Leaping, Laughing They Run

by

Carol A. Boye

Cosmos and Psyche

60121

Dr. Stanislav Grof & Dr. Richard Tarnas

May 31, 2010

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of PhD at Wisdom University

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes an archetypal journey. The journey starts with the Chimney Sweeper, moves through a death/rebirth experience, and ends with the Divine Child.

The Chimney Sweeper archetype is the child who is abandoned and mistreated. Her true nature is covered, hidden from sight by layers and layers of soot. She must work long and hard to learn her lessons. It is painful to clean, sweep and remove all the layers of soot that have built up such a false persona over the years. There comes a time when she must surrender to something greater. She must undergo a death/rebirth process, a dark night of the soul. Grace comes to set her free, and she emerges from the chrysalis as her true nature, the Divine Child.

In this paper I also cite my own dreams, poems, and journal writings to reveal my own archetypal journey as it parallels the journey of the Chimney Sweeper.

I wish to acknowledge the sacrifice made by all the Chimney Sweepers of the Victorian era, without whom the Industrial Revolution would not have come to be, and William Blake, who had the courage to expose the hypocrisy and cruelty of his age and times.

The following table contains other images and symbols from fairy tales, myths and Kabbalistic teachings that are woven into this paper to help illustrate and illuminate the archetypal journey to the Divine Child.

Chimney Sweeper	Coffin of Black	Divine Child
Cinderella	Wicked step-mother	Princess
Allerleiruah	Hollowed out tree; closet under the stairs	Princess
Sleeping Beauty	Glass Coffin	Princess
Psyche	Journey to the Underworld; Hellish sleep	Ambrosia of Immortality; Birth of Daughter
Kabbalah	Path of Initiation	Awakening of the Soul

THE SOUL'S JOURNEY

When my mother died, I was very young
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry "weep, weep, weep, weep".
So your chimney's I sweep, and in soot I sleep

There's little Tom Dacre who cried when his head
That curled like a lamb's back was shaved, so I said
Hush Tom, never mind it, for when your head's bare
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair

Leaving Father and Mother

The Chimney Sweeper is an orphan. His mother dies when he is very young, and his family lives in poverty. His father does not have the means to care for him and out of desperation sells him to a cruel master who will use him to do work that no one could be paid to do, that only a very young boy could do because of his small size. The memory of his very brief childhood is forgotten as he is covered by more and more layers of soot.

The theme of separation from the father and mother is common in fairy tales. We find Cinderella in a similar situation. She is an orphan being raised by a cruel stepmother.

Although the woman has two other daughters, it is Cinderella who is forced to do the dirty work, to tend the fire, to sweep the ashes from the hearth.

In the fairy tale "Allerleirauh," a King decides to marry his daughter following the death of his wife. The daughter, Allerleirauh, escapes. She leaves her home in the middle of the night wearing a coat made from the furs of each of the animals in the kingdom. When she is later found by a different King and his huntsmen she says "I am a poor child, deserted by father and mother; have pity on me and take me with you."[1]

In Kabbalistic teachings, the soul is said to descend from the upper worlds of the Tree of Life, from the higher sefirot, or branches, into the lower world of physical existence.[2] In the poem "The Chimney Sweeper," the children, abandoned by their parents when they were very young, can be thought of as the soul being placed in a body and entering the world of space and time, thereby losing contact with the Divine parents.

The spiritual literature of the world speaks of the soul's journey as it descends from the numinous and enters into physical form as a form of forgetting, where the memory of the blissful state of the soul's true nature becomes separated by veils as we begin our life on earth. The poet Rumi speaks of these veils as drunkeness in his poem "Who Says Words With My Mouth":

All day I think about it, then at night I say it.

Where did I come from and what am I supposed to be doing?

---

[1] Marion Woodman, *Leaving My Father's House: A Journey to Conscious Femininity* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc, 1992), 368.

[2] Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, *Kabbalah: Traditions of Hidden Knowledge* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 19.

I have no idea.

My soul is from elsewhere, I'm sure of that,

and I intend to end up there.

This drunkenness began in some other tavern.

When I get back around to that place,

I'll be completely sober. Meanwhile,

I'm like a bird from another continent, sitting in this aviary.

The day is coming when I fly off,

But who is it now in my ear, who hears my voice?

Who says words with my mouth?

