel of Aquarius, or jewel the diadem of Corona.

Normally ranging at elevations from fifty to five hundred miles, the northern

lights are known to descend on rare occasions, as if intent on incarnating. A spectator, immersed in a maelstrom of color that races to and fro in dazzling undulations, can witness intense purple surging in a slow-motion roll, rose shimmering in one direction, followed by incandescent green scintillating in spirals, then dancing across center stage to mingle a pas-de-deux with throbbing blasts of blue.

Summer's outpouring, extending beyond furthest reaches, has turned to fold in on itself. A great in-breath has been initiated. If the human forum resides between the Cosmos and Earth, we are now in our natural element, as activity of both the upper and lower realms attains a state of balance. The seasonal counsel is to keep oneself from dissipating in either pole. And yet, as if to up the ante, out of the sulfurous extenuation of summer, the dragon of materialism begins to condense.

With our desire nature awakening, we are drawn to hedonism if we do not initiate a counter-balance with the iron of our will, as reflected in the gift of meteors from the heavens. Rudolf Steiner, regarding celestial conditions at this time of year, asserted, ". . . we see how against this ahrimanic desire-element, against this animal desire-nature of man turned inside out, as it were, in the cosmos, an opposing force is present. The force which brings the human being into subjection through his emotions, dragging him down below the human to the animal level, and is revealed in full summer high above us - against this a counter-force is provided in the cosmos. This counter-force is seen in those remarkable phenomena which from time to time fall to the earth as products of the cosmos and contain meteoric iron. . . We know, of course, that the human being needs this animal desire nature, precisely because he can only develop the forces that will make him fully human by first overcoming it. And we could not have this desire nature, this animalizing element, if the same animal desire element were not a part also of the cosmos. . . . the arrows discharged by the cosmos through space to combat this sulfurous element are concentrated in meteoric iron - in the meteoric projectiles, so to say, of the universe."

- - While hiking in west coast forest, I discover that I can stand to learn from the chickadees, now banding into larger social groups. Normally a highly gregarious bird, they will disperse during nesting season, but this time of year, with the young making their way in the world alongside parents, the chickadees re-group. The

cheery pipings and vivacious camaraderie of a roving band of these tiny gypsies prompts me to take time to explore social avenues.

Down the trail, as I rest sprawled upon the mossy bed of a hilltop, a young rose finch and nuthatch approach. They are hanging out together, these juveniles, exploring life through adolescent eyes, enjoying each other's company. When they encounter me, they peer down, curious about this being lying on the forest floor of their territory. The nuthatch, intent on a closer look, flutters within two feet of my face. Chirping and hopping closer, the rose finch strives, also, to make sense of this big wingless being. Buddies for now, these young vagabonds will soon part, the rose finch to join its kin in hunting for seeds and insects in the forest canopy, and the nuthatch to follow its own family's harvest of such fare as newly ripened acorns.

And a whole raft of nut consumers, including deer, squirrels, raccoons, blue jays, bears, porcupines, and chipmunks, will rely on the mighty oak's generosity of spirit. Akin to the iron strength of the oak and its acorn, there mounts within a steely resolve to meet the late summer summons, a call to over-ride limitations. To settle for the paltry destiny that the world panders would be to court death, whereas to identify with the Self that lives in full oaken power, at the other end of time's grace - there, where the unfolding of acorn aspiration takes place - is to embrace an ultimate self-empowerment.

Fealty to the soul precedes constancy in the life of the social realm. With the time of harvest looming, poised on the brink of prosperity, seeds of resilience to counter future austerity are coalescing within. Celestial elements are precipitating from the heights. In tandem with the manifestation of the aurora and meteors, essences of blossoms condense into compact units of life-code. Somehow, despite the August accumulation of summer heat, succulent flora resists baking, and scarlet birds with flaming crests find wings of new resolve. Now the will-forces harvest regeneration in the living fields of memory, a realm of inviolable spirit force.



## **Week 21**

Aug. 25-31

During this period of contraction, of coming to focus on the atomic level of genesis, seed-forces of individuation are forming, as the self prepares a navigation. And as the out-breath of summer gives way to the agenda of personal will, questions arise, strands of a weave, inspiration gleaned on high woofed to vision from past ventures.

More species of birds are busy banking calories for the long haul south. Maturing animals disperse from parental territories, including young foxes, skunks, weasels, ravens, and fishers. The impulse for change and movement begins to charge the late summer mood with a growing restlessness.

They are soaring in a float plane over thousands of pothole lakes and river channels, an arctic delta carpeted with swamp-loving labrador tea and swatches of black

spruce tilting in drunken poses. Even from eagle altitude, the labyrinth stretches beyond visibility.

Due to a logistical problem, fuel is low and, uncertain of reaching their destination, they cross fingers and hope to avoid plummeting into the watery maze below. Pale with trepidation, his partner crouches in the rear of the three-seater. With an innate fear of flying to begin with (not a natural flyer, she gets vertigo just licking an airmail stamp), her fear is bordering on raw dread.

He believes they have a good chance of pulling through. Even if the radio fails, they can use their canoe to paddle and portage across the pocked frenzy of ponds and river channels. True, it may take hundreds of portages, but they're young yet (well, middle-aged), and have some food (not much, but there are copious fish in the watery environs below), and they have time (chances are reasonably good snow won't fly before they reach civilization).

The pilot, seasoned in the ways of northern aviation, does not quail at prospects and, as fortune has it, they taxi in to their destination without incident.

Later, he reflects on how they each carried a different level of angst over their potential fate, yet all sustained a wakeful readiness to meet whatever card destiny dealt.

- - We are canoeing and trekking across light-swept tundra, so far north the summer sky remains starless for several months. The pale emerald stretch that surrounds us would be garish but for a softening haze that diffuses the abundant rays falling from on high, a light that pours across the arctic prairie unhindered by ground cover. All around stretches a micro forest of dwarf willow, alder, and birch, ankle-high timber blended with tiny shrubbery to create a living carpet atop the frozen earth. Austerity is the common denominator here. Quietly arraigining growth, and fettered by the imminence of winter's arresting clinch, the land nevertheless manages to ember a wakefulness to counter an inward swooning, a kind of stretching out across the broad and mossy dreamscape.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, two moose appear upon the empty tract. A combination of sunken creek bed and swath of willow towering a few feet above the neighboring plant life due to water-thaw had lent just enough cover for the moose. Exiting the creek resulted in a grand magic trick - the emergence of leviathan rabbits out of a tundra top hat. The days are numbered for these migrants from the forested area to the south. A harsh winter will show these invaders no mercy. Still, with ensuing years, new recruits will wander up from the boreal zone.

Another periodic tundra invader, the grizzly bear, remains unseen through

our travels. We find only the bruin's tracks wherever we go, even overlapping the polar bear's territory along the shore of the Arctic Ocean.

Downriver, we encounter yet another wayward ranger, a wolverine paddling with powerful strokes across the river ahead of our canoe. Fiercely armed, tenacious, a low-to-the-ground powerhouse, the wolverine sports coarse fur tinged with a grizzle, flaring like an emblem of its fiery nature. This rapacious warrior, which, upon darker reflection, brings to mind Cerberus, the three-headed hound of hell, is well insulated against the rigor of a severe climate. Within, wolverine power to the extreme can reduce one to dysfunction. However, carried moderately, it becomes an ambition not easily distracted.

Late in the day, in synchronicity with the ghostly silence of evening, a pale emissary floats across the pearl atmosphere, bearing a windswept epistle. Spying us wandering below, and pivoting on a wheel of sky, the snowy owl lofts over to assess our presence, its eyes widening as it circles above. Hovering a moment, reading the pages of our sojourn, it scouts our intent before floating off on a preternatural gust into the twilight.

Later, with our tent set and campfire lit, a first cast into the river strikes an arctic char, and we dine on the choicest fish ever to grace a menu. Arctic-pure, the char wends its way in rarefied currents, flashing the lustrous beauty of the trout family.

That night as we sleep, my partner's dream merges with the crystal current. In the mirror of her soul, she witnesses a school of char-people singing a chorus of Piscean melodies. The music rises from the rippling flow beneath the cathedral sky, ascending and falling in a waving rhythm, resounding with an eerie resonance, but imbued with a rapture that transcends any regret of coming head-to-head with the threshold of summer's dissolution.

At the hour of dawn, the woods are enlivened by a community of jubilating birds, demonstrating how every morning births a mini-spring. Chickadees, bushtits, kinglets, and nuthatches forage now in a composite group, ranging through every layer of the forest canopy, singing, hopping, and flitting, celebrating the prelude of a new day. Yet, in a short span, the mood swings to that of a subdued lull which, by mid-day, will reveal the true season now upon us - the quiet fervency of summer's ending.

While the sun waxes brassy and flaring and holy, dispersing the insubstantiality of the passing season, thinking, impregnated by cosmic forces and cresting now on whitewater light, begins to rein in the godliness abounding in the river of

summer. Nearing its delta, cognitive forces meander like a waxy ribbon, and the flow begins to eddy with the in-breath of the soul. Outer and inner worlds surge toward balance. An overnight rain has washed the atmosphere with an autumnal feeling and, little by little, burning away the mist of uncertainty, the soul moves toward its triumphal destiny.

Across the meadow, a few solitary crickets chirp, late musicians playing out the dénouement of a summer symphony. Above the grasses in which they resound, dark seed-clustered stalks stand, contrasting the blond meadow with a quiet still life. At the edge of the woods, a gray squirrel, perched mid-tree, wails in a strange cadence, like an exotic bird dirging a mourn of summer's expiration.



## **Week 22**

September 1-7

Summer's fire has consumed any metaphysical momentum prematurely initiated. Just as in the world of nature, where fiery blooming has sacrificed itself for the sake of the seed, so also are soul blossoms transfiguring. Seeds are generated, but only those imbued with Cosmic Will can attain fertility.

From the still pool of spirit issues nurture for the waking soul - patience, forgiveness, kindness, tolerance, compassion - the kinds of things in life that remind us that we are descendants of divinity, not animality, as the materialist notion of evolution would have us believe (which brings to mind the question George Carlin poses: "If man evolved from monkeys and apes, why are there still monkeys and apes?").

Arrested on a marijuana charge, instead of responding in a functional manner, in adolescent angst he reacted against the punitive nature of the legal system and continued his drug use. A year later, he encountered "by chance," a sage versed in the spiritual ramifications the use of drugs can have on personal destiny, including karma, reincarnation, and spiritual integrity (the relationship between the four sheaths - physical, etheric, astral, and Ego).

Ripe for such import, on an unconscious level seeking spiritual grounding, wanting to trade "zoning out" for spiritual discipline, during this decisive juncture of his incarnation he began to undergo a subconscious form of initiation, a process of waking up to the call of higher destiny.

Later in life, the pivotal encounter with his illuminated mentor would be corroborated, in more comprehensive terms of reference, by the research of modern anthroposophists. For example, in terms of the spiritual mechanics behind continued abuse of marijuana, how it erodes the will's striving and gradually wears down the etheric body, creating "holes" in its substrate that bring chronic anxiety requiring a lengthy period of remediation. The meeting with his mentor was a providential event that compelled him to curtail his substance abuse before it could do serious damage. Through struggling with life's issues, as this week's Calendar verse indicates, there ripens "the Self of Man out of the Self of Worlds."

- - In the throes of mid-life, experiencing an emotional churning, partly about grieving the loss of summer enchantment, partly due to leaving my beloved north-land (for my fifteenth annual migration), the transition feels too abrupt. Then, reflecting on what is triggering me and discerning how the land I look upon resides also inside of me, the wild northern aspect of my being is rendered accessible. But what it takes to experience the connection in an enduring way is a sustained shift in perspective.

Carrying the process further, it occurs to me that migration, contrary to the norm of living a stationary lifestyle, can be perceived as a more natural way of life than that imposed by the status quo. (Anyway, if we were meant to stay in one place, wouldn't we have been born as trees?)

Later in the week, relocated, roaming the land, I come upon a beaver pond. The beavers, aware of shrinking daylight, are increasing their stockpile of sweet birch and aspirinic poplar on the pond bottom. As they continue their diligent industry, I reflect on how the powerful will forces of beavers are directed away from

their small forepaws into sturdy webbed hind feet, and into the "fifth limb" of their powerful jaw. Pondering Spirit's blessings and pondering cyphered flow, the inner beaver builds a dam of intent and a lodge of ardor, creating a habitat of bounty in place of the austere conditions that prevailed before its presence.

On the other side of the pond I encounter a wild plum tree decked with remnant fruit. On the brink of declining into prune destinies, their skins hold in a sweet succulence. I pick and eat some, like candies on a bough, the last taste of wild plum until next year.

Nuthatches softly trumpet in brassy tones, pre-figuring the aria of autumn, wherein self-assurance and awakening ardor will strive to resolve the enigma of life, and conspire to create a harbor in which cosmic light may come to anchor. Rivers run shallow, the sun's rays decline. Veils of light diminish, their glare bronzing softly. While valleys deepen with gold and russet, and mountain peaks recede into a quiet haze, migrant birds dream of distant realms. Meanwhile, human souls weave individuality into the social fabric of the world.

Lady Soul rises from her bed. For her, as she steels herself to meet the world, it is the hour of early spring. And the world welcomes her return from joining the soul of Earth deep in the dreamscapes of high summer.



## **Week 23**

September 8-14

A quality of clarity pervaded the muted glow of the pre-dawn sky. Then, just before sunrise, accompanied by a dramatic flourish from the house of nature, he came into the world. As the birth contractions drew to their climax, the dawning light was over-powered by the rumbling of ominous clouds. Darkness, auspicious thunder and a concerted downpour lasted for a short span, immediately followed by a return to clear light.

The Calendar this week describes how dim veils of mist mingle with revelations of the light, a dynamic found in his son's biography. As he grew into his teens, though drawn to dark expressions like heavy metal music, he also embraced light aspects, a steadfast bearing, intelligence, a caring warmth, and an openness to cultivate friendships of a variety of persuasions. Often unaware of his potential to accomplish whatever he might set himself to pursue, like many young people he

was in need of self-knowledge and self-empowerment.

Here, as we progress into autumn's multi-layered timbre, like his son, the soul is poised between sleeping and waking while spirit prepares to deliver the range of experiences necessary to proceed further into wakefulness.

- - As the floatplane rises and banks west across an early morning sky, I look forward to arriving at my remote destination with plenty of daylight to spare. After clearing the valley, we pass over alpine tundra, a watercolor of red, yellow and orange painted in autumn glory of willow and alder. Here and there, a few dark green spruce trees counterpoint the sear of color, lone warders of conservatism that intensify the chroma by virtue of contrast.

At journey's end, we touch down on the bright waters of Rose Lake. Watching the plane disappear over the horizon, I begin to slip into the quiet tone that accompanies isolation. That the silence is modified only by soft sounds of water lapping and the flutter of aspen leaves in the wind, that I am blessed to lodge in a cabin set in rugged mountains - all conspire in me a quiet joy. Ahead lie five heavenly days of the aurous luxury of Indian summer.

By night, an emissary of the dark, the great horned owl, breaking the silence with the haunting beauty of its call, becomes my soul-companion while, during the day, it's an occasional jay, or troop of chickadees that grace my roster.

This morning, I awake to find the snow line has descended the mountains to the edge of the lake. Although by late afternoon it has melted back a thousand feet, I can sense opposing forces wrestling, as the weather alternates between gusty winds bearing snow-threatening clouds, and the bright, warm languor of Indian summer. I find myself reveling in both expressions equally: while the cool mood invigorates, the temperate nuance fosters a feeling of solace.

Lady Soul, rising from the opulence of summer's estate, and sensing the imminence of the wintry realm, was delighted to be awakening in the exquisite setting of Rose Lake. He spent his days hiking along quiet trails and lonely beaches, casting into pure waters for lake trout, and picking blueberries and cranberries alongside the rhythmic wash of waves.

One evening, as he returned in darkness to his cabin from a late roving, like two living marbles there gleamed from his flashlight a pair of amber eyes. A clos-

er look revealed the silky red, black paws, and sweeping tail of a crafty little canid brother, the red fox.

There's a folk tale of a fox who, infested with fleas, takes hold of a stick and swims into a river. Deeper it goes and the fleas crowd up on its head. Deeper still, and they converge on its snout. Finally, with all but the tip of its nose submerged, the stick becomes the only safe haven for the marauding band, whereupon the fox simply releases the device into the current and swims ashore free of infestation.

In a way, the metaphor conveys a strategy for dealing with the nuisance of addictions. Through fox-like cunning, if one's flea-like habits can be funneled into a single concentration, they can be released into the current of spiritual fortitude.

Now the atmosphere presents a mix of Indian summer glory and turbulent foreshadow of winter. The mood, pervaded by a cautionary undertone, is both a cherishing of summer legacy and a quiet call for vigilance around impending change. This is the mood of autumn, mounting the steps of its throne, when increasing sleep of nature's outward semblance overlays ever-increasing inner activity.

Now the temper of the soul steels its striving, as seeds destined for spring accumulate in the darkening earth. All the many layers of nature's flourishing recede, folding in on themselves, spent forms rescinding their biotic wealth to the passage of the season. A stillness fills the air, so profound as to become an anti-wind, a palpable serenity making the lake - even with its whitecaps, residual now from a gusting gone by - appear somehow quieter, gentler than ever before.

And just as suddenly as calm pervaded the once-blustery atmosphere, clouds roll in again and the wind rises anew. Feathers of migratory yearning embrace a mounting wind. A time of year is upon the land in which the steel of autumn counterpoints the delicacy of spring, its iron tonic pervading the soul with the promise of a galvanizing season.



## **Week 24**

September 15-21

- - During a long hike out of remote wilderness, instead of rallying the mindfulness that befits the season, I allow myself to be lulled by Indian summer, and pay the price for my inattentiveness by wandering several miles off route. The ordeal of bushwhacking through rough terrain to recover the right trail is a wake up call for being out of tune with the Calendar rhythm. Light fades as I bed under a spruce thicket instead of in the cabin I had been targeting.

However, with last rays of light seeping out of the sky and flickering from my campfire, I get a consolation prize. The howl, clear and lonesome, warming and magical all at once, coming from a solitary wolf on a nearby ridge, resonates paradoxically with both my solitude and my longing for a companion. Every creature has its home. Even the roaming wolf has a spruce thicket to bed in out of the weather. And for this night I am ranging through the timeless forum of my power animal.

The following evening, though I hole up in a barely tenable shack, the beauty of the alpine tundra more than compensates for the austerity. As far as the eye can see stretches a surreal landscape of willow and alder in a wash of red, orange and gold.

An hour before sunset I howl, and am immediately answered by a pack of wolves about two miles off. Then at dusk, while in the shack getting ready to turn in, about ten paces from my door the entire wolf pack lets loose a wailing chorus. With chills running up my spine I tentatively steal out, hoping to get a close look at my visitors. I can hear them quietly slipping away through the willows and, a few minutes later they howl from a hundred yards off in a tone that wavers between connectedness with me and maintenance of a feral boundary.