Who looks out with my eyes? What is the soul?

I cannot stop asking.

If I could taste one sip of an answer,

I could break out of this prison for drunks.

I didn't come here of my own accord, and I can't leave that way.

Whoever brought me here will have to take me back.[3]

If we relive our experience in the womb, we remember another experience of this state of bliss. Stan Grof calls the First Basic Perinatal Matrix, the "Primal Union with the Mother." In a positive experience of the womb there are

---

[3] John Moyne and Coleman Barks, *Open Secret: Versions of Rumi* (Putney, VT: Threshold Books, 1984), 37.

> …experiences of vast regions with no boundaries or limits. We can identify with galaxies, interstellar space, or the entire cosmos…floating in the sea, identifying with various aquatic animals, such as fish, jelly fish, dolphins, or whales, or even becoming the ocean…archetypal visions of Mother Nature, safe, beautiful and unconditionally nourishing like a good womb. We can envision fruit-earing orchards, fields of ripe corn, agricultural terraces in the Andes, or unspoiled Polynesian islands…various celestial realms and paradises.[4]

In holotropic states of consciousness, induced by a substance like LSD, a breathwork session, or spontaneously, a person can re-experience the BPM1 state of the birth process. In astrological terms, the planetary archetype associated with the first stage of birth is Neptune – oceanic, cosmic, having no boundaries, spatial freedom.

In my own life, I experienced a spontaneous holotropic state as a result of intense spiritual practice. This state lasted for three days and three nights. Following this spiritual emergence/emergency, I had several profound dreams as my psyche integrated the experience. One of them was a dream which I now see as a re-experience of the womb state and of birth.

> *I was sitting on a saucer like disc, floating in space. The air was warm. As I moved through the cosmos amongst the stars and the Milky Way, I felt a warm breeze on my face. I felt totally at peace, safe, and happy. After a while in the distance I saw a blue wave coming at me. As it came near and passed by me I was knocked off the saucer. I found myself in a hospital bed. I was agitated by the feel of the starch white sheets. I did not like the sensation of the metal of the bed and the concrete of the walls and sidewalks. The heaviness and denseness of it all was irritating. The sounds of cars on the street were annoying. Yet I knew I had to stay here and heal. I knew I had no other choice.*

Thus, when we arrive on earth, we find that we have been abandoned by our Divine parents. As we grow, we find we must again sever our ties with our earthly parents in order to begin our journey of individuation and to step upon the path of initiation. We

---

[4] Stanlislav Grof, *Psychology of the Future* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), 37.

either do this out of a conscious choice, or more commonly, it is forced upon us by becoming orphaned, or the target of incest, or we are let down by our societal structures causing us to seek something of greater measure. We begin our journey to the Self.

Golden Hair

In the poem by Blake, the boy's golden hair symbolizes the numinous, spiritual quality of the soul. The additional image of the chimney sweeper's hair as 'curled like a lamb's back' refers to the innocence of the soul. Innocence is lost in the world of experience. This is the archetype of the Divine Child.

In the fairy tale "Allerleirauh", the daughter covers her beautiful golden hair with her coat of fur, enters the forest, and lives in a hollowed out tree trunk. She is no longer recognizable as a Princess, and she must live as an animal in the wildness of the forest, and in the darkness of the tree trunk.

The shaving of this golden hair is symbolic of the final severance with the Divine world, imposed by the material world. In the denseness of the physical world, the soul is forgotten. Shaving one's head is also symbolic of the renunciation of the self to the service of others as in the case of entering military service, or the forsaking of the old identity and the beginning of a new life dedicated to a higher purpose, as in the case of entering a monastery, a surrender of my will to the will of a higher power. The shaved head is symbolic of the head of a newborn baby.

On the very first 10 day Vipassana meditation retreat I sat, I had a dream about such a child on the first night. The Divine Child was coming to me again.

I am on the men's side in the Meditation Hall. A man hands me a booklet with several pictures of me from my past. I move over to the women's side and sit on my cushion. The man comes over and sits near me, watching me. He slowly moves closer and closer. We finally lie down and embrace. The staff tells us that embracing in not allowed. He goes to the front of the room. Later, when I am allowed to talk, I go over to him. He is holding a newborn baby boy. The baby's head is bald and I can smell the scent of a new baby's head. I ask how the baby is and the man says he has a fever, but he is alright. The baby's head is against the man's chest.

Sweeping Chimneys and Sleeping in Soot

In spiritual terms, our ordinary consciousness is likened unto sleep.[5] Our work is to awaken our souls to our true nature. The image of sleeping in soot gives the impression of how deep our forgetfulness is. Our true nature is obscured by layers and layers of unconsciousness. Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi states that "For the natural man the soul is the Sleeping Beauty as in the fairy tale."[6] Edward Hoffman finds that "we characteristically move through mundane, waking activities as though surrounded by veils, which hide other possible spheres of perception…"[7] In the Zohar, one of the major books of

---

[5] Edward Hoffman, *The Kabbalah: Doorway to the Mind*, (Highland, Indiana: Creative Audio, 1986), cassette.

[6] Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, *Adam and the Kabbalistic Tree* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc, 1974), 245.

[7] Edward Hoffman, *The Way of Splendor* (Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, Inc, 1981), 120.

Kabbalistic teachings, it is said that since the soul is part of God, it feels lost and out of place in the body, and longs to return home.[8]

In the fairy tale "Allerleirauh", the Princess, upon leaving her father's castle, covers her hands and face with soot, wraps herself in the coat of animal skins, enters the forest, crawls into a hollowed out tree, and sleeps. She sleeps until the next day when a King finds her and takes her to his castle to work in the kitchen and sweep up the ashes. The boys in Blake's poem crawl into chimneys and sleep in soot much like Allerleiruah in her hollowed out tree and in her closet under the stairs.

Marion Woodman describes being in a hollowed out tree as being in the womb of nature. The hollow tree is paradoxical, being both a "tomb and a womb within the Great Mother."[9] It is a time of separation from God, and occurs in the middle years of life, between the ages of 25 – 45.[10]

When Allerleirauh is taken to the castle, she is given a closet under the stairs as her room, a place where no daylight enters. Woodman describes the symbolism of the closet:

> The den under the stairs is an advanced version of the hollow tree – a womb in which she is pregnant with herself, beneath a staircase that connects her to another

---

[8] Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar* (Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1991), 683.

[9] Marion Woodman, *Leaving my Father's House: A Journey to Conscious Femininity* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc, 1992), 16.

[10] Robert Bly and Marion Woodman, *The Divine Child*, (Audio Literature, 1991), cassette.

> level of consciousness. Like many contemporary women, Allerleirauh has to learn to mother herself.[11]

The work done in the kitchen and the sweeping of the hearth can be called ashes work. This work is necessary to develop the qualities of the conscious masculine and conscious feminine. The work is done in the kitchen found down in the basement, in the dark where there is no sun, and there is no shining. The soot represents the ego traits used to cover up the Divine self. It represents the traits that make up the act, or the persona.[12] I found it interesting that one of Freud's clients referred to her therapeutic sessions as "chimney sweeping."

> This young woman, whom Freud called in his writings Miss Anna O., suffered from severe hysterical symptoms. During their therapeutic sessions, she experienced spontaneous holotropic states of consciousness in which she regressed to childhood and relived various traumatic memories underlying her neurotic disorder. She found these experiences very helpful and referred to them as "chimney sweeping."[13]

.

---

[11] Marion Woodman, *Leaving My Father's House: A Journey to Conscious Femininity* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc, 1992), 17.

[12] Robert Bly and Marion Woodman," *The Divine Child*, (Audio Literature, 1991), cassette.

[13] Stanlislav Grof, *Psychology of the Future* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), 13.

VISIONS IN THE DARK

And so he was quiet, and that very night

As Tom was asleeping he has such a sight

That thousands of sweeper, Dick, Joe, Ned and Jack

Were all of them locked up, in coffins, of black

Coffins of Black

The chimney becomes the tomb of the sweeper. The more he climbs, the more soot gets on his body and in his lungs. Each day he enters the chimney to do his work, and each day he experiences the panic of suffocation and the horror of confinement in such a small and narrow place. The black coffin symbol is a petrified chimney. The soot has become so dense it is sticky like creosote, until it finally hardens to the point of becoming a coffin where the boy gets no air and no light, and he gets stuck.