The Spirit of the wolf ranges in an elusive manner. Scientists' attempts with state-of-the-art technology can reveal only one face of the wolf. Can there be an accounting of wilderness in mere data, a means of quantifying this wild and charismatic companion by reductive measurement? If like begets like, how can we know the outer wolf without cultivating a relationship with the inner wolf?

The next day I hike onward, and my mood shifts to feeling saturated with the immensity of the terrain. By midday, weary of the long miles of seemingly endless passage, the experience is triggering a core issue. How often have I put myself in a landscape with a horizon unattainable? How often have I carried a weight too long, through too many obstacles? When does spirit call for ambition, and when for balance?

By evening, once more compelled to sleep under a spruce thicket, as I cook a late meal, night descends and an owl flies over, silent and curious. It flutters round in a muffled circle and returns to hover directly above, making eye-to-eye contact. I talk to the owl as I prepare to turn in. Back-lit by stars of a deepening sky, it repeats its circling ritual at least twenty times. Each time, hovering and probing. And darker the sky deepens as the owl circles and hovers, circles and hovers, questing to discover the quintessence of this wandering being, and causing me to reflect, while feeling the owl's silent query, *who, who - who are you?* - on owl energy inhabiting my own personal nocturne.

Without shelter or day-consciousness to fend off the darkness, my shadow seems readily accessible. What fears and insecurities can arise here? Is there a grizzly bear lurking somewhere in a dim recess of my being, needing communion or redemption? What anxiety wells when my daylight dialog quiets its prattle?

Facing the abyss, where light and dark eclipse each other, poised before sleep

on the rim of that indigo canyon, unknown terror or wild imagining can well up. There, in post-twilight ambiguity, the inner owl hovers, ready with esoteric resource to escort a would-be explorer through the harrow of the shadow.

As the birch withdraws its tonic force, and its leaves warm to a golden tone, the soul's affinity with angelic forces, woven and enlivened by the season-long rapport with summer, generates a counterpoint to the fading of the Earth's verdancy. Forums of discipline and questings of the intellect are initiated. Spirit is resolved to grapple with any power that would undermine sovereignty of the soul, such as, the rising dragon of hedonism foreshadowed now by a faint odor of sulfur wafting from a scarlet sunset of inner terrain.

Entering a juncture of balance within this month of Libra, the Scales, he finds himself poised between light and dark, Heaven and Earth. Summer has taught him that his origin is from on high, but autumn teaches him that the fruitful yield of his own being must be found within.

Nature's bounty upholds in all its multi-dimensional giving. Time will dress the wound of heart, and the heart will render the song of time. The chamber is still and filled with memory's ashes, with every doorway bound, padlocked by codes destiny has made off with. As seabirds loft over an ocean of unnamable savor, patience bides in an oaken rocker, rocking victory in its sheltering arms, though few of the world may witness, an oscillation as inexorable as the season's adagio. The setting of summer has become a river of gold, its twilight emberings portending the image of a galloping moon sweeping across a furious sky of winter.



## Week 25

September 22-28

Spent trees, decaying blossoms, and over-ripened fruit tell the tale, as nature recedes from the gates of sense. Shadow, held in abeyance by summer light, descends now on wings almost leathery, with a breath on ember of flame, and a countenance all but formed. Forces opposing Egohood condense, precipitating out of astral recesses - powers to meet and grapple with, and tame to allegiance of spirit.

The steel assurance of will pervades the inner domain. Faith overrides trepidation. V-formations of geese are beheld on high in evocative Indian summer moments. The blue-bird's post is vacant, its cheery tone withdrawn to a distant land. The song sparrow, for the most part subdued now, sings at odd moments - not its melody of jubilation, but a ghostly ode to a fleeting memory of spring.

In earnest, squirrels stockpile, mushrooms abound, migrators depart. There is a feeling of quiet urgency in the air. In his inner life, he grows more perceptive and inspired. And while he wonders how effective he can be at sustaining the dance of integration, despite the numerous distractions of modern life, rousing gusts of autumn begin to stir his

will to ardor.

Then, contrary to the mood of urgency, a sleek and whiskered otter bounds in and out of the charging waves of a lakeshore, its fluid momentum and carefree spirit provoking in him a question: If unfettered, if cajoled beyond routine, what kind of freewheeling does *the soul* long for? What kind of spontaneous play?

One of the most valuable principles he learned during his years as a Waldorf teacher was how academic development needs to be pursued in tandem with the other two arenas of soul life - feeling and willing (doing) - a consideration important for any age, and nothing less than crucial when it comes to child development.

According to Waldorf educators, the overly cerebral focus of mainstream education creates an atmosphere of oppression in the inner life of the child. Excessive intellectual activity at a young age, such as reading, they assert, subverts the child's optimal potential in the areas of memory, observation, and self-empowered thinking.

Anthroposophist, Bernard Leivegoed, cites how developmental oppression of the child leads to behavioral eruptions later on in adolescence. The problems of mis-developed youth need to be met before they rebound into what Leivegoed refers to as a "Luciferic path," in which the warmth and light of the soul becomes of a too-polar and illusionary nature. Misguided notions of development are in direct opposition to the message of the Calendar this week.

- - Feeling steadfast harmony with my starmate, communing with Lady Soul, I come to ponder what color of flower would best honor her. Shall I offer a white blossom, as a token to her purity, to her rising-dove hope? Or should it be green, in honor of her healing influence, for the spring she blooms in my winter-bound heart. Or gold, for the power of autonomy. Or again, red of rose, for passion. Blue, to reflect her expansive mystery that comforts and beckons, yellow, for sailcloth of navigation on the sea of mind, purple, for teaching, orange, for compassion, paisley, for unbound joy.

In the end, of course, as I draw near this awakening princess, I know it must be a flower of every possible nuance, a limitless bouquet.

Later in the week, cruising the West Coast on a ferry, I am visited by a leviathan, half of which I meet above the waves, while the other half I must find within, a being that resides in a quicksilver domain, an ecstasy, vast and liquid. Watching the sun paint its light upon the whale's breaching, I feel assured that no matter how great we become, nor how advanced in an art, nor how far we evolve, we can prosper from a gentle bearing.

It is said that a stone dropped in the planet's deepest water takes an hour to reach the bottom. And now, in this season of transmutation, while a stone plummets in the ocean of soul, where layer upon layer feeling life reels, the depth of belief is assailed. The challenge of being incarnated and experiencing, from time to time, the emptiness, the excruciation that arises, is countered by love's weave, by striving to bear understanding and joy into the world, forces to temper insecurity and melancholy, and to heal the weight of weariness that covers all the shining of virtue.

Through the fire of will nature's autumnal death is overcome. A softening light pervades the atmosphere. Growth processes abate. Grain has ripened. Thinking becomes easier and clearer. The physical and etheric aspects of nature withdraw their forces, compelling increasing entry into the astral, or soul realm.

Both the otter and whale demonstrate a vigor that matches the season, a time to counterpoint with inward fervor autumn's expiration, a time of overcoming nature-consciousness by means of self-consciousness.

Like a thousand whipping flags, branches gyre in gusting winds. Heaps of treasure acorns are gathered in hollows of trees while, around their trunks, mushroom eruptions create sudden villages of elvin habitat. The deepening silence is pervaded by the galvanizing aroma of decaying leaves, a silence periodically overcome by a mounting tempest that, in turn, fades back to silence. Like Vivaldi's *Autumn*, there is an iron rousing followed by a slow-paced melancholy, in resonance with the dying away of nature.



## **Week 26**

*Michealmas*

Sept. 29 - Oct. 5

As they prepare for southbound exodus, geese with copper backs and black stockings, strong of wing and gregarious, graze upon final shoots emerging from a chilled earth. Lofting above through smoky blue skies, their haunting beauty becomes a proclamation that a time of circumspection is upon us.

While the power and scope of the generalist belongs to the human kingdom, animals are the specialists, demonstrating the outcome of tangents that run their course. The horse, for a charismatic and seasonally appropriate example, embodies high-spiritedness in the face of hindrance and peril, and has a psychic aptitude for receiving image and feeling from its rider.

Now is a time when equine courage, combined with colthood memory, draft-horse endurance, and pegasus imagination make for formidable inner resources, qualities to implement upon summer's expiration, when a muddy-red dragon

emerges from a craven realm. With its warty countenance and coal eyes embering, reeking of sulfur and saturated with pyromania, it ranges across human astrality, spying out frailty in the underbelly of intention. Behind its shining façade, there exudes a pall of smog, as counter-images of luminosity and dinginess juxtapose the smoke and mirrors of materialism.

Now the human will through faltering integrity can fall prey, rescinding the soul's rightful destiny as a vessel of love. Having no physical and little etheric or egoic form, the dragon consists of an overloaded astrality, an intense, but uncontained emotionality demanding from anyone resolved to master its volatile nature an artistic poise of refined measure. Because dragon ferocity can only be transmuted by an evolved aspect of the Self, when meeting the beast, there are two possible outcomes. The power of its flame will either overwhelm the self, or the self will kindle higher forces to subdue and convert the dragon as an ally.

As depicted so effectively in Bernard Lievegoed's masterwork, *The Battle for the Soul*, the lifestyle of a "guardian of the soul" calls for resisting the hardening forces of the world, as well as active inclusion of the inner multitude gathered around the table of life.

Over and above these considerations, desires are legitimate, insofar as dedication to honoring what the soul is experiencing engenders redemption. In fact, as we discover, the deepest desires lead to none other than higher destiny.

An immigrant from the Himalayas, the blackberry, now attains its peak of fruition. While sweet berries are swollen with the sun's gift, saw-tooth leaves and thorny brambles remind pickers that life's harvest also has an abrasive side. The blackberry is a tenacious being, adamant about expanding its territory, with an iron-rich fruit resonant with the resolve of Michealmas.

In the earthly realm it is harvest time, but in the realm of the soul it is a time to sow for future harvest. Inspiration is readily accessible, and the will forces grow pregnant with creative urge. Out of this gestation there shall issue, in its optimum time, the spiritual infant, "the jewel in the lotus" that resides over the whole of the Calendar year.

Cleansing the soul of lower desire through autumn, the season of the astral body, prepares a way for spiritual wealth and grace to visit through the sacred nights of deepest winter. If base aspects are not spiritualized, there can persist a residue of darkness in the feeling life, manifesting as anxiety or fear, emotions that dimin-

ish the enrichment waiting in the goldfields of winter.

Spirit turns from the ways of the world to the depths of the soul where beauty wells. As biotic forces diminish in the outer realm, and autumn intones its dusky closure, deer grow fat on annual prosperity, and robins and red-winged blackbirds depart, carrying memories of their nesting ground and the long span of summer. And we will miss the robin's steadfast cheer, and the blackbird's brazen manner.

The owl that calls from the silent and holy center of the hour of dusk provides an auditory backdrop to the eurythmy of the soul's drama. The hawk's buffet begins to diminish, as migrating birds flee and rodents increasingly drift into hibernation. Beavers top off their storehouse to ensure starvation will be warded off during that last crucial month before spring's forces erupt the ice cover. And, in these days when the bear begins to ponder hibernation, and the cholera of the dragon rises, shifting outer conditions demand resourcefulness. Now the call appears to come from without. Six months away, it clearly issues from within. Poised at a place of balance, in the month of Libra, and in the middle of the year, equi-distant from the passage of Resurrection, the stillness and silence of the autumn mood - unlike that of early spring - is pregnant, not empty. For the stillness is found to be full of inner momentum, and the silence, filled with the song of pure gold.



## **Week 27**

October 6-12

*You form it to your service, you reveal the value of its substance in many of your works. Yet it will only bring you healing when to you is revealed the lofty power of its spirit.*

- Rudolf Steiner

At first, searching, and not finding, stumbling in the twilight, being the light, so not seeing it, the soul is like a star that beams across an immensity of space. Then, as solid as the contact of hooves upon the earth, malleable when heated, steeling itself into a given shape, iron's "lofty power of spirit" instills resolve to attain a true cast. And the soul, experiencing this ferrous arrival from meteoric heights, and tempering its striving, is braced inwardly.

And within the grounding world of nature, where autumn reveals its shadow in a startling way, hiding its darkness behind the sunny clime of Indian summer, then baring it with fervor in squalling winterish bouts, owl senses develop to con-

jure image and sound out of the dimming world. Leaves let go and coast, released from parent trees to drift home to the ever-compromising domain of soil. And over the fluttering confetti descent, the hooting sage beckons to look where shines, within, a florescence, uncontained and overlooked.

Birds call last warnings. Plants suspend their force, turn inward. Stumbling in the growing darkness, we are the searching beacon, striving toward an existential haven.

- - In the hour of the Scales, the poise of the crane centers the fervor of my aspiration, as opposites come to balance, pack and lone wolf, an ending and a renaissance, affluence and minimalism. Along with ventures in learning, I open "bud of powers of soul" through drama, radio show hosting, creative writing, and social activism.

At daybreak, as an eagle descended from the house of sun, I ride the season's turbulence. And through late morning, by the shore of a surpassing water, encountering a wolf cub cavorting with an otter, I savor their interplay until they part their separate ways. Then, noon finds me penetrating a forest of seclusion, to find a brook purling tones with a wren, a duet to transpose the ponderous, now a rousing, now a eurythmy softly enacted.

By mid-day, a flock of acrobatic crows invites me to oppose fear of free-wheeling, followed by a late afternoon brightening ensouled in the guise of a band of chickadees frolicking through sunlit spruce trees. And in the end, by day's closing, sunset unfolds a passage of dark and light, like an owl and hawk wing-by-wing that counterpoint each other, pulling twilight apart at the seams, so that gray must give way to full bright and deep dark.

And with the dispersed ethers of summer's wide vista funneling down, my soul feels quickened, the broad meandering of its riverine volition, as it narrows into a canyon, forming itself into an energetic current.

Increasing cold gels the circulation of the turtle, signaling the phlegmatic amphibian to burrow into its muddy tomb on the lake bottom until spring rebirth.

With heartbeat slowing, blood congealing, pauses grow more and more protracted between softer and softer beats, until only a gentle murmur is there, pulsing in the submarine mire. And the languid turtle will endure the lengthy winter through dreaming, only dreaming. Dreaming long, drawn-out reveries of sun and warmth, food and light, and plying lily-pad waters, dreaming long draughts of liquid memory and the unreeling of summer.

And high above the dozing mire, fire spirits ember hotly, as salamanders, freed now from the sun's paternal hold, flickering burning tongues within nature's soulhood, are igniting sparks in heated pursuit of pure creative forces. Likewise, air sprites, galloping free-mane in autumn wind, dry out decaying foliage, and strip withered leaves. Gusting, they stir the mind, quickening, raising thinking to Mercury's sweeping silver height. And water fairies, undines, recede from the intra-floral, dance within the season's sudden rain, and skip across the briny cold that rolls upon Indian summer sand, even while earthy gnomes engage in undersoul and underground, guarding seedheart magic, a potent alchemy of out-and-in-ward harvest. Now, released from summer enchantment, a whole compendium of nature spirits seeks freedom from narrow bounds, redemption in the rising human light.

Migrators clamor each morning, rustling feathers, entreating, *shall this be the day?* Yet they continue their rite, dawn by dawn, as if to never follow through. Then, on a morning shrouded in fog, they are gone. Only silence pervades the woods, with an occasional chirp sounding from out of the sublimated mist, as though an inward voice calls to cease the outward search for light so longed for. Now, a genesis free of encumbrance can unfold, along with a quest to subdue, ally, and refine astrality (emotional bearing), as far as possible - then ask the angels for help with what remains.

Through autumn, the accumulation of spiritual light permeates and rouses all interior terrain. Powers bloom like a spring garden: to Apprehend, by taking hold with eagle overview; to Foresee, by piercing flow of time, like a nectar-sipping hummingbird; to Empathize, by uniting with; to Stand Apart from, by discerning individuation; to Act Upon, as an osprey seizing prey from living waters; to Bide in patience, like a conifer clinging to cones for decades, awaiting optimal conditions.

And now the conundrum of shepherding the wild part of astrality arises: Through spring, contemplation served progress of the soul. Now the will becomes key. Numerous seeds of flowers have dispersed into the sleeping soil, into a grave-and-womb enclosure. And, as the account of autumn light recedes, crows gather en masse, as far away from nesting as the Calendar wheel turns, and set to lofting over nature's wide and varied terrain, mirroring the soul's persistence to stretch away at inmost limits.



## **Week 28**

October 13-19

Generosity of sun, earth, and nature's elementals brings provision to the orchard limb and vine, as the spirit of the land in a great spectacle of beauty provides parting gifts for table, hearth, and soul. It is an evocative time. Bridges to the past come to light. The soul is rising to take stock. Deliberate acts of gratitude connect external fruition with an inner spring cadence. So much provision bears to the world a sense of security, and surfeit prompts sharing, the heart beaming into the social forum. The deep reassurance born of fruition of the earth-sun communion goes hand-in-hand with how home for the human community, located neither in Heaven nor on Earth, is found poised between the two. Thus, prosperity created from the fusion of two poles is shown to be the crux of existential holism.

There is power in visualizing what is longed for having already come to pass. But hope and imagineering alone are not sufficient. This week the Calendar delves into how the fulfillment of longing is tied to the degree to which the true nature of

desire is comprehended.

In his heart, a question arises: when I am required to reach beyond longing to something more potent, can I rise to the challenge, or will I become lamed by the broken wing of hope?

As if in answer, he recalls how he was graced with a nine-year marriage to a charismatic woman born during this Calendar week. With an intriguing blend of Native, Norwegian, and Inuit blood, possessed of both physical and spiritual beauty, sociability, and an adventurous resilience, she had a gift for seeing both sides of a conflict, and a knack for adapting appropriate responses to meet shifting circumstances. The nature of his ex-wife's birth-week, as reflected in the Calendar verse, made for a tendency to step beyond mere hope.

As days grow shorter, and the night's roosting lengthens, young ruffed grouse are leaving their mothers and dispersing. Patient and methodical, picking their way through the forest, they map the mossy floor with their foraging. Buffered from the elements by downy composure, sheltered in boughs of forbearance, an inner moss-hen loads its crop with sweet-thought berries and conifer needle ponderings, grist for a soulful mill.

Loons gather with southbound intention, their backs rippled with patterns reflecting the image of water caught in a gusting crosswind, and their haunting wails echoing the loneliness that attends the season.

On this brisk autumn morning, as he roams a path through forest water-colored with a yellow wash in search of a photograph to depict the blazing tenor of the hardwoods, a band of seagulls circles overhead, their high-pitched *screes* evoking the tone of a sailor shanty, a far horizon sounding the sea's uncontainable sweep. Wheeling and crying, the flock gradually ascends into a pearl veil, one of many blurred edges now in nature.

Here and there, larch needles sift down upon the forest floor, their gold smithed from a long season of photo-combustion. While colors are softening, an iron focus is taking place inwardly. And in this gesture of containment, the soul now penetrates where it once passed lightly over.

Now, with the sky buffered by its searing veil of cloud, he experiences the music of breeze through conifer bough all the sanguine day long. Most birds have retreated, those that remain go about their business in a subdued manner. Waters shimmer gently, as if there will never come a freeze. In the distance, marauding crows call to each other, planning new mischief.

Eurythmy of color is staged in the forest, steeped in yellow, warmed by orange, contrasted by green, vivified by red, and lifted by the enduring gold of sun. And from out of this color-play bursts a lively band, chickadees who hop around, delightful, yet difficult to connect, to since they live within the marrow of an instant, an energetic bustle in a compressed and intensified now.

Spawning begins, brook trout in headwater, lake trout in the shallow of shoreline. Armored and slim, with a lively splash of color, chromatic scales, poised by the edge of a whirling eddy to sample the stream of offerings, within its aquascape the spirit of trout teaches trust in life's riverine surge and the gyre of provision.

From his journal: - - As I continue on the forest path, the Spirit of the woodpecker sends a downy emissary that alights overhead, arresting my attention with its evocative drumming. I pause to listen and notice how potentially photogenic a nearby setting is. In fact, it might even be the image I've been looking for all day, except for poor lighting. I pause a moment to observe the woodpecker, and when I turn to carry on, sunlight beams upon the setting. Thank you, woodpecker, such timing! If not for you, I would have missed this opportunity.

High-contrast apparel, sharp of beak and claw, a piercing call, flashing through the forest in angular swoops, the woodpecker cuts the reverie of autumn with its choleric presence. Possessed of a diligence that prevails over the severity of winter, it is like the rising light within - waxing, unfolding, and shining its beam upon every standing tree of the heart's grand forest.



## **Week 29**

October 20-26

Like a candle of the marsh shining fiercely, skirting ponds, brightening swamps, its regal bearing overlooks austere domain, wild, rocky, and boggy. Though a conifer, it sheds its needles, standing skeletal through winter and, come spring, pregnant with resurrection to unfold its jade fire.

Edward Bach, initiator of Bach Flower Remedies, discovered that a derivative of the blossom of tamarack, or larch, is effective for enhancing self-confidence, creative expression, and spontaneity. This is the essence of the interior tamarack.

And, as unsettled weather prevails in the wildlands, with a hawk-like turbulence swooping across the sky, and an icy wind preceding a slanting downpour, and the brook turning glacial cold, there congeals, within, clarity of perception. Striving to take hold, at this time when the axis of transition is at hand, has a significant impact on destiny.

As he explored the depth of Anthroposophy, his passage as a teacher increasingly assumed the form of an initiation, and he came to foresee that Waldorf Education could flourish on a grand scale, that current initiatives were like a handful of acorns dreaming of a great oaken forest. Holding reverence for childhood, working in conjunction with developmental stages, and catering equally to the three functions of the soul - thinking, feeling, and willing - genuine education would be at hand.

Mainstream schooling's debilitating impact of too-early intellectualization, such as early reading, operates in stark contrast to the level of nurture Waldorf Education can deliver, a powerful vehicle of social evolution that resonates with this week's verse, in that "the light itself of thinking kindles its own self inwardly and gives meaning to experience out of world spirit's source."

- - As a metaphysical traveler, journeying to many places and trying on many ways of being, crossing borders and encountering contradictions, I discover dualities I need to learn to live with for a time. Learning to accept myself, with all that that implies, it's as though the process of incarnation inexorably spirals toward an inclusiveness whose conception lies beyond the confinement of the mind's logic-oriented trappings.

Now, as I move increasingly toward wholeness, which of the many parts of the self will I choose to sit at the head of the table? Will it be the cougar, the wolf, the crow, or the swan? Or will it be the river, the mountain, the wind, or the pine tree? Or perhaps *puer eternis*, the eternal boy. Or the wizened old man, or the angel, or a shadow character (of which there are many, I readily admit). One of them can reside at the head of the table. The others can still sit at the table - none need be cast out.

Then, through due process, I come to understand that the one most effective in the role of captainship is the Master, or Spirit, or Ego - the Guiding Hand of the whole assembly.

Sweet sap withdraws now, draining earthbound through the heartwood of an ivory-barked tree. Gracious in gesture, the birch arranges its foliage in aesthetic perfection, goldenly upon dark twigs, fountaining from an elegant crown. In one of the most beautiful color swatches found in all of nature, its yellow leaves counterpoint the deep blue of Indian summer sky.

Because of its finery, the poet has christened the birch the *Venus of Trees*. Able to thrive in poor soil and harsh conditions, it is the most northern of hardwoods, found even, albeit in miniature form, upon high tundra. Sweet and life affirming, the birch roots itself in a winter-hardy niche of the soul, dwelling where moon ray refines resolve, and sap renders itself as an elixir of serenity.

Birch-like, but self-kindling, human thinking lights meaning into existence. The quest of spirit would go unfulfilled if not for Egoic presence. Hope, last week grown insufficient to meet the soul's encounter with its grand array, is opening out to a greater potential. Now hope takes on a new and more potent context, developing out of the deepening solace of autumn, as spirit wills an optimal state of being, a will force that refracts now as it passes through the inner prism, then resolves to clarity in the depth of winter.

Now, fattened on grubs and acorns, as well as the sweet apple and milky corn of human cultivation, the bear has stoked itself for its annual denning. For several days it wanders about in semi-hibernation languor, sinking inexorably toward sleep. Lolling upon a fir bough bed, with the furnace of its metabolism beginning to glow, astrality embers into long draughts of image, as dreams lumber through the psyche. With heart beating slower, pulse softening, deeper descends the beast into a darkened bower. And slower yet the heart throbs and pulse dims. Curled in its den, it wanders through a wild interior range, a slumbering animus forest, and slower still the heart throbs, and falls to the softest of murmur. Now the dreaming is made bitter by bear-root, now sweetened by the bee's amber honey. And breathing all but ceases as the bear soul-streams away, drifting on astral currents, steeped in remembrance of a summer-long sojourn.



## **Week 30**

October 27 - November 2

With solar light dwindling, a gleam falling soft and low in the south, the moon claims its sterling throne to reign over a winter-long kingdom. And upon this mid-moon-night of wild wavehorses ranging across an aquatic prairie, this hour of autumn gravity charging onto a deserted beach, he wanders inwardly, striding by his own sweeping lake along a cracked and broken strand of oblivion, with a mighty equine surf stampeding ashore, and transforming into frenzied waterfowl that devour his tracks with their dabbling beaks.

- - Now, like a wolf ranging between solitude and the pack, I find myself shepherding my individuality, even while incorporating other influences, avoiding camps at either end of the social continuum, sustaining originality, but only in keeping with

the flow of Spirit, through other people, other sources, the voice of nature, and the dynamic input of Intuition.

By week's end, my phoenix aspiration, rising from Scorpion ash, generates a flourish of creative will. Insofar as I am able to rally Michealic forces, anger, frustration, appetites - all manner of unbridled astrality - are met with unwavering certitude. And to the extent that I am able to transmute this dragon energy, I will prepare the manger of my soul for a Christmas genesis.

Kingfishers grow scarce now, a few of the river hermits lagging behind, their chittering call and undulating flight certifying that the spirit of a waterway is not contained by its banks. Patrolling the river, spearing fruit of icy flow, the blue and white monarch sustains its presence until a deepfreeze turns its wing to southbound wheel.

The hare grows fur snowshoes and paints its coat with cream to pour itself across the drifting winterscape. But a predator dons a white cloak, as well, in pace with the hare's transition. Within a wildscape of restless will, tiny but fierce, a dynamo darting and bounding, secretive, intent beyond its minuscule size, the weasel counters the somnolence of the season as it traverses across a bracing sweep of opportunity.

Now, while November grays down toward a winter grave, the light-feeding part of his being falls to grieving, while another part unfurls a wing of primavera, like the tiny round bird he watches in the upper reaches of a douglas fir, a downy pearl performing agile feats in the amber tone of sundown.

And in the morning he witnesses dawn, the goddess Aurora blooming petals of a salmon corona out of a calyx of purple cloud. And his soul, once languishing out beyond the sea's horizon, sails landbound, while waves, rolling across the void of enchantment, wash now upon the sands of his mindfulness. Cerebral gustings, quickened by fusion with Spirit, play the surface of the deep, bright yellow whirlwinds dancing impressions of intrigue and aesthetic finery upon the waterflat sweep, while the ivory gull, intuition, circles overhead in an epiphanic sky, wheeling on a quickening course.

As tracks of the soul imprint sands along the foaming, low-lying sunlight radiates softly off the watery main. Ashore, a glow enwraps a skeletal tree, like the folding wing of a great dove. Abruptly, the light glares into a profusion of beams bending around the arboreal contours, as it enwraps and enrapt, searing into the core of the beholder.

And in that moment of a treasure-hold burning free, an earthy gnome with an oaken heart bursts from bonds of summer-long service. And in that moment, also, while high overhead Orionid meteors shower down, there is a washing away of light's gloaming. And he, picking up Allen and Wilde, finds his harvest of thought nurtured by the countenance of Lady Soul, and self-assurance bequeathed by her smile, as he beholds the bright summer

that she advances toward, even while winter in the outer world wheels closer upon snowy wings.

The messages of birds have grown vacuous, the soulful swan is a ghosted memory. Floral brilliance is encased in earthy bulbs, the snail has withdrawn. Spring peepers have retreated to pulseless dormancy, and the swallow, long departed, celebrates a distant sky.

Across the road from nature's house, courage comes to bear and, enrapt with thoughtful clarity, feeling removes itself from former dreaminess, and enters into the inviolable realm of certainty.



## Week 31

November 3-9

Through the night, aqua pura, lustrous as salmon scales, falls shimmering, soaking, pummeling the earth like a thousand diving wings of tiny birds. Pattering through the forest, rippling the pond's black face, annealing all exuberance, the vapor condenses, amasses and effervesces within a milling cloud-herd, converging, roiling across the sky-prairie. And the swell, surging down, incarnating, softening the receptive earth, yet tempering inner life with a torrent of the greatest potion in creation, is called *rain*.

And with downpour's end, the morning light across the layers of mountain and cloud softens to a smoky wash, such that, come mid-day, the rising haze serves to augment the sun's rays into an over-welling glare. The week graduates from an evocation of nostalgia for summer to a mounting inner lucency.

Hiking a trail by the ocean, though he feels the shining and his vision pierce the mist, his ardor is abruptly shaken as he encounters fresh dragon tracks along the sandbank of an interior stream. Sensing the beast lurking with heated breath, aware of his every move and his wandering vigilance, he cautiously scouts his way forward, praying for courage, hoping to find a way to transmute this raw and craven astrality.

That night, he dreams of baiting a bull, and finds himself in the harrowing position of having to face down treacherous forces. Then, falling back asleep, tumbling once more into the canyon of lucidity, he becomes a deer hurtling full-speed through moonlit forest. Racing swiftly, leaping over logs, slipping through underbrush, each time his black-diamond hooves strike the dun earth they spark like flint. Wrapped in a tawny cloak of sandstone pattern, legs thin but sinewy, he feels his power and swiftness. And as he races on, attentive to every sound that emerges from the veil of night, his pace becomes relentless, urgency mounting to an unbearable quivering until, in a sudden act of self-abandon, he leaps headlong into a pool of lunar rays that overwhelms his consciousness with the paralysis of its silver and hypnotic regency.

- - While the tempestuous mood of autumn falls over the sea-vast ecosystem of the Great Lakes, canvassing for Greenpeace to raise funds and awareness door-to-door, I find too few of those who have their lives enriched by these five watery jewels willing to take up the cause of guarding their shorelines.

Being the season of the will, I am learning to cultivate a reptilian hide against rejection and, even more daunting, how to persist in the face of the most dominant mood, a morass of indifference. How is it that the materialist in us, oblivious to self-annihilation, fails to discern that prosperity is inseparably linked to enhancing the Earth?

Through the morning, marauding crows convening in communal roosts, waxing bold and raucous, can be seen berating the hawk for his hold on the throne of sky. And by mid-day, a cold November storm is soaking the forest, autumn winds loosening the dwindling foliage, leaves swirling down, scuttling across the ground, and settling into clumps and drifts. And as the storm rises to a crescendo, dark pelting rain begins to dash through the threshold that leads beyond this world, bursting into light beams on the other side and, as it passes through the gateway between matter

and spirit, the cold of the driving wind wafts into a raying warmth.

Meanwhile, outside, the icy wind roars and swoops, flailing the crowns of trees, rattling windows, awakening would-be sleepers. The flurry, the restless sweeping and scouring of a first of season hurricane, becomes a wildness that initiates passage beyond the tame and mundane into an increasingly charged and exotic forum.

By week's end, through the whirling flakes of the first snow to visit the eastern hardwood forest, he comes upon a covey of chickadees and mourning doves grouped together. As the doves rise up in their coppery garb, he is enamored by the tiny zydeco bellow music of their wings. Gentling the moment, the grace of dove counterpoints the effervesce of chickadee. Amid the swirling snow he calls, and a chickadee responds, hovering within two feet of his face in curious wonder. The birds, unalarmed by his presence, seem pleased to meet another being out in the inclement weather.

Now, like a vault of darkness looming, winter's countenance deepens. But from the autumnal womb, a growing light bears its genesis. The great community of plants disassembles itself. Inward exploration proceeds. The dreaming of the bear augments. Etheric forces have fully withdrawn into roots and bulbs and the encoding miracle of seeds. Astral forces are roused and wakeful, as feeling life transfigures to render itself fit to wed with life's grand masterpiece. And egoic forces incarnate further, interfacing with whatever array of aspects is presented by the other three sheaths of the human constitution.



## **Week 32**

November 10-16

His grandfather planted a seed, which the Earth embraced and used to form itself into a being of symmetry in an upward lifting gesture. Eighty years later, with the autumn sun lighting the brassy maple, golding its leaves to proclaim eternity in the face of impermanence, he picks a yellow leaf with a blush of rose on its tips, a two-dimensional architecture capable, only a season ago, of profound chlorophyll synthesis. Now the hardwood, having drawn its greening magic down into the harbor of its core and roots, guards its vital force for the passage of winter, leaving behind an aesthetic treasure.

Weighing options, the value of a lengthy courting stage, of giving time a chance to blueprint the stability of foundation into intimacy, it seemed to him that some of his

romantic partnerships were true destiny, meant-to-be-in-a-full-relationship connections, while others would have been more appropriate as friendships. Popular culture, rife with quick-consummate relationships, rarely depicts individuals opting to build a strong foundation through a prelude of prolonged friendship. Just as the wisdom of wintering trees, holding back forces through a season of gestation, cultivates optimal conditions for the glory of spring, the true bearing of his being aligns now with the Calendar verse, in that Selfhood is being empowered to "find its way to clarity in life's web of destiny."

On Remembrance Day (which he chooses to honor by recalling skirmishes in the "battle for the soul," as opposed to outward military histories), he attends a big band event. There, he meets a woman who, like a flute countering a dirge, demonstrates in her bearing such uplifting warmth that he finds himself enamored. Recognizing the event as an *inner* resonation, he does not act on the infatuation. Longing to become, like this woman, a virtuoso, his authentic recourse, he feels, is to seek understanding around the muting of his love, how he descends to dissonant connections with others.

Then, pondering his last relationship, an alliance in which his partner believed he should give more to the world despite mounting burnout and a need to hold back, he feels caught in a dilemma. In the end, he comes to a place of wanting to balance the *whole* ensemble, to honor the dissonance as well as the melodic, to orchestrate the full range of his soul's dynamics.

- - I range through a quiet forest in search of a distillation of late autumn. A red squirrel, trailing providence, is busy storing nutmeat gems in the sleeping soil, some of which will lie forgotten, sprouting future summer affluence. Diligently, the squirrel prunes the great conifers and care-takes the forest, inadvertently cultivating an arboreal genesis.

As I wander onward, I encounter a gray jay and its mate gracefully slipping through the trees, coasting fan-sail across a clearing, calling to each other, maintaining a dispersed scouting formation. Gentle and ghost-like, angelic and specter-ish, as little avatars they range through the soul's forest of solitude.

When the jays depart, the forest grows increasingly silent and profoundly still, until out of the velvet serenity there wells a light-rhapsody of a hushed but resonant composition. And through the still aquarelle I hike onward, hour on end, while a white haze washes in, buffering the forest, the spell of silence broken only by a solitary birdcall, or a squirrel's sudden chatter, stark and needly like the pines it lives upon. In this evening season, with outer light ever dimming, it looks and

feels like dusk all through the day.

The following evening, the temperature drops and the wind sighs of snow. Resolutely, a coal-black squirrel carries a wad of dry leaves along a web of branches, padding a winter nest high up in a beech tree. The trees are bare now, with here and there only a scattering of brown leaves clinging with stubborn resolve, like little children who refuse to go to bed.

Mounting lucency of the soul goes hand-in-hand with the increasing silence of autumn. The saffron canopy of maples presides as a bright but tenuous veil over the decay proceeding below. In the face of the season's counsel to maintain distance from nature consciousness, wild birds become speculative, and draw near, responding to a quiet mood of reverence. The color green, toppled from its verdant throne, recedes, as chlorophyll's reign becomes a memory. The currency of leaf, impoverished, retains only deflated stock in its portfolio. Last turns of Indian summer still hemline back and forth, deliciously warm but brief, dogging along for perhaps a day or two then, in true bear fashion, tumbling into bankruptcy.

A brisk northern wind stirs the lake to whitecap, and wild surgings roll land-bound, as a gull mounts the rising turbulence, steering on pinions, braced and riding. Partly to scour the churning broth for tidbits, but more there to play, it revels in the chopped strata, from the rhythmic, pounding vehemence of surf on up to cloudhigh bluster, like a Mercury figure vaulting the barrier between the world and spirit, winged feet above the topmost rim of earthly perception.



## **Week 33**

November 17-23

With rutting season over, the moose ranges the lowlands, striving to put on weight to meet the stringent conditions that lie ahead. Spring water surfacing no longer warms but sustains its subterranean chill. Though life is clothed in death and decay transpires, energy builds out of austerity. The sky, hazed with a tusk-white wash, fills all the space ransomed from nature's dissolution. Here and there, a few songbirds hunker upon bare branches. Aroma of leaf mold pervades the air. On the ground, dry leaves skittered by a sudden turn of wind scamper a final jig before giving way to inexorable decay. Beyond rumination and stark revelation, through final sighing breaths, past folding wings of striving, a doorway opens. A few slothful urban starlings huddle over a chimney, savoring the thermal upwell, oblivious to noxious fumes rising from the belly of a furnace. The etheric force of nature is all but withdrawn, compressed and charged on the molecular level with atomic power. Gentling the song of light, the brass of day grows dull, the gold of dusk is shroud-

ed, and the silver of dawn quietly holds back its sterling beam.

Within the cavity of a venerable oak, wild honeybees are slipping into semi-dormancy. Warmed by thousands of vibrating wings clustered around their queen, the hive is stockpiled with an elixir of gold that sustains the bees until spring, when honeyed blossoms will restore the treasure-hold.