The imagery here is the same as Grof's description of the Second Basic Perinatal Matrix, the Cosmic Engulfment and No Exit or Hell:

> …we typically feel we are begin sucked into a gigantic whirlpool or swallowed by some mythic beast. We might also experience that the entire world or cosmos is being engulfed...The sense of overwhelming vital threat can lead to intense anxiety and general mistrust bordering on paranoia…descending into the depths of the underworld, the realm of death, or hell…we feel caught in monstrous, claustrophobic nightmare, exposed to agonizing emotional and physical pain, and

> have a sense of utter helplessness and hopelessness. Feelings of loneliness, guilt, the absurdity of life, and existential despair reach metaphysical proportions…[we] become convinced that this situation will never end and that there is no way out…[there is a] sense of dying, going crazy and never coming back…we are selectively blinded and unable to see anything positive our life and in human existence in general. The connection to the divine dimension seems to be irretrievably severed and lost.[14]

On the astrological level, the planetary archetype associated with the second birth matrix is Saturn – oppression, depression, stagnation, guilt, and engulfment.

On the level of initiation, the coffin of black is a symbol of the death experience. In much the same way that the 'books of the dead' are now being viewed as mystical teachings of the initiation process of life hidden in the symbolism of death, the symbol of the coffin of black is an indication of a process of death that must be experienced during life before higher levels of consciousness can be obtained.

In the following dream, which I had in the weeks following my spontaneous holotropic experience, the symbol of the coffin of black is found:

> *I was on a barge like ship going south on a wide river. It was night. We were moving fast. A couple was trying to figure out a way to sneak off the ship and go to shore. There was a long corridor. We were trying to avoid a woman whose room was at the end of the corridor. This room was like my parent's room. The man got in a box. The woman was next to the box and both were in a net. Someone else wanted to go to shore in one of these boxes, but it would take four hours, and the boat would keep going. Besides, it was night and the tide was strong.*
>
> *I went to the front of the boat and later came back. I was talking to someone about leaving the ship. I saw someone getting into a black coffin. I asked "What if you get to shore and no one opens the coffin and wakes you up? What if they forget?"*

---

[14] Stanislav Grof, *Psychology of the Future* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), 41-44.

The critical event of a 15-day wilderness retreat I did in 1990 was the Vision Quest, a three day experience in the Rocky Mountains where I fasted, slept exposed to the elements under a tarp, and contemplated my life in complete solitude. Prior to the Vision Quest, I did some work around facing my fear of death. The following excerpts are from the journal I kept at that time:

> Last night we did a ritual where we faced our demons. The demon I chose to face is death. He was all black except for a white skeleton face surrounded by a black cape. He came across the plain in a coffin so I knew it was him. I was afraid of the coffin. It is a place I do not want to go. I have memories of funeral after funeral of confusion. I have always been afraid to die and therefore sometimes afraid to live. I am numb or reckless with an unquenchable need to prove myself – all coming from the same fear of non-existence.
>
> The demon said he was more powerful than me, that I was afraid to face him.
>
> I became a warrior. I was the white ram Medicine Man – the wise healer. I wore a black cape over my own white wool cape. I had a mask on and I used swords to fight with the demon death. I also had powers to shoot laser beams through death.
>
> At the end of my encounter with death, he stood in front of me and I looked into his face deeply which was still white but no longer a skeleton – it was now a face with skin and hollow, black, deep eye spaces. I put my face up to the face of death and breathed in his breath deep into my soul. Death began to vaporize into white smoke and I breathed him into my being. Death was fluid. Death was part of my being forever.
>
> Death and I danced and I felt I loved him. I wanted him to stay close to me. I asked death how to spend each day with him by my side and still live. He said I must risk and be true to myself, living my life and expressing myself, then I would experience life fully – even more fully when I allowed death to be ever present at my side. He said when I avoid death and deny death, life is shallow and hollow and goes on with a particular numbness and aimlessness. When life is lived with death affirmed and acknowledged, life is precious, a journey of learning, a never ending quest for knowing.

During the Vision Quest, I read from a book of poems. Two poems focusing on the death experience seemed appropriate during this time. The first is by Rainer Maria Rilke:

> Be ahead of all parting, as though it already were behind you, like the winter that has just gone by. For among these winters there is one so endlessly winter that only by wintering through it will your heart survive.
>
> Be forever dead in Eurydice – more gladly arise into the seamless life proclaimed in your song. Here, in the realm of decline, among momentary days, be the crystal cup that shattered even as it rang.
>
> Be – and yet know the great void where all things begin, the infinite source of your own most intense vibration, so that, this once, you may give it your perfect ascent.
>
> To all that is used up, and to all the muffled and dumb creatures in the world's full reserve, the unsayable sums
>
> Joyfully add *yourself*, and cancel the count.[15]

The other poem was by Bunan:

> Die while you're alive
>
> And be absolutely dead.
>
> Then do whatever you want:
>
> It's all good.[16]

These poems helped me to make my symbolic descent into the underworld during my Vision Quest.