Upon the limbs at the crown of the gnarled oak, a few remaining leaves rustle in the sighing wind. But the gentle sonata of their whisper is abruptly countered by the staccato retort of a band of crows sailing over in the blue vault. The crows, deployed in their autumn ritual of roosting en masse, disperse into reconnaissance brigades by day and reconvene at night. This morning, a piecemeal convoy is patrolling its turf, a stretch of terrain between highland and sea, as it makes its way toward its daytime niche. As the last trailing crow disappears over a hill, a blurring streak plummets and banks. It is a sparrow hawk, diving to repel another small hawk. The two mini-warriors oppose each other, contending for the local crown of hawkdom. The winning jousting will lay claim to a small kingdom of wood and field harboring prey sufficient to sustain it through the winter. The combatants swerve and bank in a flurry, until the sparrow hawk finally drives away its competitor, who flies off in search of less hostile pasture.

Meanwhile, chickadees and nuthatches, on the brink of their wintering stage, flit around a bird feeder, vying for sunflower seeds, ideal high-power food for the cold months. The choleric nuthatches bluster away at the sanguine chickadees, who initially retreat but persist, getting theirs every time a nuthatch flies off to stash a seed.

- - Increasingly conscious of challenges, seeking an eagle overview and courting balance, I do not want to go off in a frenzy, like the belated squirrel who, loitering through Indian summer days while industrious kin packed away provision, suddenly awakens to his precarious state. Last minute scurrying to resolve long-standing issues, I feel, can lead to resolutions lacking synergy. Besides, when meteors flash overhead, I want to identify with their blaze, not the spent hulk of their burnout.

I initiate daily meditative discipline, using an Anthroposophical approach to refine the interweave of my fourfold layers (physical, etheric, astral, and ego), and remedy the negative impact that modernity affects on consciousness. Overall, the week seems a time to suspend resolution, a time to deepen awareness of issues

before acting upon them.

Undulating in briny currents, the red film of laver, the thin green of sea lettuce, the olive-brown, tubular kelp with its medusa-ribbon crown, have been torn free by the first tempest of the season. Heaped in sporadic piles upon the shore, the gardener gathers a mass of the gelatinous seaweed imbued with valuable elements, including a trace of gold known to help the human constitution retain youthfulness.

Meanwhile, the wind gusts anew over the cold and salty compass where dwells a mysterious Presence, a perpetrator of grand rhythms whose countenance now shines bright, now falls profoundly shadowed. Even the color of the ocean defies containment, resting one moment deeply green, the next receding to icy blue, then in turn reflecting the gold of sun, the platinum of cloud, the silver of moon, and even, be it ever so faintly, the diamond beam of distant stars. Then, with morning, the rose of sunrise washes across the void, and gradually recedes until, once more, daylight emerald returns to its marine home.

Across the sea of untold tales, a living mythology stirs, as whitecaps charge, spewing surf in wild abandon, a crazed stampede hurtling toward shore, while dark clouds cover the dome above, except in southmost lie where light sears whitely, burnishing a silver patina into aspiration. The egotism of humanity can rise at most to worldly glory, like a gusting wind under cloud, darkly moving. Far unlike the light of spirit, a destiny falling futile.

With the world dependent on human spirit to create itself anew or else fall cold and lifeless, truly meeting a landscape or animal engages the wizardry of the soul. An inner rascal cavorts with the otter. An inner virtuoso sings with the songbird. An inner nomad ranges with the wolf. Inner beings work, strive, wander, soar, and compose a magnificent array of expression in resonance with outer relations.

And the wind whistles, then roars and buffets, through an interior alpine tract while, out in the world, the mountain's spire cantillates its dulcimer harmony. And down by the base of the mountain, where spirit tumults against a craggy bluff, an inner fervency swells. Over the sea a light shines, over the sea of soul. And the soul, reeling in trepidation, would to the dragon go down, but out from the light a charger rides, outpacing the furious wind. Over the wildsome sea it rides, while the soul ebbs and washes, and the sea rises and falls, and all the while the rider speeds, churning the sea beyond measure, and transmuting the vast and holy chalice of its untamable agency.



## **Week 34**

November 24-30

While etheric energy pulses sluggishly through the Rocky Mountains, gnome-ish elementals go about the business of tending seed and soil. Snowpeaks tentatively expand and retreat as the meltline falls then rises. At lower altitudes, animals are busy harvesting the last of edible matter strewn upon the ground before the snow blankets all. The blue of sky has a crispness to it, the cold, an immediacy. While a wakeful vibrancy charges the air, within, blood warms and circulation increases to counter the congealing force of the external world.

Thinking continues to elevate to a clear and present mindfulness, as it penetrates veils to core truth. The world of nature is dependent on death - without the cycle of decay to regenerate the foundation, new life could not unfold. Winter,

swooping across the land on wings now sovereign, proclaims austerity, although for now the foray is temporary, a foreshadow of an ultimate siege.

Rose hips are the sole remnant of a once colorful parade of flowers scattered along the shore of a lake, no longer boundless, circumscribed now by ice formation. The containment mirrors the soul's condition, which asserts boundaries now to orchestrate particular aspects from out of its grand multiformity.

Later in the week, King Winter, storming down from the north, seizes the mountain peaks, and prepares to escalate. Upon a glacial throne, wrapped in hoary cape, as he confers with his lieutenant, Jack Frost and his scout, North Wind, ice-blue eyes burn under a snowy mane, and above his icicle beard waft frosty exhalations. Now, as crystal beads freeze upon the knotted brow of his resolve, none shall escape his will. Deploying his Ice Giant troop, with frostbite tactic and blizzard assail, the winter regent vows to lay waste the lowland and imprison the flowing river beneath an ivory stronghold.

While he was experiencing an integration dream in which he journeyed with a woman and child through a construction zone in a dark landscape, destiny was setting the stage for a rare life event, referred to in Anthroposophical literature as the "circumvention of the Guardian of the Threshold." And, although he was in need of a significant trigger, a catalyst came his way through a painful but intense healing modality.

"Neural therapy" involves surface hypodermic needle injections, using small amounts of an organic anesthetic along meridians and into scar tissue. It is essentially a kind of acupuncture, but to an exponential power (and he doesn't want to recommend it to anyone because, once they are going through the ordeal, his name will arise on their lips as a curse).

The outcome of this circumvention was a quickening of consciousness and insight into the spiritual progress of his life, an overview that revealed how his primary relationship, now rife with dysfunction, was generating uncertainty in the validity of what he was experiencing. In turn, the negating of his faculty of sentience was relegating him to a directionless void. He felt stuck, and unsure of what he needed. In a word, he felt obliterated.

The Threshold event, however, drew him out of his stagnancy and affirmed the validity of what he was feeling. A year later, his relationship over, having completed the most intense passage of mid-life, he has come to a place in his biography

from which he can give thanks for the overall harvest, the gain from grief as well as gifts, and feels grateful for inner wealth that has accrued.

- - It is an overcast November day, and I am walking on a soft cushion of conifer needles through west coast rainforest. Here, where the sweet aroma of cedar merges with the savory tang of decomposing leaves, the silence of nature renders space for reflection. As I roam the forest, I ponder how we of the modern world all too often speed around in quiet desperation (how little has changed since the time of Thoreau), and I discern how I have choices regarding such harried living. I'm examining how I fill my life with distractions to the point where I succumb to the belief that I have no time to spare, and resolve to make room for venturing, for exploring this gift called my life.

Here, on the West Coast, seasonality lags. Some leaves still remain on alders and greenery persists in the thickets of salal and fern that cover the forest floor. Winter never fully arrives, and I feel compelled to go on a journey, a foray into the interior in search of the true season. Is it wanderlust, or spirit-inspired motivation? Knowing me, it's likely some of each. However, a nagging fear arises when I consider spending the Christmas season as a lonely wanderer. By the time I come out of the forest to the shining sea and meet the tide's ceaseless surge, I resolve to keep an eye on this fear, and on my urge to trek, which ebbs and flows with a running tide of its own.

Outside, an atmosphere of saturation prevails, as rain pelts down under a thick mass of cloud. Inside, beyond the Threshold, there is a contrasting aridity. Here, a brilliant yellow spirit-sun shines in a soft blue soulsky, over which starlight penetrates despite the daylight - eternalities arrayed such that wherever one roams a means of navigation is assured.

The communion of Sun and Earth forces through summer is now stored and transformed in the Earth, and in the soul. Preparation is underway. Forces and gifts gathered from the cosmos are now metamorphosing, as spirit combines them with "outward labor" to enhance individuality and clarify the path of destiny.



## **Week 35**

December 1-7

In his late thirties he acted in a play written by Samuel Beckett that casted only two characters who, if reading the lines without pause, would finish in about 10 minutes. Yet, the performance ran for a full hour. Through this minimalist drama he was learning much about silence and filling pauses with dramatic content, about subtle timing and subtext, and how very powerful, like this time of year, can be the empty space that lies between outward events.

Pausing now, in his navigation through the script of incarnation, the Director instills in him an organic approach, a method-acting blend of granite resolve and charisma. The curtain call goes out, the house is dimmed, the understudy of spirit lights the premiere candle of Advent. Over the next four weeks, the four kingdoms each take a turn staging a segue to a coming birth.

The first week, Act One, spotlights the mineral kingdom. The answer to the

question, "What is the true nature of matter?" sheds light on how the genesis of spirit resonates this week within the physical body. Next week, an etheric question is posed. The following week will comprise an astral study. Then, upon the apex of Christmas, matters of the human, or Egoic realm, shall preside, as signified by the birth of a dramatis personus whose destiny became a turning point for humanity.

I am in a meeting with a bureaucrat, weary of jumping through hoops to qualify for funding. The official, in controlling mode, tries to push me into repeating a step I feel I have already more than adequately covered. By now I can see through the façade of the program. They are padding use of their services to enhance funding, as opposed to facilitating the optimal unfolding of ventures. I refuse to comply, and end up having to drop out of the program.

Later, a part of me wonders where my sustenance will come from now that program funds are unavailable. While I feel good about taking a stand for what I believe is right, I am also hoping the demonstration of integrity will somehow pay off. I am hoping that, through overcoming temptation of material concern, I will be able to penetrate to spiritual considerations, which, in turn, will bring more meaning to my overall sojourn.

During this Advent week, the minerals are enhanced, alchemized on an atomic level. Matter, inanimate, yet driven by forces, by the wind, and of the wind, *becoming* wind, or cloud, or water, hums with Spirit. With each electron comprising a black hole, a minute threshold to the fourth dimension, arranged in molecular patterns of exquisite design, the foundation of matter reveals a creation of godly intent.

Hardened, excessively incarnated, matter responds when touched by part of the human will with a talent for awakening hidden potential in its benumbed stoniness.

Gold gleams as it sings of spirit. Iron warms, tin shimmers, silver radiates, lead drones, water dances, and calcium intones. Carbon remembers its etheric past, and precious metals recall their cosmic origin.

And while granite gazes lidless into the heart of maelstrom, and the weathering of a hundred thousand tempests merely renders it to refined sculpture, gemstones, the royal entourage of the mineral kingdom, become vessels in which chroma, light and elegance incarnate. Formed by wizard alchemy, gems model the destiny of souls. Upon the forge of the gods, Vulcan imbues power, Venus imparts

beauty, and Mercury delivers quickening. The spirit of Ruby lights a flame of passion. The Emerald gnome models constancy. The Sapphire elf intones enduring peace. The re-configured rainbow of the Opal patterns transubstantiation of the lower astral into a higher form. The spirit of Diamond holds to purity through infinite reaches. Even common crystals become hexagonal flowers when seen through the eyes of spirit.

The shore has gone leafless and browning, interspersed with the quiet red of willow, and nests woven in spring now lie exposed in the crooks of branches. Wild grape has become dun vine laced in brush. Once brightened by the melody of songbirds, it now trails coppery stems and bits of remnant, iron-red fruit.

Over and above the pale terrain, the red-tailed hawk patrols, with pages of the rodent community spread below, book-marked at a winter chapter. And the hawk, power-reading with imperial eye, adjusts for an optimal strike.

Across the surface of the lake, water molecules expand, heaving into crystalline structure as the temperature drops through the night and lake edges swell into ice. By mid-day exposed stretches will break up, but sheltered areas and shorelines will remain frozen. Gradually the ice expands toward the center until only a small segment remains, kept open by lingering waterfowl. In time, the whole lake congeals, temperatures plummet, ice thickens to self-insulation, and snow descends to finalize the fortification.

Now, the surface of the lake has whitened under duress of the aging season. Fluid has grown solid, wash has ceased, trickle has been silenced. Within the fastness of the lake, now waveless and dim, currents are propelled solely by inflow of creek or flexing of fin. Somnolent fish drift, unlabored of purpose. All action is bound in a torpor of sedation - muted, silent, frozen in ice and time.



## **Week 36**

December 8-14

In these winter depths, sentience seems closer than hands and feet. Seeds, etheric galaxies contracted to a pinpoint, dream sun-infused blossoms. In northern climes, akin to Mercury under restraint of Pluto, the otter, drawing breath from bubbles on the ceiling of its icy domain, is now only sporadically visible.

The long silver night of the wolf is upon us. Patterns of animal drama weave feral scenes in the snow, lines rehearsed by instinct, delivered on an icy stage to a sleeping audience of birch and pine. Enchambered in wintry fastness, the heart bears light, resolving contradictions generated by the mind's inability to elucidate the subtler regions of the soul. Birds are nestled for a lengthy night in leafless trees, silhouettes stark against remnant western light, beyond whose dusking veil spirit lights a candle of feeling.

In the Earth, wintering seeds are suspended, a tableau harboring a universe of

drama, a gallery of floral artwork, panoramas of shade and hue and streaming color, a portal to a grand fiesta come spring.

Through summer, thrusting sunward, drawn forth by solar force, plants formed a bridge between the mineral base of Earth and the astral realm of animals. From tiniest rootlet to fairest petal, regenerating itself unto highest attainable reach, the floral kingdom uplifts thought and emotion by modeling masterworks of lofty aesthetic expression. On behalf of the plant kingdom, lighting the second candle of Advent ritualizes another step of interior resurgence. Now, our awakening etheric body resonates with an inner Bethlehem. A re-ordering is underway.

From lichen and mushroom, fern and horsetail, through cacti, on up to the mighty redwood and giant sequoia, the etheric energy of the Earth, invested in the plant kingdom through summer, pulsing in the core of great trees and within the roots of once verdant plants, is humming with transformative forces.

And in the fervor of its genesis, the Earth Spirit directs a question to the heart of the human kingdom: Should the plant safeguard stagnancy, be satisfied to remain as a stalk, or is it compelled to flush out leaves to create from out of the higher function of its being a crowning blossom?

- - An acquaintance complains of how she is weary of the gloom of winter. The notion that the soul can rise, wakeful and shining, while nature descends into its dark period, she insists, is only an "interesting theory that doesn't work" for her. From what I can see, she has been uniting herself with nature's outer form, instead of counter-pointing with her inner life. I give thanks for how awareness of Calendar dynamics helps avert "cabin fever" through the winter.

I am out on the edge, meeting fears, giving poetry readings, and teaching watercolor painting. I know the method I am teaching is potent, but feel hobbled by an anxiety-bound *self-ness* issue. The catch-22 is that my condition needs a stronger sense of self, but I cannot attain that without deepening my relationship with the world, without sharing what I have to offer. The dragon would have me resort to egotism, but I would rather Ego than egotism. I elect to continue living out on the edge of exposure to fear-inducing situations while inviting spirit to contend with the fear.

Rangers of moonlight, the animals' sun, begin their wandering through the night of

astrality, inhaling its sterling potion, while in every direction a cloud presses down, grayly, the final moments of daylight. And yet, out on the horizon a warming glow mounts, subdued but stirring in its counterplay of the impinging darkness, for it is where darkness predominates that light attains its most powerful expression.

Illustrious magpies search the roadside for sustenance, while human revelers raucously party. Shop-aholics consume and spend. And the magpie plunders beside a lethal avenue of hurtling vehicles. The spiritual dis-eases of Christmastide - acquisition, and stumbling about in a "stunken drooper" - he sidesteps, bearing gifts of nature, seashells or wave-sculpted bits of driftwood, and re-gifting what he receives. And his drinking he keeps very moderate. (There's nothing wrong with drinking like a fish, as long as you drink what a fish drinks. . . )

One evening, upon a hilltop he sits, playing his harmonica and gazing out across the snowy hills clad with conifer and cloud and twilight. The chords of the instrument counter the muted light with a brassy warmth while, in resonance, across the darkening wilderness a few human dwellings glow incandescently.

A few days later, he is seated in a cathedral, a grove of mammoth fir trees. Humming through the giant pillars in a tone of silent vitality, the Earth's subterranean drone is graced by the squeaky notes of a solitary kinglet upon a scepter twig in the upper canopy.

With the duet overtuned by the bell-chime of a cheerful creek, the air bearing scent of fresh snow, and a few juncos giving quiet voice to the closing hour of day, he feels succored in a cocoon. And in this cathedral, this holy place that quickens, his etheric voice intones, his etheric ear opens to a proclamation, his etheric eyes begin to shine, and his etheric heart warms.



## **Week 37**

December 15-21

It is *astral* week in the Advent procession, a forum in which animal personas have their own distinct qualities intensified across the breadth of the soulscape - ranging from super-conscious eagle height to the subliminal undersnow world of mice and voles.

At the same time, in the house of nature, it is the silver hour, the season of the moon's reign. Opposing clarity, but in a harmonious manner, divinity is cloaked in a lightless robing. The realm of soil, as it hoards its treasure within the bosom of the Earth, assumes a contracting and solemn demeanor. Long stretches of night bracketing short spans of daylight bear a sobering quality to the atmosphere. Intention, turning upon the rim of resolve, percolates creative urge, and the revolving discs of perception fall into alignment, synchronizing the lens of thinking, like scattered crows forming into a cohesive flock.

He goes to work for a few days as a substitute teacher at a Waldorf school, in a community he had been an integral part of for five productive and rewarding years. But despite a welcoming reception, he knows he doesn't really fit anymore.

Nor does he fit in with the New Age people of his local neighborhood. A homeopathic dose of physical Yoga that he weaves with Feldenkrais and dance exercises, is as far as he will go, knowing from his study of Anthroposophy that traditional Eastern practices, such as mantras and breathing exercises, once wonderful and ideal in the distant past, are now counter-productive to modern spiritual development (unless modernized in a knowing way).

Wrestling with issues around getting his life on track and some lone wolf anxiety, he is wanting both worldly connection through his work and social connection in his community.

- - I dream of Soul-woman rising to an exalted state, and experience warm communion with her, as she gives me excellent advice on a remedy.

In another dream I am up on the roof of a huge mansion. It is risky, I could fall from a dangerous height. I encounter a character who informs me of a safe way down. Then I come to a staircase and descend, only to arrive at another situation of risk. The dream portrays, upon the upper limits of the mansion of consciousness, an edifice which not only contains a wide array of facets, but also potential dangers. Respectful exploration is called for, along with a need to ask for guidance from a reliable source.

What is the foundation of life - is it spirit or matter? The materialist sees the physical world and imagines it to be the foundation, or even the *only* aspect of life. (Why did the materialist cross the road? Answer: Actually, it didn't happen, because he didn't believe in the other side. . . )

But, to create a physical body it has to be made from a pattern of some kind. This etheric patterning, or vessel, is the essence of what the plant kingdom constantly demonstrates. Going a step further, the animal kingdom, through the existence of soul, or the astral realm, presents a grand forum.

The astral body, or vehicle of the soul, embodies instinct, emotion and desire, as exemplified by the vast coliseum of animal types we encounter on Earth: ecological chambers and antechambers, canine alcoves and feline hearths, avian conservatories, ungulate parlors, ursine dens, piscine sanctuaries, primate gymnasiums, feral taverns, insectine corridors, arachnid closets, reptilian cellars and serpentine crypts,

lupine galleries, pinniped pantries, crustacean courtyards, equine haciendas, rodent huts, marsupial balconies, waterfowl towers tolling swan sanctus bells, raptor turrets and phoenix domes, omnivore attics, herbivore bluffs overlooking carnivore canyons, pachyderm deserts, amphibian beaches, delphinic caverns, cetacean coves, orca abysses - and endlessly on in the grand architecture of life.

Even in places seemingly devoid of provision, beings thrive, penguins in sub-zero Antarctica, or reptiles in the furnace of a desert. In the deepest place of ocean, there are beings literally incandescent in their thriving. Adversity births talents, and stumbling blocks become stepping-stones for distinctive destinies.

The incarnational process evolves an upwardly spiraling sentience. Mirroring this, adaptable, perceptive, the animal kingdom rises to meet its challenges. Human dreams take place upon the stage of the astral-animal kingdom, a realm in which there dwells a stellar array of beings, a compendium whose number is reflected in the panorama of the heavens. This week, this star-troupe performs a theatrical masterpiece. In the lucidity of the night-world animals range through the deep of winter, warming remote niches. At the same time, the Higher Self within bears light into astral darkness, light to purify the senses, to raise instinct to a higher level, to moderate the fire of desire, and to lift the feeling life into love.

The astral body takes on a glow, shining now in preparation of becoming a chalice. The modern spiritual path might be described as Egoic development striving for a Master's degree in individuality and a PHD in love.

Into the deepest penumbra of winter we now descend. Within, the brightest of dawns is impending. The senses are imbued with a quickening. Steps become vigorous and purposeful. An energetic charge pervades the soul, as a feeling of expectation mounts to higher ground. Power is at hand to sublimate dark or agitated aspects of the soul into their destined creative capacity.

A time is upon Lady Soul for transforming gloom into light within the Sophia womb. We experience the depth of winter (or incarnation), so that light can reverberate through the All.

The longest night comes upon us. And with the turning of light, the angels prepare gifts of vision, guidance, and inspiration to bequeath through the thirteen Holy Nights that commence on Christmas Day. Thus the darkness of the year becomes an offering in disguise, a fruitful orchard contained in the dormancy of a handful of seeds.



## **Week 38**

December 22-28

The turning point of darkness has come upon us. Within the seedbed of aspiration there is a taking hold of the "I am," and a giving over to patience all concern regarding limitation. Allegiance to individuality engenders a feeling of completion, of descending to the understory of life, to the place where spirit surges up from its source, like a spring hidden in a dark wood.

With Easter as a beginning, and this week as a climax, the next three months become denouement, a segue to another genesis. Within these hibernal depths, a cocooning takes place in a sheath woven from the silken power of the will, and the soul finds itself shrouded in a chrysalis of holiness.

With the passage of winter solstice, the forces of the Earth have been drawn to a point of contraction. Now, in the darkest moment of the year, in the midnight hour of seasons, the I AM is born anew.

On condition that focus is diverted from the smallness of being to a consummate Greatness, this week and next bear gifts of guidance and inspiration. In the words of Sergie O. Prokofiev, author of *The Twelve Holy Nights*, "to encounter the Archangels at night while asleep, we must attain to the greatest possible spiritualization of words, of faculty of speech, during waking life."

Leaving the west coast behind in quest of winter, away from the rain he drives, on to the interior and mountains, and the purity of the cold, and blue skies where cloud-catching mountains, blanketed in snow, uphold a silent, shrouded forest. Like Christmas trees, the patient evergreens stand upright under their snowy burden, emulating an inner shining through the season's darkness, and bringing to mind the iconic manger that exemplifies a state of humility from which can rise the greatest outcome, a destiny inexorably linked with the animal kingdom, and the *Madonna* setting in the soul that can give birth anew to the higher Self.

- - I am cross-country skiing in a lofty setting of the Rocky Mountains, through a silence unbroken except by the occasional call of a distant raven. I stop to rest where tracks of an alpine squirrel cross the snow and offer some bread to a pair of gray jays that swoops down for a handout.

Later, from the top of a mountain I look down on peaks in all directions. Here and there, the crests of cloudbank shrouding the valleys gleam like angel down. As I descend, I look back to see folds of the snowy peaks dressed in the gold of sunset, like an array of candles burning on high.

While sentinel evergreens christened by frost stand in silver radiance, the spiritual sun at the midnight hour dwells in Earthen depths. The Holy Nights of Christmastide present an opportunity to attain clarity, a time of light shining brighter, of color vibrating more intensely. With two thousand inner birthings of the Higher Self having lifted the sojourner, year by year, another increment toward destiny, the soul of Earth and the soul of the sojourner share in creative transformation.

Listening, watchful with the eyes and ears of the heart, a mystery wells. Light comes shining into the darkness of the season, and into the obscuration of materialism. The soul's winter descent resonates with the embering within plant

seeds. A winter preparation of the deepest kind is taking place.

The secret of the Holy Nights is expressed in Steiner's meditative verse wherein the seer, in the darkest hour, pierces the material substance of the world to encounter the sun shining on the other side:

Behold the sun  
At the midnight hour  
Build with rocks  
In the lifeless ground.

So, in the declining world  
And in death's dark night  
Find creation's new beginning  
And morning's young might.



## **Week 39**

December 29 - January 4

Enthroned in resolve, cognition wields its brassy scepter to penetrate hidden resources. Lily pads are frozen in ice, a cryogenic chlorophyll. The eggs of the dragonfly slumber, and the seeds of the morning glory dream of distant days as brilliant white trumpets.

A window of perception into the coming annual cycle opens on this Holy Night, as a cresting wakefulness inspired from on high. Through midsummer, the sun unfolded its secrets. Now the Earth unfolds her secrets. Opportunity rises for creative flux in a moldable forum, such as painting, modeling, or stream-of-consciousness wordplay. It is a time to recall that the essence of our being is love. A time to perceive that the materialist has pulled the wool over his own eyes, not stopping to ascertain that matter is composed of spiritual substance.

The moon is not due to rise for a few hours, and the stars are shining with astounding fervor. With no urban light nearby to wash out the starscape, it assumes its rightful role as a heavenly soul mirror. Mysterious emanators sounding in the depths of boundless shadow, stars affirm that despite the darkness of incarnation spirit is ever accessible. And on this night, against the canvas of countless, glimmering lights, a sudden influx of meteors, Leonid emissaries, etches a blazing signature. Warming the deep, holding oblivion in abeyance, constellating forces reveal celestial patterns and configurations of destiny.

In the morning, blue skies loft over the mountains and the wind gusts and sweeps. As he hikes through the shallow, traversable snow, and revels in the wind's unbridled energy, he finds himself reflecting on the shooting stars of the prior night whose diamond burn still sears in his perception like a window-to-the-future. Making a wish, sensing that longing and destiny somehow converge under such auspicious circumstances, it seems to him that genuine prophecy is to be had from clarifying aspiration of the heart.

That evening, back in civilization, he watches television broadcasts of millennium celebrations taking place at various sites around the world. The festivities are spectacular - fireworks, lighting, laser art, performances. On one level, he's pleased to see the world united in creative celebration. On another level, he recognizes that this outward expression of light and color is directly resonant with the inner state at this time of year, as a foreshadow of the Epiphany on January 6th. New Years Eve is also Sophia Night, in reference to the highest ideal of soul-life, that which is embodied in the archetype of the Madonna. The Calendar verse for Epiphany week refers to "world-word's fiery strength" (foreshadowed by meteoric fireworks), replacing "empty notions of narrow self," as exemplified by hedonistic appetites common to New Year revelry in the worldly forum at this juncture of human evolution.

- - On January 1st I find myself above sage scrub terrain, skiing in mountaintop pine forest. Snow gently sifts through the still air as I pursue a routeless track. Though mapless and new to the area, I have taken to following animal tracks, trusting they will lead me deeper into the mystery of winter.

There is only an inch or two of snow under the pines, and golden grasses and the tops of kinnickinnick plants are exposed. Most of the animal tracks I encounter

were made during the night, but the coyote tracks I converge with are more recent and, as I follow their lead downhill, where the amber-eyed canid has slipped through winter shadows foraging for sustenance, I come across a fresh deer kill surrounded by wolf tracks.

As I read the imprint, it appears the coyote sought to sustain itself on brother wolf's takings, nipping in for a few bites while the wolves were absent. In an indirect way, the wolf serves a handout to numerous life forms during the harshest stretch of winter, including foxes, weasels, crows, jays, and other bird life.

Below the sporadic forest, I look out across the valley's patchwork of sage scrub upon late afternoon light filtering through an ivory bank of cloud. It shines on the mountains just enough to render an even lightwash where, because of yellow grasses protruding from the snow, the scene takes on a delicate golden hue, in a rarified January 1st, brand-new-life luminescence.



## **Week 40**

January 5-11

Through long January nights the stars commune with an intimacy that ranges effortlessly across the vastness, as though the distance between them amounts to nothing, just a vacuum. And now, the last Holy Night plays out, as the image life of the soul wells with a vision of what the course of time will bear.

The soul-mood of the season is reflected in a sweep of wild sea, or the energetic force of the wind. The resolve of hawk is at hand. Of regal bearing, soaring over snowy reaches, arcing a feather trail, spying small movements from on high - like the last steps of a snowtop squirrel, as shown in the photograph on the facing page - the hawk's fierce countenance aligns with the Fortieth Week.

Meanwhile, deep snow takes its toll on ground-dwellers. The tiny feet of the fox, piercing fresh drifts, belaboring movement at a time when energy conservation is most needed, causes its provision account to plummet. With no leeway for a hunt

based on aimless wandering, stealth, cunning, and keenest use of senses are demanded.

And with sundown, there is a giving way to nocturnal romance, as the great horned owl goes prowling for his soul mate. In the depth of night, and out of the bleakest mid-winter stretch, the mating call goes out, a snowy serenade bolstered by the spirits of baby owls clamoring to attain new owl incarnations.

In tandem with these oratorios drifting ghost-like across the frozen terrain, the owl within is incited to lead the way through this week's darkness.

- - I dream of tobacco smokers (once a habit of mine), gathered and reveling in their indulgence. Taunted by one of the revelers, I counter how in the long run smoking doesn't lessen, but intensifies, anxiety. During this season designed for transcendence, many opt to pursue a tangent of indulgence - running down the up escalator, oblivious to opportunity to rise above hindrance.

Despite this powerful juncture of the Calendar, I find myself swinging between extremes, rising above my "narrow self" one day, the next falling back, subdued and despondent. But some of the limits I think I am bound by are not real. I have more leeway than I suppose, more determination than I imagine. In fact, it's somewhat unclear *where* my real boundaries lie.

Delving into spirit depths brings release from anxiety. I encounter "Heart's love-world" on "Soul's ground in Spirit depths." Intent on forging into the unknown, "fiery strength" and resolve become accessible.

I am reminded, in timely fashion, of the essence of Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom*, which asserts that freedom lies in living neither into instinct, which would be to follow a will-weighted impulse, nor in the single-track pursuit of feeling and desire, which would be an astrality-weighted approach. Freedom, according to Steiner, issues only from the clarity of "pure" thinking, otherwise known as Intuition, a spirit-directed process containing all three modes of being - thinking, feeling and willing - poised in balance.

Inspired by the dynamic of light and dark through the Calendar year, I write the following lines:

*During Lent/Easter, rise out of shadow, lifting shadow toward the light.*

*During Michealmas, descend into the shadow, bringing light down.*

*During the Epiphany, in the depths of shadow, birth light.*

Even after saying goodbye to snowy landscapes and descending to sea level, because of his sojourn into winter, his soul retains a burnished feel. Memories linger of the invigoration and silent-stillness, the freedom of skiing and snowshoeing, the frosty mist of mountainsides, the light breaking through squalling clouds, the lofty rumble of avalanches, the crystalline artwork of ice formations, the silver trails of moonlong nights, and the star-jeweled canopy shimmering on high.

Though the fox's larder is depleted and the hawk, trimmed by winter's stern provision, grows lean, though days of austerity are upon us, and the sun's passage is closely bracketed by rise and set, making long the owl's day, wisdom's garden grows luxuriant. It feeds upon the loam of the heart's summer-long enrichment, composted now into the soul's soil. Any experience now of emptiness and separation is not without purpose. For, in the Void we meet that which delivers us to unity and fullness, to "fire of the Cosmic Word." The energy of a spiritual sun, having withdrawn to Earthen depths, now becomes an etheric catalyst compelling sleeping seeds to anticipate germination. Within the dead and empty ground can be found a tremendous incarnational vibrancy.



## **Week 41**

January 12-18

Northern Native people tell of a long ago event in the depth of winter, wherein a starving hunter is given the first pair of snowshoes by a mysterious man who turns out to be the Spirit of the wolf. From that day, powers of transport and provision are enhanced for the people.

Now, through mid-life gauntlet, as the story comes to mind, he senses the spirit of the wolf ranging by his side, lending fortitude, golden eyes contending with winter darkness, leathery paws forbearing icy traverse, and luxurious fur an ample robe against the cold. Ranging the austerity of the season, no matter how fraught with tempest, nor dark winter falls, the wolf is in its element.

At this time, when spirit strength is weaving itself into the fabric of soul life, spring feels distant, but there is a grandness at hand in which small notions can be overcome. Wakeful, wakeful, with enchantment dissipating, it is a time of clarity and mindful venturing.

Many years past, floundering in the darkness of an insubstantial marriage, he experienced the loneliness that attends not being met by a mate. And in the travail of his descent, he discovered in the central theme of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony an adagio movement consonant with his soul mood, as it modulated between deep melancholy and a sweet bridge to the love he longed for.

Within this orchestration he encountered a star shining in the black waste of an interior heaven. And the soul, struggling to rise from the numbing snowdrift sweeping over it, cold, dark, silent, alone, reached out to its beacon of redemption.

The vision had a warm healing effect on his loneliness, and helped sustain him during a time in which his destiny called for lengthy passage across a romantic desert.

Following solstice there arises a feeling of spaciousness, as Chronos lingers, holding the sweep of time's passage in abeyance. Now, sense perception of nature diminishes. Light dims, colors fade to earthen shades. Birds are absent or subdued. Fewer aromas pervade the air, a faint whiff of frozen cedar, perhaps, or a metallic hint of snow. And feeling, by cold, falls numb.

And with this sensorial muting, sitting quietly in sanctuary, the primary heart-song he experiences is an acoustical streaming, an etheric emanation welling from a sun-like core, in whose sound-stream oscillate bright, chromatic arpeggios, red, green and purple, a forum he would best express by inventing a water-coloring piano.

Through the week, he is teaching a Grade Two class in a Waldorf school. In Waldorf Education, the stories are the heart of the lesson and, lucky him, he gets to convey Native legends. Evoking a mood with a hoop drum, Raven, the trickster, flies in primordial skies, bringing light to the world. He also meets hard lessons due to his mischievous nature. The children get to live through Raven's consequences without needing to be transgressors in an overt manner.

From the story of The Wolf Who Brought Snowshoes, a snowshoe trail becomes a form drawing. From Raven Steals the Sun, he brings an art lesson exploring light and dark interactions.

Snow-shoeing the meander of a valley bottom, grounding aspiration, inner sensate forces venture through a vivid landscape. Beneath the auspices of Sirius, the Dog

Star, Beethoven's Ninth rises from the foundation of creation, and unlimited vigor counters the cold drifts and parades across the frozen field. And under the star's brilliant beams flashing now against the black night, the wolf ranges far and wide, traversing horizons of the undiscovered.

Provision is held in abeyance for animals and birds, sustenance sparse, but adequate, in this stretch of the calendar that lies far from summer dreaming. Here, a part of the human experience peers off into the year ahead and envisions potential for a time of fulfillment. And, though another part looks and lacks faith, exaltation can be won. Life provides what is needed now. And the last word is key. Now is dependable. And, in fact, now is ever a fulcrum of true power.



## **Week 42**

January 19-25

- - (journal entry, 1979) Rising before dawn, not a difficult feat north of the sixtieth parallel, where 11 a.m. marks the January sunrise, cross-country skiing in the moonlight, jewel mountains gleaming in the distance, to sustain body warmth at minus 40, I am compelled to keep moving, although only in non-aerobic fashion, as exerted respiration will result in frozen lungs.

It is a delicate balancing act, this business of traversing the boreal forest where the great light furnace glows so feeble and distant. And yet, as I wend my way through this daunting snowscape, a prior experience comes to mind that makes this outing seem like a tropical stroll.

Normally, when the temperature drops below -20, the atmosphere becomes deathly still, but on one occasion the wind chill, in tandem with -55 Fahrenheit, factored to a minus 100 deep-freeze. To sustain heat in my cabin, the wood stove was

burning red hot in places while, 10 feet away, ice formed in a bucket.

Outside, as the cold pricked on all sides, I passed by trees that cracked like shotguns. All creatures were huddled away, some beneath the snow. No matter how cold it gets outside, it's always near to 0 C if you're deep enough under snow. Before long, I had to retreat to the relative warmth of the cabin to avoid the deathly condition that attends absence of the sun's influence.

In his dream, a bitter adolescent berates him while undermining any chance of communication. In desperation, while making a concerted attempt to confront the youth, he is bitten savagely, dismembering a finger.

The dream is a classical demonstration of shadow construction. Aspiring for years to cultivate empathy for others, he had suppressed a part of himself that needed to erupt now, either in dreams, or as a projection through someone else.

Winter is a time when the soul's brightness embers wakefully. But it is also a time when the shadow magnifies, presenting an opportunity to aspire toward a stasis harmonic and ordered. Carl Jung asserted that 90% of the shadow is pure gold, indicating the value of redeeming the entire cast dwelling within the theater of shadow.

- - (journal entry, 1999) I am backcountry skiing in the Rocky Mountains, through towering peaks, half-sunlit like guttering candles. Two or three times an hour an avalanche cannonades down a mountain wall, as if the Earth is expressing a mighty gesture of excarnation, a fitting expression for terrain that climbs so close to heaven.

One massive avalanche shrugs off a mountain shoulder and stampedes downhill, thundering over luckless trees, splintering a whole swath of coniferous forest into a jagged morass. In contrast, the next avalanche spills down in a delicate snowstream that pours itself over a cliff into an ivory waterfall, shining its way down into a drifting pool. In a way, it is akin to an aspect of the soul that, in touch with power, does not need to flex its muscle but, rather, holds to a serene and knowing composure.