In the myth of "Eros and Psyche", Psyche's fourth trial requires a descent into the underworld. She is given a casket by Aphrodite to take to Persephone in the underworld where Psyche is to ask that it be filled with an ointment of divine beauty. Then she is to return the casket to Aphrodite. Just as Psyche is about to throw herself off of a high tower

---

[15] Stephen Mitchell, ed., *The Enlightened Heart: An Anthology of Sacred Poetry* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 132.

[16] ibid, 85.

in despair over such a task, the tower speaks to her and reveals secrets that will help her to journey safely to the underworld and back. On her journey to the underworld, her major trial is to resist having pity on the poor, begging people she passes on the way.

> …all Psyche's acts present a rite of initiation, this prohibition implies insistence of 'ego stability' characteristic of every initiation. Among men this stability is manifested as endurance of pain, hunger, thirst, and so forth; but in the feminine sphere it characteristically takes the form of resistance to pity.[17]

Psyche successfully endures the lame driver, the river of the dead, the dead man, the old weaving women, the huge hounds with the three heads, and the bribes of Persephone, only to meet her doom upon her return when instead of returning the casket filled with the ointment of divine beauty to Aphrodite, she opens it and finds not beauty but a thick cloud of smoke which puts her into a hellish sleep.

In his work with holotropic states of consciousness, and in reference to the Second Basic Perinatal Matrix, Stan Grof states:

> Yet the fastest way of terminating this unbearable state is surrendering completely to it and accepting it. This shattering experience of darkness and abysmal despair is known from the spiritual literature as the Dark Night of the Soul. It is an important stage of spiritual opening that can have an immensely purging and liberating effect.[18]

In his discussion on Holistic Depth Psychology, Ira Progoff describes creativity as a process which occurs in the form of cycles, or holistic units. He view the literary form

---

[17] Erich Neumann, *Amor and Psyche* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 112-113.

[18] Stanslav Grof, *Psychology of the Future* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), 44.

of the Psalms as a reflection of these cycles in which the Psalmist passes through a tine of soul searching and moves eventually to a state of integration.

The Psalm occurs in phases, and contains in its cycle one phase that can be considered a regression. Following some sort of crisis, the first period is that of hopelessness. This hopelessness increases until it seems as though the very bottom of the valley has been reached and nothing can occur to change it. Fear develops until all hope is lost. This phase in the cycle of experience is known as the dark night of the soul. St. John of the Cross describes its mystical significance:

> …it follows that the darkness which it here suffers is profound and horrible and most painful, for this darkness, being felt in the deepest substance of spirit, seems to be substantial darkness. Similarly, since the affection of love which is to be given to it in the Divine union is Divine, and therefore very spiritual, subtle and delicate, and very intimate, transcending every affection and feeling of the will, and every desire thereof, it is fitting that…it first of all be purged and annihilated in all its affections and feelings, and left in a condition of aridity and restraint…with respect to both Divine thing and to human.[19]

The dark night of the soul phase is followed by a transformation in attitude brought about by the intense fear. This phase continues for a time until a new attitude establishes itself. Finally, complete integration takes place. Integration actually begins in the dark night of the soul phase. Progoff states:

> The place to look for the integration and the place to be with it is where the confusion and the life disorganization is at its fullest. Look for the integration in the depths of the darkest moment. That is where it is beginning to form itself.[20]

---

[19] St. John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 121-122.

[20] Ira Progoff, *The Practice of Process Meditation* (New York: Dialogue House, 1980), 48.

When a person can see themselves in a relationship with their life as a process, the time of panic and despondency becomes the ground position of the integration. The achievement of integration is considered to be an act of creativity.[21]

According to Clarissa Pinkola Estes, when there is destruction in the psyche, there is also a door, a way out. The door is through the destruction. The destruction blows open a wall that you can enter down into and apply the medicine required to heal the wounds. Shadow material and complexes are revealed to us through our night dreams. The dream ego, the part of us that participates in dreams, gives us pictures. These pictures show us what happened to Persephone, and can reveal what Hades looks like. Dreams and creative urges reveal the medicines that are needed to repair damaged aspects of the psyche. These medicines and this healing allow us to ride the creative cycle.[22]

The Turning Point

A shift occurs during the Third Basic Perinatal Matrix (The Death-Rebirth Struggle). Stan Grof speaks about the differences between the second and third matrices:

> The prevailing atmosphere is that of extreme passion and the driving energy of intoxicating intensity…we encounter archetypal figures of deities, demigods, and legendary heroes representing death and rebirth.
>
> Several important characteristics of the third matrix distinguish it from the previously described no-exit constellation. The situation here is challenging and difficult, but it does not seem hopeless and we do not feel helpless. We are actively

---

[21] Ira Progoff, *The Practice of Process Meditation* (New York: Dialogue House, 1980), 58.

[22] Clarissa Pinkola Estes, *The Creative Fire*, (Boulder, Colorado: Sounds True Recordings, 1991), cassette.

> involved in a fierce struggle and have the feeling that the suffering has a definite direction, goal, and meaning.
>
> …In addition, we do not play exclusively the role of helpless victims…while the no-exit situation involved sheer suffering, the experience of the death-rebirth struggle represents the borderline between agony and ecstasy and the fusion of both.[23]

The astrological archetype associated with the third perinatal matrix is Pluto – movement to wholeness, deep underworld of transformative power and energy, libido, instincts, creation and destruction, the death-rebirth cycle.

Pinkola Estes points out that in Jungian Psychology, in the process of individuation

> …in order to retrieve the gifts buried deep in the unconscious, one also has to deal with the instinctual nature of appetite, creative life, sensuality, sexuality, and love of God that is almost mind possessing…[24]

The Inner Light of Consciousness

Several days after my spontaneous holotropic experience, I had the following dream where I was given a lit candle by my spiritual teacher:

> *I was with three other people on shore. I was feeling vulnerable. I was crying and struggling with some inner conflict.*
>
> *I was on a boat. I didn't know how to drive the boat, so a man who did drove it upstream. We were going north. As the boat travelled, I moved closer and closer to the front.*

---

[23] Stan Grof, *The Future of Psychology* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), 48-50.

[24] Clarissa Pinkola Estes, *Wild Women Archetype*, (Boulder, Colorado: Sounds True Recordings, 1991), cassette.

> *My spiritual teacher was in the front of the boat. Students were sitting in chairs and she was calling us up to her one at a time. She had a few people around her, helping her. When I came up to see her she said "Yes, Carol is ready for further teaching, but I don't know what teaching. She is sweet, kind, and gentle in spirit." She handed me a lit white candle that reminded me of my first communion candle by the decorations on it. I carried it back to my seat. Other people had candles also.*

My dream reminded me of a dream that Carl Jung had involving a candle and a figure following behind him:

> It was night in some unknown place, and I was making slow and painful headway against a mighty wind. Dense fog was flying along everywhere. I had my hands cupped around a tiny light which threatened to go out at any moment. Everything depended upon me keeping this light alive. Suddenly I had the feeling that something was coming up behind me. I looked back and saw a gigantic black figure following me. But at the same moment I was conscious, in spite of my terror, that I must keep my little light going through night and wind, regardless of all dangers. When I awoke I realized at once that this figure was…my own shadow on the swirling mists, brought into being by the little light I was carrying. I knew, too, that this little light was my consciousness, the only light I have. My own understanding is the sole treasure I possess, and the greatest. Though infinitely small and fragile in comparison with the powers of darkness, it is still a light, my only light.[25]

An important aspect of our inner work during life is to keep this light going. In the following poem "A Crystal Star", I use the symbol of a candle to describe my essence:

> I am in focus in this dimension of space and time, and death is when I become blurry
>
> Until the light that perceives me scatters infinitely into space
>
> And while I am in focus in this plane of existence, I truly want to have my wish.
>
> And that is to be connected, truly connected to others, to life in such a way
>
> that the sad, terrifying aloneness I was,

---

[25] Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* (New York: Random House, Inc, 1963), 87-88.