Due to upward evaporation, the bottom layer of snow develops into a loosely arranged crystalline structure with open pockets. In this dimly lit subnivean world, a spider, gelled by the cold, moving with a slow rhythmic crawl, is pounced upon

by a ferocious shrew who derives momentary satiation, then scurries off in search of its next meal. Above, a vigilant weasel senses the shrew's movement and plunges in. The ferocious shrew meets a predator equally rapacious. All along the sustenance chain there is a reverberation. Like the spider it preys upon, the shrew emanates net-like strands within its web of predation. In turn, the shrew gets snared upon a strand of the weasel's web.

In the depth of the forest, night comes to close in on wakefulness, to spread its veil of dreaming. In the darkness lurk beings who are at once somehow familiar, yet mysterious. The soul learns to wait patiently, anticipating the unknown, alert but open, prepared yet savoring the growing silence.

As in autumn, the soul now begins to engage shadow. Yet, unlike the autumn experience, which took place from the inside out, the process now unfolds on the opposite transit. In time, the soul bears a full measure of illumination, and there grows a deepening understanding of the marrow of incarnation. The focus centers there, where the bud of heart produces petals of understanding, unfolding like a many-layered rose even while the perimeter propagates thorns of darkness.

The fruits of spirit are present to the degree that virtues were cultivated through the past year by exercising love's sovereignty. Inward fruition, dreamed of in high summer, is now manifest in the form of powers to attend the shadow rising from now to Easter. We are called upon to prepare ourselves to meet the measure of fear's assault. Caught within winter's mesh, the spider of perception dreams of unfurling its summer web. And, under Dog-star cold, at the nether reaches of the thermometer, feeling seems vanquished of aspiration, empty of pretense. And all the reverie horses appear corralled within a somatic containment, dreaming of a bright prairie of summer, filled with a shadowless sun.



## **Week 43**

January 26 - February 1

The soul suffers in its earthly incarnation, and does not have within it what it needs to heal itself. Nor does the world have what is needed in the soul's hour of grief, or despair, or longing. The healing the soul seeks is linked to a peace that is greater than that of the world, a peace that comes only after meeting the rejection and opposition of the world. The soul is dependent on communion with spirit, and the cold of longing that arises over and over is resolved, again and again, only through Spirit warming.

- - In prelude to Valentine, intimacy rising on the agenda, I am discerning a pattern of *Puella eterna* women in my biography. In the past, I made a half-hearted attempt to spend a longer span of time getting to know someone before having the liaison

escalate. Now I find myself deepening my resolve.

My journals at this juncture of the Calendar reveal inspiration about primary people and events in my life. Not trusting an intuition appears to lead to grief of one kind or another.

"We can turn to what opens free spiritual vision of higher reality," Steiner asserts, "or by shunning this, by not summoning sufficient courage to penetrate into these regions with full consciousness, but allowing ourselves to be driven by unconscious forces within ourselves, call for illness or disturbances in our being."

During this time, feeling vulnerable, I am wanting to grow tougher to endure the rigors of the world. Around the same time, I dream of being attacked by a snake sporting a mouth full of nasty fangs. The confrontation escalates into a desperate struggle. The dream ends unresolved in a wash of astraphobia - in essence, a fear of inner space.

The spirit of inclusion, of redeeming all inner beings through process of the heart, means that even a menacing diablo-snake must be transfigured, suggesting that rather than seeking unity in light, unity be sought within the framework of light and darkness converging.

An eagle rides above the mundane, on a thermal ascent to the bullion gates of the sun. In a garment woven by wind, the feathered lord inhabits a blue palace of the cloudy plains. And below, upon the base and narrow ground of daily trial, the sojourner meets his frailty. Feeling isolated and weary, longing to know wholesome community, experiencing his personal "cosmic cold in wintry depths profound," he is needing to engage, like the spirit of the eagle, the "spirit's very being gathering warmth," so that the "fire of soul" can "grow stronger and defy the cosmic cold." Now, daily meditation for maintenance of consciousness has become even more important.

In his teaching, he implements artistic integrations, motivational exercises, and dramatic elements, and modifies activities to suit the needs and temperaments of the children he is working with. He brings exercises to draw out creative expression. Sudden waves of inspiration come his way, like a fresh way of reading poetry. His work, at least, is one arena in which the inner eagle gets to rise through the strata of his volition.

In order to sprout, some seeds require a season of cold. Some species of apple tree need at least 1,000 hours below 7 degrees Celsius or buds will fail to open properly in the spring. Northern animals do not make out well in southern locations. Crops, stored in soil in a root cellar, sustain vitality better than in mere cold storage. The synergy pertaining to the integrity of a living being within nature's domain is no small matter.

A period of solitude can become an occasion of holding out, of becoming detached from the outer world, so that warmth of the inner world can expand its parameters. Though leery of confinement, struggling with the seasonal phase of contraction, like a seed that holds potential unimagined, he is called to conceive, within any given confinement, a universe of possibility.

Out of the dynamic of the contradiction between contraction and expansion, he composes a passage to his soul: - - My lamp, my flame, longing grows longer. Within the darkness of the year, wrestling with midlife, I give thanks for my inner woodland. With birdlight and sunsong, angels revel in my soulfulness. Upon folding wings, through incandescent heartsongs, responding to a deep and abiding passion, by the steadfast warmth of spirit's hearth, my weary wandering ceases.



## **Week 44**

February 2-8

The old form of prana, or connection to primal power, was embodied in the breath, and could be accessed by means of certain prescribed breathing exercises. According to Steiner, a process of evolution has taken place wherein prana has moved from the breath into Thinking - not the common notion of thinking, but the presence of spirit in a full cognition involving all three soul functions - thinking, feeling and willing. When we engage in Thinking, it is this modern pranic faculty that is being activated, as per the Calendar's reference to "soul's clarity" and "thought's creative willing."

In resonance with the house of nature, where the lake's impervious ceiling of ice makes for an austere, twilight containment, he, like a lonely fish, finds himself floundering. While enduring a challenging passage through his relationship, wondering if he should trust his tears with someone who has a hard time sharing hers,

he dreams of Soul-woman scurrying around in a house. He barely keeps up, then loses sight of her. Later, he seeks and finds what *seems* to be her. When he finds her again, she invites him to come and see who she is, but before he can investigate he awakens in a mood of uncertainty.

Caught up in this obliviation, time passes. A year later, through Jungian analysis, he's coming to further light on his issues, and discerning how he's caught in a pattern of always looking to the future for freedom, provision, or even rest.

Now his dreaming grows more urgent. First, a woman berating him for not listening to her, followed by an episode in which he feels he must abandon ship. The captain of the vessel concurs. In a sense, the soul has given warning, then the Ego, personified by the captain, aware of danger to the etheric vessel, calls for taking time out for re-orientation on an island in the midst of the Void.

In tandem with this urgency, anxiety-bound dreams follow, one in which a character is driving his vehicle with reckless abandon, another in which an aggressive businessman is barging forward, knocking over anyone who gets in the way. Shadow aspects are being assertive, compelling him to orchestrate a means of integration.

- - I daydream of assembling a multi-dimensional performance troupe - a wonderful, creative forum, if I can ever manifest it! The troupe would consist of a half-dozen members, each adept in at least two arenas of expression, including dance, music, art, drama, singing, speech, and eurythmy (the science and art of movement to music or speech). The troupe would portray settings - the sea, the desert, the jungle, the tundra - through multi-dimensional performances. The boreal forest, for example, would include the spirit of the wolf, blended with the sanguinity of the chickadee, in turn counter-pointing the somber mystery of the owl. Diverse facets of nature would make compelling subjects - the flight of eagle, the audacity of crow, the waving and rhythmic sea, or a landscape over which winds range, from balmy breeze to raging tempest.

Last week, there was an underlying current at work in the psyche that expressed itself as a tendency to let material needs exert power over the soul. This week, the inclination has modified to a tendency to ignore matter entirely and exalt the heights, a momentum equally risky. Next week, the need for vigilance continues,

as the third consecutive attempt by the forces of darkness offers power over the dominion of the soul in exchange for allegiance. Resisting the three temptations and communing with Earth's Spirit (where, according to Rudolf Steiner, the higher aspect of humanity, or the Christ forces, now dwell), overcomes the debilitating influence and opens the door to a greater destiny.

To rephrase this week's Calendar verse, by virtue of the presence of spirit, born and recently reborn, the soul in clarity beholds life anew and engages in creative action.

In apprenticeship for a voyage now, the art of navigation presides, a pouring over charts depicting the Ocean of divinity. In striving to ascertain the play of the deep, in a forum of ecological transcendence, the multitude of beings in nature's tableau are attended - those within the silence of frozen lakes, and those within the winter-dark forest, or even upon wild mountain reaches.

While the seed of love, filled with fertile dreaming, sleeps within its enchantment, we are summoned to instigate forgiveness for all the world's abrasion. And the clemency that opens the gate we long to pass through bears the fruit of a grace grown on love's vine. There, though the seedbed lies quietly dark, spawn for many morrows multiplies. Meanwhile, light dreams itself, wills itself, within the center, a hub of improvisation while, lingering by a canyon spring, patiently awaiting emergence, joy quests to be of service.



## Week 45

February 9-15

He is seeking overview and inspiration to meet mid-life struggle. Last warnings from spirit are filtering through: renew the ground of the connection with his partner, or separate. Although the relationship had started off seemingly rich with potential, he was now feeling alone - more alone, in fact, in the relationship than he could have felt outside of it.

He is gaining strength and expression through individuation, a key factor in modern spiritual evolution. As a by-product, however, he is increasingly challenged to sustain a relationship. Inner marriage has to precede the outer condition. The word *matrimony*, in his perception, has come to mean encouraging one another's individual destinies, a rewarding undertaking but, at the same time, a lofty ideal.

A few years after their separation, as Valentine's week fulfills itself, with Raphael, the archangel of relationships and healing, artfully guiding humanity, his

starmate's distant heartbeat becomes a rhythm he cherishes, a passport to access places where she may have lingered, or may soon appear: a tent on the edge of an unexplored wilderness; a dance floor in the heart of a city; an embering hearth in a bright cottage; an art gallery; a sandy beach crossed by mink tracks. Overhead, the stars have woven her countenance with premonition as, poised on the brink of the void, he strives to incarnate his vision.

- - I have a dream this week of being intimate with a woman, an integration event between the soul and the ego. One pivotal Valentine's Eve in a year gone by, I had experienced a powerful vision of meeting my Twin Flame - an event akin to two stars finding each other across great reaches of space. As I entered the loving pool of her eyes, it was as if, in a state of unspeakable holiness, we had always been one. Bathing in the transcendence, we felt ardently loved by each other through a passion expressed in a deep and wordless peace.

In hindsight, now, I also feel truth in the idea that the Universe is my soul mate. Because the experience of Oneness is ever at hand - that there is one soul, one starmate, one sun, one Mind - all come to an accord in response to the question "what is love?"

During my most current Valentine's Week, I am practicing an approach to counteract modernity's limited notion of romance, like the flimsy, instant-fix affair depicted by Hollywood. By living into underlying soul-ego communion, popular culture begins to take on new meaning. As I listen to love songs on the radio I discern a deeper theme behind the mundane lyrics. "When you hold me in your arms. . ." (Soul is singing, "When you use your will forces to embrace me.") "Say that you love me. . ." (The developing ego is acknowledging resonance with the soul). "Let's dance together. . ." (soul and ego strive to enter into a pas-de-deux).

On this evening in which winter grows now a little gentler, he finds himself envisioning bright settings and summer forays, and aspires to strive for clarity. "For fullness of soul to unite with world becoming," and for productive exploration through the sense faculties, there is need of "the light of thinking." Thought now joins itself to spirit birth and, providing will forces are used to redeem chaos in a soul-and-sense-mingled dawn, the light of awareness overcomes shadow.

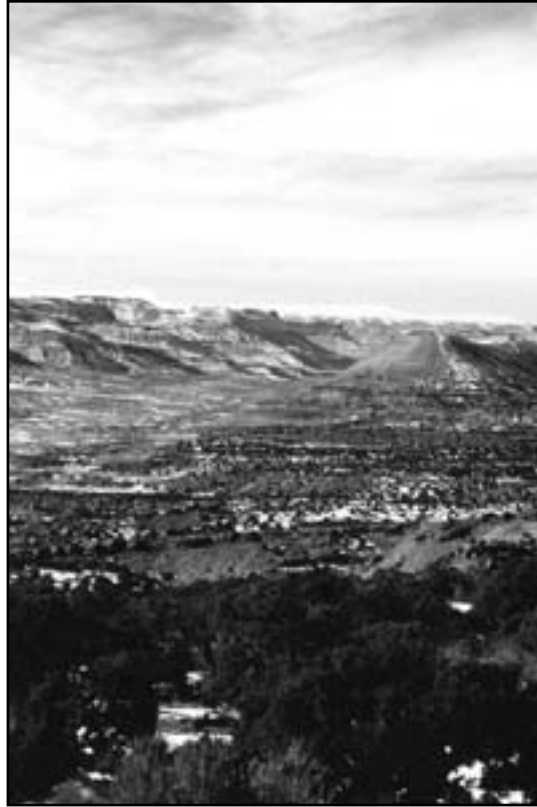
The world is evolving, in both inner and outer ways. The soul, also unfold-

ing, moving toward fullness through an orchestration of the whole compendium of its being, now meets the world. But, for the union to find consummation, sense revelation needs to be imbued with Thought's light.

Early migrators dream of nesting sites in their northern homes, within the boughs of a lilting spring. In the voice of the wolf one can hear how long-drawn winter has become. Its howl cuts across the frozen night, calling to the sun, but the season is not yet ripe for the sun's return. The snow muffles the song, subduing the light of its tone, and a barren forest stands guard over the ensuing silence.

Ice holds steadfast across frozen lakes, sealing in the waveless oblivion below. Inner fish swim free of elemental chaos, but languidly, ritual creatures residing in containment. The pegasus of individuality has ridden long through the night of winter, and now rises, wings strumming upon strings of spirited expression, a chamber music abiding within the courtyard of the heart.

Cherishing wild companions, revering the deep and dimensional soulfulness of the human condition, treasuring the Earth and its spirit imbued with light, he out-breathes: *I love*. He in-breathes: *I am loved*. *Twin Flame, wherever you are, the star we share shines down upon us each alike. May your heart's desire come to fullness.*



## **Week 46**

February 16-22

Of a past year, this week, he was wanting to know where Divine Will stood regarding some of his life questions. He was wanting yes to be yes, and no to be no - and to let the gilded language of spirit pour from the wellspring of the heart.

In his purification process, raising awareness around fears, grappling with an abandonment and fear of betrayal issue, he was coming to understand that those who are abandoned have first abandoned, or betrayed, themselves in some manner. At the same time, he reasoned that his issue around lack of consideration shown him was a karmic condition - because he had been guilty of this in past relationships with others, so it was coming around to him now. As he pondered the issue, a trip he took several years ago to southwest desert country came to mind.

- - This exotic Sonoran landscape parched with light, this low-lying mountain terrain covered with cacti and other beings of resilience in the face of austerity, is a

setting of latent vitality awaiting rainfall.

Sleeping on the soft bed of an arroyo, I awaken in the night to a vivid starscape. As I take in the starry spread, I detect a quiet rustling out in the desert that turns out to be a group of javelinas rooting sustenance out of the sandy desolation, roving like a mist, leaving behind only a faint-hoofed signature. Bristly, like the prickly pear it feeds on, both in garment and temperament, the wild pig is well adapted to a rigorous life.

The javelinas are visiting a seeping spring, a source of water far removed from the affluence and clarity of the brook. With most of its moisture sinking below the surface or evaporating, its mineral-laden draft forms a scant puddle for thirsty pigs.

With daybreak, a bird of sweet demeanor visits. Perched starkly red upon saguaro green, I am impressed with this cardinal, whose residence ranges from the verdant Great Lakes to this setting of sparsity where all the searing of the day seems to gather in its scarlet frock.

Through the morning, I make my way up-mountain through unseasonable heat, packing ten pounds of drinking water for the daylong hike. Side-stepping the porcupine outfall of chollas, spiny segments that seek to hitch a ride, plodding through shadeless glare, sweat streaming, I am rewarded for my striving when I attain the mountain's crest. Though played out by my trek, I feel somehow at home here, where distant horizons hazed in heat stretch like a sweep of desolation.

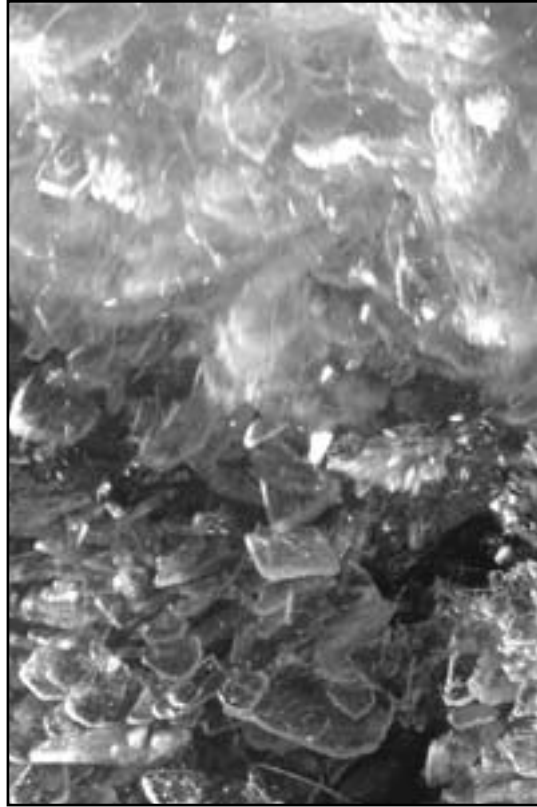
As I descend, I encounter a 30-foot grandfather, a lofty saguaro bristling with spiny whiskers. Bound in a semaphore frieze, the still choreograph of its numerous offspring are spread over the hills, their barbed arms upholding unceasing praise to the light. What little water they access is like a seeping gold, a precious trickle taken up by rooty tongues and lapped into a vacuous account. As I traverse the landscape, I am moved by the mysterious process in which the cream-colored earth renders a nurturing milk to form resilient cacti flesh. Overall, the land is sparing, open, uncontained, providing an arena to practice *self*-containment. Everywhere I probe, the lesson of the landscape teaches the value of maximizing utility from minimal provision.

In the evening, what I first mistake for a loud-winged bumblebee turns out to be the world's smallest hummingbird, a bee hummingbird, buzzing with a high pitch, operating its tiny motor on God-knows-what sustenance this time of year. Although Sonoran desert can, as on this occasion, grow unseasonably warm, the foreshadow of summer is of a very low-key sort - blossoms are yet scant, the temperature warms to only a mild sanguinity with not enough choler in the air to draw the rattlesnake out of its aestivation and, still starkly bare, the palo verde exhibits only a hint of bud formation.

The sun's aura brightens, elevating the countenance of the world. Streaming rays become a serenade to the Earth, and it warms and responds, breathing out toward the light. In iron strength, the oak has held itself through winter suspension, and tiny spirits of unborn chickadees induce would-be parents to envision nesting sites, although it will be some time before they implement such vision.

If not for striving this week, numbness would set in. Feeling vulnerable, wanting to apprehend his issue around betrayal and abandonment, he reviews his past, recalling traverses across terrain, both relational and landscape. In the marrow of his being he feels that what might prove most fruitful to explore at this juncture, and perhaps even lies at the base of his issue of inconsideration of others, is this business of self-abandonment, this relegation to a relational desert.

Memory - a spirit power, more than an astral, or soul force - is a function of Ego, a mark of individuality at work through the grand scheme of incarnation. Memory, capable of embracing the procession of experience as an overview, is at once a creative and mysterious act of the will. Through this faculty a past tableau is made fresh out of the moment of imagination's living cauldron. And along with this underlying dynamism, there rises a feeling of being open to the incursion of the world. The soul feels itself to be in a vulnerable position now, breached so to the whole gamut of worldly activity. And vulnerability persists, becomes problematic, unless existential orientation is provided by the spiritual force of memory or, put another way - by spirit remembrance through an act of the will.



## **Week 47**

February 23 - March 1

When he first encountered the river in the warming sun of a spring afternoon, it was a dazzling ribbon of ice and snow. And when he returned at sunset he could hear only the faint sound of rushing water beneath the ice. Beyond that, only silence and the rose wash of sundown filled the landscape.

It must have broken in the night. A mile away, sleeping through the cracks and booms, it was early morning when he arrived to a full-scale breakup in the rare form of candle ice. A hundred yards wide, the river was brimming from bank to bank with a shuffling morass of frozen tapers sounding a continuous cacophony, like a million tiny glasses clinking a xylophonic toast to the magic of spring.

By evening it was over. Ice floes still dominated the river, but the candles were gone and stretches of open water were growing larger by the hour.

As this expansive turn of season converges with the fruition of the will, the

experience of selfhood strengthens, giving rise to mindful awareness, versus floating off into the ethers. The squirrel has grown lean, the bear in its shadowy den has used up most of its reserve, the moose tires of its austere fare of willow tips. Birds entertain notions of returning to summer abodes, while the quicksilver flux of thinking begins to moderate, though ever-so-slightly, becoming faintly languid within the first draw of a great out-breathing.

- - There are times when synchronicity illustrates what the Calendar refers to as "godly powers" at work in a biography. Two friends of mine who dwelled in disparate locations I migrated between, and who had no knowledge of each other's existence, happened "by chance" to meet one day in a third distant location. In hindsight, when I first knew them they each represented extremities bracketing my biography. One lived next to wilderness, the other in a very urban center.

After several years of migrating between these dualities, I have come to a juncture in my life in which I want to resolve the polarity. While pondering options of where to relocate, my friends make an announcement. It turns out that a marriage is imminent for more than just the dual settings in my life. Of all locations across the continent, the site they choose for their wedding is adjacent to one of the Waldorf schools I am considering applying to, a place where both nature and urbanity are accessible - in effect, a meeting ground for my two lifestyles. And then the clincher - the date set for the event "happens" to be my birthday.

Reviewing childhood influences - Burgess Meredith, Dr. Dolittle, Ernest Thompson Seton, Grey Owl - he discerns that the common denominator of his focus was astral communion or, put another way, the personification of Beings of the soul in the form of animals.

Later, during adolescence, despite this wholesome orientation to the animal realm, his astrality ran amok, leading him to pursue hunting, not for sustenance, nor any productive reason, but for the mere experience of it. With no initiation process in place during this vulnerable life passage, and no authentic role model to aspire to, he received little guidance to address his dysfunction.

By mid-life, his trespass against nature would become an acute shadow issue residing in the core of his biography that would require a protracted process of healing and self-forgiveness.

In those early teen years he had fallen prey to the materialistic illusion that we are separate from the environment and the beings we share life with. Believing the rabbit was distant, untouchable, shooting it became a means of *contact*. Later, maturity and return to balance was accompanied by the realization that as he delved within himself, he discovered an abiding connection with the swooping swallow, the timid rabbit, the illustrious raccoon, the wily fox, and all the many beings that are conjectured to live outside of us.

Dusk assumes the form of a great avian swooping over the close of day, taking under wing any sorrow drawn with traveler's woe. In the field of twilight, where twin lights meet, sun-gold and moon-silver alloy to paint a quiet bronze across the mountains. And in that moment when above, in the soft purple after-burn, only the brightest of orbs assail the nocturne - Venus, Jupiter, Arcturus, Sirius - while the blue jay sits subdued, reserving his ruffian clamor for the brass of day, and a sweet tone rises from a solitary cardinal, there is an unfurling of sails. But to board this ephemeral ship, one has only from stern of day to bow of night for, beyond that fleeting span, unmoored and drifting into stellar seas, she sails to lade her astral hold.



## **Week 48**

March 2-8

Above a swelling river, nuthatches, usually solitary through winter, have gathered now in spring boughs. Icicles, formed through the night upon sweepers over-hanging the river, drip in the morning sun, as snowmelt and raindrop converge in a stampeding water-herd, a sea bound exuberance sweeping from rim to rim. Despite what he has maneuvered into position between himself and the sun, it's as though his own riverine surge has become an extravagant momentum, a passage through a valley of resistance taking on the whole streaming input of his incarnation.

Winter calls for warding off the cold, and summer for dreaming into the luminous. Spring, however, brings increasing intimacy with the waking world, as upon a hilltop yellow and shining, earth forces, not flaring in trumpets brassily, but glowing with a flute-like warmth, rehearse the first semi-tones of a sojourn toward the sun.

The hint of ardor in the sun's glance brings a subtle shift in the song of overwintered birds - the jay and crow, with their bluster, the chickadee's vivacity, the cardinal's water-like sweetness, and even the mourning dove, on its journey back from southern retreat, dreaming itself here in its nesting home. Other migrants dream, also, of their presence in treetop and field, by brook edge and spring, beginning as fleeting astral visitations, wing-and-feather reverie gradually building, the projections waxing into an inexorable momentum that draws the gypsies back to summer home. Overall, at this juncture, the joy rising in the ethers is of such a subtle nuance as to be missed by those scurrying to attend worldly demands, and so a treasure-hold is passed by.

The shadow, counterpoised by spirit's growing light, moves into a position of redemption through the season of Lent. Because the dark forces hold sway in unconsciousness, the awareness of spirit lights and protects.

Seeking illumination within the emptiness, the soul fathoms its authenticity, knowing that pain as woof and happiness as warp weave whole the fabric of incarnation.

In autumn, descending from the cosmos to penetrate the Earth, he encountered shadow in an ahrimanic form, with materialistic tendencies. Now, traveling in the opposite direction, from Earth toward the cosmos, he encounters the shadow's luciferic side, ensconced as cravings and egoism, which emerge to be purified by the resurrecting force of Easter, an experience the words of Christ speak to: "Every mountain shall be brought low, and every valley shall be filled. The crooked way shall be straightened and the rough made smooth." Excess shall be modified, and denial of a wholesome want shall be filled. Distractions from deeper wants can be avoided, and agitation of a desire nature can be smoothed.

- - During my thirties, I crossed social borders, including arenas of creative expression (dance, theater, choir), the environmental cause (Greenpeace, Sierra Club, Bering Sea preservation), and spiritual practices (Native, Siddha Yoga, Zen ). In hindsight, by engaging in an eastern or Native practice, I felt I was activating a past spiritual essence, not so much to become an aspirant, but to strive beyond it, to reawaken something, then move on to new ground.

Rudolf Steiner advised, when choosing a meditative practice, to seek a disci-

pline that reflects awareness and honoring of the spiritual evolution of individuality (Ego). Older traditions, including mantra and breathing practices, he maintained, tend to practice dissolution of the self, making them no longer appropriate.

Within the snowdrop, the interplay of light and dark dance an intrigue. Stimulated by warm air, this first brave flower of the season produces a thin translucent film, a flag of light that rises like a secret within a heart-shaped chalice. The over-lighting angel who crafted the snowdrop must have been moved by winter's assail to nudge a gesture of spring into as early a show as possible.

In anticipation of summer enchantment, growing solar warmth engenders a cheer that rises not clamorously, but as a lulling undertone. While the day's concerns wait out near the rim, on the edge of worldly experience, a heartsong chants goldenly at inmost core. In the atmosphere the sun's rays increase, veils of light condense, the shining intensifies. In the north, the beaver's stockpile runs thin, and it dreams of a break in the pond's icy ceiling.

Now, out of the blue ebon of winter's end there heats a soft luminescence. The faint warming of sun, the slight shift in songbird melody, the subtle stirring in the earth, induce growing feelings of connectedness, of assuredness, a composure of integration.



## **Week 49**

March 9-15

The March wind blusters in maddened gusts, taking away the breath and twisting trees into a dancing gyre. Across the land it sweeps, waking the elementals and chopping blasts of ivory into the air as it skips across the lake, a tempest fittingly mounting, unleashing a tirade against the melancholy of winter's overlong reign.

Stirred within, longing, he sends a message to the lady who yet awaits: Time paces a slow ember here, so far from you, and the mist that arises from the cold lake in my heart shrouds an image I seek to ensoul with light. In a pre-dawn hour, day strives to break, but the ardor of my longing is adrift upon a starless void. You are. . . somewhere. . . I sense the wheeling of the heavens compass your presence. Though the maze of incarnation keeps us apart, yet not one fold of a sparrow's wing proceeds outside of destiny's grand artistry.

And now, no birds sing, and a church sits empty, sacredly void, a setting where a sacrament awaits consecration. Feathers seek the wind, but meet a gustless

lull. Buds of primavera overhang a newly woven nest, but remain shut, like fists tightened against a repressive regime. As an aged winter bout lays siege the audacity of spring, somewhere far away a host of Lenten angels chorales a heartsong, familiar, but sounding only upon the inner ear. Wandering an alien landscape, he seeks a navigation, searches for refuge, longs for solace. Though tenuous, hope sporadically rouses, like a baby deer on shaky legs. Through inner strength garnered from enduring protracted darkness, assurance seeps, yielding flora of expectancy. Rooted in forbearance, stalks of attentiveness nurture the leafing fiber of Universal Life.

Six months away, a different resurrection is brewing. But while autumn's hope looks toward birth, spring's hope seeks beyond the other portal, the threshold of death, to encounter the rising Light that overcomes the darkness of materialistic destitution.

In that both darkness and hope vie for attention, there now coexist two contrasting soul states that call upon the will forces. While certainty in the steel of striving is needed to fulfill the provision of the soul, a sanguine will has the power to overcome elements that threaten to make life a burden.

After a lengthy absence, he returns to the west coast, and recalls his first encounter with the expanse of sea, the mysterious forest and mountains, the soft light and misty veils, and the wonderful spaciousness that pervades the region. Here, a verdancy washes out of the sea and climbs progressively through the forest, each layer fading softer than the preceding one. Over-flowing with etheric forces, plant life surges with vigor and, even after falling to earth, trees spring forth new growth upon their spent forms. Vitality recycles, the salt air and greenery saturate inner life, and an overwhelming languor pulsing with the sea's wash, curling in and sweeping out in long-breathing rhythms, calls for the rigor of the Ego to uphold focus in the midst of dissolution.

- - In the rain - raining, always raining down by the bay - I ascend a creaky stairway, and pass dim recesses, a hold whose cargo comprises lonely, marginalized souls, a dark and dingy hovel to huddle in. Residents bear heating oil in jugs up the stairs from barrels in the side yard to feed oil cook stoves, rendering warmth to stave off the invading dampness. But the oil, spilled here and there over the years,

inadvertently serves to kindle a firetrap. Listing in a sea of poverty, sailcloth in tatters, adrift upon a social backwater, though when I first laid eyes on her she looked ready to keel over, hoisting myself amidships, I made her home.

As a student with little financial means, a slum tenement will make do. A long time past, it must have been a passable dwelling. But now, in its dilapidation it looms like a foundering ship over a watery grave, a shabby hulk with a slumlord at the helm, whose residents, with little prospect outside of a life of squalor, are seldom visited by the wings of hope.

One day, one of the elderly residents asks me to haul up some jugs of heating oil for her. An intriguing character, she is the kind of soul who can contrast her gloomy abode with a cheery glow. As I get to know her, I feel inspired as a student of the media to depict both a portrait of her valor in the face of destitution, and an exposé on the social anatomy of poverty.

Interviews with my madonna vieja, the slumlord, and the administrator of the welfare bureaucracy, result in a radio program and an article with revealing photographs. A month later, my friend is moved by a social worker to a brighter, cleaner place to live.

In tandem with the Calendar, the inner beams of hope are active in raising light from out of a tomb-like darkness.

Early mists clear, giving way to the light, and the soul begins reviewing what it has explored through the academic year. An owl off in the distance, barely audible, touches the spruce-dark silence with a soft-feather call. And somewhere out there, the fox ranges wide, scouting, black paws leading on to the next elusive meal. Both these over-wintering characters, the fox and the owl, move now with a ghost-like presence, feigning non-existence in a bid for proximity to prey.

The soul prepares to embrace impending change while keeping constant with winter-won enrichment. There is tumult over the surface of the lake, but quiet within the dark of the Earth's womb, where woven strands of seed-dreams, under suspension for a season, begin now to unravel.

And the crocus, penetrating winter's expiration, wrapping an aura of purple around a ray of warm orange, rises in an early spring gesture, as though out of the emptiness thawing crystals have condensed into a carnelian to warm the cold of death.



## **Week 50**

March 16-22

It is a flame-like chroma compared with summer's jade and autumn's olive, this green of grass and leaf-flush lighting the hills of St. Patrick's week. And the nature of green is of a middling quality. Whereas red boldly advances into perception, and blue serenely recedes, green holds steadfast to a restful, neutral position. And yet, green can also overlight like a scroll of primavera, or cascade as a tonic against the shabbiness of winter's leavings.

According to Steiner, we are, in a sense, the "earth" for the angels, a resource in which to root and flourish. To the extent it may be so, that any striving to dissolve emotional and intellectual illusions that arise in spring goes far in freeing the elemental powers of nature, would mean we have the capacity to serve all manner of spiritual beings. And we thought we were mere wanderers, keeping to ourselves, like shipwrecked sailors on a deserted island. Theorists of evolution would call us

*enlightened apes* but to approximate Steiner's view, we are *descended angels*, both subjects and substance of resurrection.

Years ago, fledging wings of drama in the first North American stage production of Monty Python's *The Life of Brian*, he carried three different roles between which he rushed backstage to change costume and character.

Produced in Alaska, in a town regaled as one of the most idyllic on the continent, people seeking a quality lifestyle are drawn to the setting of beautiful mountains rising from bright waters, sandy beachheads and the ebb and flow of the second biggest tide in North America.

Within this semi-utopian framework, a life-celebrating cast of individuals made rehearsals engaging experiences, and material lent itself to dark humor, including choreography by individuals strung on crosses, while singing "always look on the bright side of life."

While fundamentalists panned the play as "blasphemous," looking back, he recognizes that the experience was an ideal forum for Lenten shadow work. With a tendency to take spirituality seriously, he was able to air its opposite - fun and irreverence in a metaphysical amphitheater. While any character of the inner cast can become illusion-bound, he discovered that under the influence of mindful direction the "bondage of enchantment" can be loosened.

- - After pushing for too long beyond my personal energy boundary, I have to quit work. The school I am teaching in, like most progressive communities, engenders utopian ideals while short-changing the shadow. ("How many idealists does it take to screw in a light bulb?" Answer: "Just one, who stands there holding the bulb while the rest of the world revolves around him.") It is time to stop, to focus on recovery.

However, at the same time that I need to withdraw, a wayward voice within, externalized through my partner, insists I "finish the year off - put as much of yourself into the work as possible before you quit." Fortunately, to counter this, another inner counsel echoes through a friend to take care of myself, that a new framework would give opportunity to redeem suppressed shadow elements, such as "idleness" and "selfishness." I have to get that dark hound out in the open, before it turns into a rabid pit bull.

In the midst of all this, I am undergoing a substantial death process - the demise of my community connection, my work, and my relationship, so much change calling for so much mindfulness that I find myself having to work through the "bondage of enchantment" in an exponential way.

Later, in a dream, I am traveling with a close friend in a seldom-traversed wilderness. Wildlife abounds, mostly moose, bear, and wolves. It is growing darker, night is closing down on us in tandem with a rising threat from the bears, who will brook no trespass on their territory. It is stressful, but I feel in control. We keep moving with sustained vigilance.

While outwardly, life is filled with spring's light and exuberance, within, the shadow seeks expression through dreaming, a forum to purge itself. Vigilance becomes second nature now. Memories of wolf-song over surreal autumn terrain arise. At this juncture of the sojourn of the Calendar, horizons have been rendered visible, destinations once elusive appear attainable. As the owl of existentialism prepares for an ultimate encounter, the sovereignty of spirit is well established, and shall soon prove its mettle. At dawn, a waning moon floats across a pale wash and, in the following sea of daylight, currents of gold transfigure an auric wealth, as a sleeping tide of green champs to rise within the imagination of myriad seeds.



## **Week 51**

March 23-29

The beauty of flowers, the melody of birdsong, the evocative fragrance of blossoms, the pleasant warmth of the sun, and the taste of fresh, vital greens - as spring's procession pours into the soul through the gates of the senses perception discovers its power in spirit.

Trees begin to engineer petals from the blueprint of sunrays. Blossoms become delicate chalices of solarly, an architecture charming and rarefied.

And, though in stark contrast, an astral smog vents from the dungeon of shadow, threatening to obscure the effect of the nascent forces in the garden of the soul, love's refining forces and a little striving to bring balance to the appetites promises to transcend travail.

- - I am performing a challenging feat in a risky setting, climbing through a window, poised on a high place over an abyss. Maneuvering panes will allow me access to the interior. The procedure requires a lot of focus and concerted use of will forces. Getting inside is accompanied by a tremendous feeling of accomplishment.

The dream speaks to how the resolution of my predicament is hinged on the transformation of my perception - which "must create its power anew, out of the mirror of World Spirit." However, the resolution of my overall condition, a deeply karmic one, can only unfold over time, layer by layer.

In the years since the dissolution of my career, having washed away much overburden through mindful process, I have been able to arrive at the bedrock of my condition. What remains is an issue of feeling under-valued, currently associated with being down on myself for feeling limited by fatigue, and the effects of that fatigue - emptiness, feeling awkward in the social arena, and inadequacy in meeting the world. I am needing to forgive myself, especially since much of my current limitation is due to having given of myself beyond my limits.

Those who hear the harmonious voice of one of the first songsters of spring can be forgiven for imagining it derives from an exotic-looking mentor bearing lessons for a choir of Carusos. Careful search finds only a humble brown sparrow painted with an array of spotty streaks, like notes of a hermetic order.

Often found in its favorite haunt, a streamside thicket, the song sparrow, in harmony with the watery music of the brook, intones a chalice of effervescence that dissolves any lingering memory of winter.

In another part of the forest, a wood-carver is at work, chiseling, hammering and drilling in the warming sun, foraging for delicacies seasoned with a hint of sweet sap. Enrobed in striking black-and-white with a flaring red crown, the downy woodpecker is equipped with a spear of intent to harvest a scourge from the heart's forest.

And above, on a descending course, wing hinterland poetics in the haunting beauty and navigational genius of wild geese. Whistling down on great wings, alighting upon waters of quiet elegance, they have at last returned and we can release a great sigh, a breath of all-is-well across the land.

The season and the soul converse through song sparrow charm, the vivacious probing woodpecker, and the geese that evoke a mysterious power of orientation.

Meanwhile, Lady Soul can only be approached with the white-feather discourse of the heart. And silence is her response. But the silence is pregnant with a multitude of songs, for in her house there are many mansions. And, as March winds with rousing gusts announce an unleashing, human consciousness increasingly communes with nature-consciousness.

Though squirrel stockpiles are depleted, there sleeps beneath the howling of the wind a rainbow of provision. The whale migrates north, never tiring in its briny traverse, while ashore, grain sprouts, and the life of the soil quickens in etheric charge. With trees budding, and the song sparrow in a quiet bower performing the first movement of its intricate composition, the forces supporting Egohood rise to meet nature's stirring momentum, entering now through the gates of sense.



## **Week 52**

March 30 - April 6

In tandem with wild geese, the sun's golden chariot streams up from its winter abode, penetrating the earth with the magic of regeneration. With the stirring of long-frozen etheric forces, spaciousness presides over the spring silence, an empty arena that invites what presses from above to cascade down, and what presses from below to well and overflow.

Near the close of day, deer, strained by the long spartan winter and hungry for nutrients, are out on snow-free south-facing slopes dining on fresh greens.

A hawk perched on high scans for new gleanings, rodent hibernators emerging in a somatic state, or freshly arrived migrant birds scouting would-be territory. Having subsisted through a protracted season on an austere diet of squirrel and wintering bird, the hawk welcomes its new menu as exotic buffet.

His life feels bracketed, on one side by fatigue, on the other by rigorous discipline. Although impatient to recover from his prolonged state of depletion, he knows he must moderate his expectation if he is to make reliable progress. Meanwhile, at this time of year, he would rather focus on the increasing exuberance of nature than to languish in self-absorption.

An emissary of dignified bearing, its plump form sporting a conservative tuxedo, the robin weaves a classic nest, where sky-blue eggs hatch motley, spotted fledglings who mature into proper and contained citizens. Not only one of the earliest songsters of the year, the robin is also the first to herald dawn's faintest glimmer with its fluty "cheer-up, cheer-up!"

One year, although aspiring to higher education, he had relegated himself to the regime of a working drone for the sake of his children, recent victims of an amicable, but taxing divorce. He was willing to sacrifice the course of his life, if that was the best thing he could do for them. However, the Universe had other plans. In the midst of soul-searching, he encountered a cheery, robin-like individual who persuaded him that if he really wanted to give something of enduring value to his children, he would set out on a quest to fulfill his own life in such a way that he would become for them a model of a person living in a consummate way.

- - I dream of crossing a frozen river. As I proceed, I become trapped between a bear and open water flowing in the middle of the river. Death threatens on either side. It is a foreshadow of Easter, this position midway between dangers, in that I have come to a place where I must beware, on one hand, precarious spiritual immersion, and on the other, an overwhelming power.

The dream leads me to ponder the Spirit of the bear, a being at home in wild places, whose connection with the world is buffered by a generous padding of fat and fur. Fortunately, the bear is largely phlegmatic in temperament - as a choleric, such a creature would be tenfold fearsome.

The bear is an Easter being - as, with etheric rhythms hovering near zero, its death-like hibernation and lengthy passage through the astral/dream realm precede a bright spring resurrection.

Living in shadow behind streaming forest sunlight, quietly, but with adaptability and persistence, the bear emerges with a shamanic potency we are compelled to treat with respect. Within my *bearness* I get a feeling of being at home in the

world.

Moon forces and sun forces now attain a point of balance. Put another way, the force of Life and the force of Consciousness now meet in the soul. Knowing that one side dominates to detriment, balance is paramount. Life or Consciousness. The *nature* of Spirit lives in the life force of the earth, and the *being* of Spirit lives in consciousness. Our path on Earth lies between. This is the essence of Easter.

With one foot in nature and one in Spirit, we return, once again, to the footing spring delivers us to. The year ends in a wonderful state of balance, in the same place it started. But life is not merely circular, its gesture expresses a spiral upon the wheel of Destiny.

Warm light, akin to sunrays, shines from a Being upright in stance, a highly vibrating potency that elevates physicality to an etheric state. The Being's eyes generate depth, boundless peace, and steadfast warmth, as they shine from a countenance of love - windows to the sun's power, the mystery of the stars, and the pearl radiance of Earth. Compassion, power and wisdom preside, within the Being, within the self. It is the Self in self - the Pilot, the Shepherd, the Guide, Love, Truth, the Door, the Logos, the Word, the Light.

The Master wed with Earth Spirit.

This is the essence of Resurrection, the human destiny. Life is here to be lived. And living is here to be loved.

Spirit sublime, Thou gav'st me, gav'st me all  
For which I prayed. Not unto me in vain  
Hast thou thy countenance revealed in fire.  
Thou gav'st me Nature as a kingdom grand,  
With power to feel and to endure it. Thou  
Not only cold, amazed acquaintance yield'st,  
But grantest, that in her profoundest breast  
I gaze, as in the bosom of a friend.  
The ranks of living creatures thou dost lead  
Before me, teaching me to know my brothers  
In air and water and the silent wood.  
And when the storm in forest roars and grinds,

The giant firs, in falling, neighbor bough  
And neighbor trunks with crushing weight bear down,  
And falling, fill the hills with hollow thunders -  
Then to the cave secure thou leadest me,  
Then show'st me mine own self, and in my breast  
The deep, mysterious miracles unfold.

- Goethe

## Appendix:

### Rudolf Steiner's *Calendar of the Soul*

#### Week 1 *Easter Mood* April 7-13

When far out of world reaches  
Sunshine speaks to man's sense  
And joy from soul depths  
Combines with light in contemplation,  
Then thoughts from selfhood's sheath  
Stream into outer space  
Bonding dimly  
Man's essence to spirit being.

#### Week 2 April 14-20

In outward sensoriness  
Thought power loses its own self;  
Spirit worlds again find  
Their human offspring  
Whose seed comes from within them,  
But whose fruit of soul  
Must within itself be found.

#### Week 3 April 21-27

There speaks unto the Cosmic All  
Itself forgetting,  
And mindful of its primal state  
The growing human I:  
In Thee, as I set free myself  
From fetters of my self-bound nature  
I find the ground of my true Being.

#### Week 4 April 28 - May 4

I feel the beingness of my being:  
So speaks feeling experience  
That in the sunlit world  
Unites with light's rays;  
This feeling sense offers warmth  
To thought's clarity  
And firmly joins man and world  
Together in one.

#### Week 5 May 5-11

Light from spirit depths  
Fruitfully weaves in space  
To reveal the work of Gods  
Soul's being shines in it  
Expanded world-wide  
And resurrected  
From selfhood's narrow inner power.

#### Week 6 May 12-18

There has arisen from its separate state  
My Self, and finds itself  
As revelation of the Worlds  
In powers of Time and Space.  
The world shows everywhere to me,  
As archetype divine  
The truth of my own likeness.

#### Week 7 May 19-25

My self is threatening to escape  
Unto the light of Worlds drawn mightily  
Now enter thou, my heart's Divining,  
With power and strength into thy rights  
Replace the might of thinking,  
That in the senses' glory  
Inclines to lose itself.

**Week 8**            May 26-June 1

Power of the senses grows  
Joined to divine deeds  
And draws the force of thought  
Downward to the dimness of a dream.  
If divine being/Is to join with my soul  
Human thought must  
Calmly yield to dreamlife.

**Week 9**            June 2-8

Forgetting my own willfulness  
World warmth announcing summer  
Fills my spirit and soul being  
Spirit gazing bids me  
Lose myself in light  
Strongly giving me forewarning:  
Lose yourself, yourself to find.

**Week 10**        June 9-15

Into summer heights  
Rises the radiant being of the sun;  
It takes my human feeling  
With it into far-off spaces.  
My prescient sensibility awakes  
In inwardness announcing softly  
What you too sometime will know:  
That you are touched now by a godly being.

**Week 11**        June 16-22

In this, the Sun's own hour, it is for thee  
To recognize the tidings wisdom-filled:  
To beauty of the Worlds now yielded up  
Feeling thyself in thee, experience this:  
The human I can lose and find  
Itself within the Cosmic I.

**Week 12**    *St. John's Tide*    June 23-30

The beauteous world glory  
Impels me out of soul depths  
To let my own life's divinity  
Soar out into the world's flow.  
It impels me to forego myself  
Trustingly seeking selfhood  
Only in world light and world warmth.

**Week 13**            July 1-6

When I am in the heights of sense,  
Then in the depths of soul there flames  
Out of the spirit-worlds of Fire  
The Gods' own Word of Truth:  
In grounds of spirit seek divining  
To find thyself akin to spirit.

**Week 14**            July 7-13

Given over to senses' revelation  
I lost my own being's urgency;  
A dream of thought appeared  
To numb and rob me of myself;  
But world thoughts approach me  
In the show of senses - wakening.

**Week 15**            July 14-20

I feel as if enchanted  
In the world's show of spirit weaving;  
It has wrapped my selfhood  
In senses' dimness,  
To endow me with the strength  
Which my own limited ego  
Is powerless to give itself.

**Week 16**      July 21-27

My prescience of the divine  
Sternly bids me store spirit gifts within,  
So that godly treasure  
Can gather in the soul's ground  
And ripen into selfhood.

**Week 17**      July 28-August 3

Thus speaks the Word of Worlds  
Which I through senses' gate  
Might lead into the grounds of soul:  
Fill thou thy spirit depths  
With all My width of worlds  
To find hereafter Me in thee.

**Week 18**      August 4-10

Can I make wide my soul  
That she may bind herself  
To Cosmic Seed-Word now conceived?  
My heart divines that I must find the strength  
My soul to fashion worthily  
To form herself into the Spirit's raiment.

**Week 19**      August 11-17

Mysteriously with Memory to enclose  
That which has newly been conceived,  
This be my striving's further aim;  
And growing strong, it shall awaken  
Powers of Selfhood in my inward being,  
And in becoming give myself to me.

**Week 20**      August 18-24

So now I feel my Life  
Which, severed from the Universal Being  
Within itself, must quench itself,  
And building merely on its own foundations  
Within itself, bring death upon itself.

**Week 21**      Aug. 25-31

I feel strange power quickening  
Which, gathering, grants me to myself  
I find the seed ripening  
And presentiment weaves in light  
To inwardly empower selfhood.

**Week 22**      September 1-7

The Light from world-wide spaces  
Lives on in me with strength;  
It turns to light of soul  
And shines into the depths of spirit  
The fruits to liberate  
Which in the course of time will ripen  
The Self of Man out of the Self of Worlds.

**Week 23**      September 8-14

Into autumnal dimness  
The stirring of the senses dies away.  
Dim veils of mist now mingle  
With revelations of the light;  
And I behold in widths of space  
The Autumn's winter-sleep.  
The Summer has itself  
Now yielded up to me.

**Week 24**      September 15-21

Soul ever anew creating itself  
Becomes of itself aware;  
World spirit strives on  
Newly enlivened by self-knowledge  
And shapes out of soul darkness  
Will's fruit of selfhood.

**Week 25**      September 22-28

I may now to myself belong  
And radiantly spread inward light  
Into the darkness of all space and time.  
All natural Being presses towards sleep;  
The depths of soul shall waken  
And waking carry gleams of Sun  
Into cold floods of Winter.

**Week 26**    *Michealmas*    Sept 29 - Oct 5

O Nature, your motherly being  
I carry in my willing;  
And the fieriness of my will  
Tempers my spirit quest                      To give  
birth to selfhood's feeling  
So I may bear myself in me.

**Week 27**      October 6-12

Into my being's depths to press  
Stirs up a longing filled with heart's Divining  
That self-observing I may find myself  
As gift of Summer's Sun, which as a seed  
Warmth-giving lives in autumn-mood  
As bud of powers of my soul.

**Week 28**      October 13-19

I can, with new inner life  
Feel my own being enlarge  
While thought's rays strengthen  
And out of the soul's sunlike power  
Loosen the riddles of life  
Fulfilling many a wish  
Whose wings mere hope had lamed.

**Week 29**      October 20-26

The light itself of thinking  
Kindles its own self inwardly  
And gives meaning to experience  
Out of world spirit's source;  
This is my summer harvest  
Autumn solace, and winter hope.

**Week 30**      Oct 27 - Nov 2

Within the sunlight of my soul  
Spring ripened fruits of Thinking.  
Into the certainty of self-awareness  
All feeling now transforms itself,  
And I can sense with joy  
The Autumn's spirit-wakening.  
The Winter will arouse in me  
The Summer of the soul.

**Week 31**      November 3-9

The light from spirit depths  
Strives outward like the Sun;  
It turns to strength of will for living  
And shines into the senses' dimness  
Forces to liberate  
Which ripen from the soul's impulses  
Creative powers in the work of Man.

**Week 32**                    November 10-16

I feel ripening strength of my own  
That gets stronger and gives me to the world;  
I feel my own being empowered  
To find its way to clarity  
In life's web of destiny.

**Week 33**                    November 17-23

I feel for the first time the world  
Which, without my soul's participation,  
Would merely be empty, cold life  
And, showing itself powerless  
To create itself anew  
Would, of itself, lead only to death.

**Week 34**                    November 24-30

Secretly the ancient wisdom  
With newly arisen selfhood  
Comes with feeling alive inwardly  
It should pour waking cosmic forces  
Into my life's outward action  
And imprint my becoming into existence.

**Week 35**                    December 1-7

Can I know true being  
So that it rediscovers itself  
In the soul's creative pulse?  
I feel power lent to me  
To live my own self in the universal self  
Modestly as an integral member.

**Week 36**                    December 8-14

In my being's depths speak  
Pressing to be revealed,  
Deep secrets of the cosmic word:  
'Fill the goal of your work  
With my spiritual light  
Sacrificing yourself through me.'

**Week 37**                    December 15-21

Blissful urgings of my heart seek  
To bear spirit light into world winter night  
So that shining soul seeds  
Can root in universal ground  
And God's word in the dark of the senses  
May resound enlightening through all that is.

**Week 38**                    December 22-28

I feel the Spirit-Child  
Now conjured free within the womb of soul;  
In clarity of heart  
The holy Word of Worlds has now begotten  
The heavenly fruit of Hope  
Which grows rejoicing into farthest worlds  
Out of my being's ground divine.

**Week 39**                    Dec. 29 - Jan. 4

Unto spirit revelation given  
I win the light of universal being.  
The power of thought flows clearer  
Giving myself to me  
And in waking frees for me  
Out of thinking power feelings of selfhood.

**Week 40**      January 5-11

When in the depths of spirit  
I am fulfilled in the ground of soul  
Out of heart's love-worlds,  
Then empty notions of narrow self are  
replaced  
With world word's fiery strength.

**Week 41**      January 12-18

Soul's creative power  
Strives from the heart  
To kindle godly forces  
To work aright in human life,  
To shape its very self  
Through human love and human deeds.

**Week 42**      January 19-25

In deepest winter darkness  
The soul's strong impulse  
Is to reveal its own strength  
To lead on into darkness  
And with forethought feel  
Through heart's warmth, the sense revela-  
tion.

**Week 43**      Jan. 26 - Feb. 1

In wintry depths profound  
The spirit's very being gathers warmth;  
It gives to cosmic glory  
Through forces of the heart, the power to Be.  
The fire of soul in Man  
Grows stronger and defies the cosmic cold.

**Week 44**      February 2-8

By grasping new sensations  
Soul's clarity,  
Aware of spirit birth attained  
Fills teeming world becoming  
With my thought's creative willing.

**Week 45**      February 9-15

Thought's power firms itself  
Joining with the spirit birth;  
It clarifies dark sense stimulation  
Into full enlightenment.  
For fullness of soul  
To unite with world becoming  
Revelation of the senses  
Must receive the light of thinking.

**Week 46**      February 16-22

The world threatens to dumb  
Soul's inborn power;  
Now come, you power of memory  
Shine out of spirit depths  
And strengthen my seeing  
Which only through strength of will  
Can fully sustain itself.

**Week 47**      Feb. 23 - March 1

Out of the world's womb  
Desire of becoming quickens the life of  
sense.  
May this find my power of thought  
Armed with those godly powers  
That strongly in me and inwardly live.

**Week 48**            March 2-8

May there shine in the light  
That flows from cosmic heights to the soul  
The surety of world thought  
That solves riddles of the soul,  
And may it gather radiance  
To awake love in human hearts.

**Week 52**            March 30 - April 6

When out of soul depths  
Spirit turns toward world being  
And beauty wells from far spaces  
Then power of life draws  
From heavenly distance into human form  
And, working mightily, unites  
Spirit presence with human beingness.

**Week 49**            March 9-15

'I feel the force of world being.'  
So speaks clarity of thought  
Considering its own spirit growth  
In the darkness of cosmic nights,  
And bending to nearing universal dawn  
The inner rays of hope.

**Week 50**            March 16-22

There speaks unto the human I  
Mightily itself revealing  
And setting free its very powers,  
The joy-in-growth of World-existence:  
Into thee my life transferring  
Out of the spell of its enchantment,  
I reach my own true aim.

**Week 51**            March 23-29

The rich kingdom of the senses  
Pours itself inside of man.  
The world spirit finds itself  
In the mirror picture of the human eye  
Which must from out of that source  
Create its strength anew.



## The Author

Where thinking falls to the dimness of a dream, and imagination and feeling rise to a throne of sentience, earth-vision is born.

Within the biography of Josef Graf can be found a Waldorf teacher, wilderness traveller, watercolorist, and anthroposophical researcher. With over twenty years of experience in the field of spiritual ecology, his primary approach to writing is to open himself to nature until it can speak through him.

His works can be accessed through [www.evsite.net](http://www.evsite.net)

## Books by Josef Graf

*EARTH VISION, a travelogue of spiritual ecology*, opens the treasurehold of the soul by portraying the human-nature relationship at 70 sites across North America.

*A Calendar of Nature and Soul* continues to follow the trail of a third millenium everyman, now shifting from a geographic focus to a passage through the seasons. 52 chapters coincide with the weeks of the year, in which natural and biographic events interweave with Rudolf Steiner's Calendar of the Soul.

*GAIA SOJOURN, Spiritual Ecology Across a Series of Incarnations*, takes a global perspective through mythic, historic, and futuretime forums, using reincarnation as its principle device(an artistic blend of biography and fiction).

*The Earth Vision Gallery*, a thematic exhibit of photographs and watercolors contained within the covers of a book, carries the viewer through a holistic experience of nature, color theory, and self-discovery.

*Hebert Returns to America* is a gallery of humor with its artwork hung off the wall. The reader is invited to test drive Hebert's haywire passage through a diverse array of wild lands, social, cultural, and natural.

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