> the new, blonde brief candle of a girl who almost blew out,
>
> The magic nearly squeezed shut between the fingers of those I adored.
>
> One of them needed a drink and a buddy to make himself feel he was alive,
>
> And the other sitting home in a chair in the shadow of the parlor, having had enough of broken promises,
>
> Shut down to comfortably numb. A stare at a cracked wall, pale green, no more hope, no more life.
>
> And now suppose I had a crystal star which was the opening the shadow and the absent one had to pass through in order to come back into focus, would I give it to them?
>
> When I visit I keep it concealed but the energy leaks out and it touches them,
>
> and maybe it burns, because it has been such a long time since they have come in contact with such a thing.
>
> The last time was when they were each a small child almost blown out in the night.
>
> The star came into focus from a vision. A vision a breath away from a breath held. And what will it take to move the breath deeply inward and out, in a chest collapsed nearly shut, under the pressure of anguish never expressed, of despair never embraced, by those held up so high as the truth?

In the poem “A Crystal Star”, being in focus is an image of being fully incarnated in the body and fully present with life. It is as if the energy of the soul converged as a single point, and life was created. Death is associated with being blurry, being obscure, being unperceived by light.

In the image of the self as a candle, life is seen as a fragile flame that is easily blown out by the winds of abandonment, despair, and grief. Aloneness is magnified by the longing for connection. Adoration increases for those who are far away and

unreachable. The self becomes blurrier and blurrier through neglect until nothing is left but a flicker behind storms of confusion.

Those adored but unavailable become internalized as conflicting, paradoxical ego personas. One is the shadow side, the addictive personality, exhibiting unacceptable behavior, having love affairs with substances that create electricity, sparks, excitement, the illusion of being alive. One sits in a shadow until nothing is left but the shadow of existence, a listless life of pale green, a crack of a life. One is absent physically; the other is absent mentally and emotionally.

Being a shadow and being an absent one is the same as being blurry. What is needed is the coming back into focus, into the fullness of life with the capacity for intimacy. What is needed is an opening and here it is a crystal star; a center of light with brilliant rays extending out in all directions. It takes immense energy to go through a transformation from and addict/shadow to a fully present and alive human being, and the crystal star provides this energy. Preparation must be made in approaching this light for shadows and flickering candles are obliterated and incinerated in its wake; they are not strong enough containers for this energy.

The way to prepare for this crystal star opening is by breathing. In the last breath, beyond breathing, in the blurry land of death, a vision appears. It is the vision of spirit, of Ruah, of the breath of life, of the Holy Spirit. In this vision, the breath of spirit enters the chest coffin of suffocating sadness and it begins to move deeply, inward and outward.

When I wrote this poem I did not know the answer to the question “And what will it take to move the breath deeply inward and out…?” I was left with a vision of what it would take to open my coffin.

A BRIGHT KEY

And by came an Angel who had a Bright Key

And he opened the coffins and set them all free

Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing they run,

And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,

They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;

And the Angel told Tom if he'd be a good boy,

He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.

And so Tom awoke and we rose in the dark,

And got with our bags and brushes to work.

Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm;

So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

Sudden Breakthrough and Resolution

A bright key is what is needed to open a coffin of black. It is a gift of grace from an Angel. The brightness of the key gives the impression that after a long time of waiting

in the dark of the coffin, there is a sudden infusion of light that is dazzling as the boys are set free.

Stan Grof describes the experience of the fourth Basic Perinatal Matrix:

> Having survived what seemed like an experience of total annihilation and apocalyptic ending of everything, we are blessed only seconds later with fantastic displays of magnificent rainbow spectra, peacock designs, celestial scenes, and visions of archetypal beings bathed in divine light…
>
> Following the experience of psychospiritual death and rebirth, we feel redeemed and blessed, experience ecstatic rapture, and have a sense of reclaiming our divine nature and cosmic status. We are overcome by a surge of positive emotions toward ourselves, other people, nature and existence in general.[26]

The planetary archetypes associated with the fourth stage of birth are Uranus/Jupiter – epiphany, sudden breakthrough to resolution, coronation, gold.

The Four Elements

Once the boys are freed by the Angel with the bright key, they are in a beautiful bright place. It is shiny and green, full of life and air – a sharp contrast to their previous existence in dark, sooty, confining chimneys. Here the boys are free to play, run, and wash off any soot that remains on them. Life is a balance of the four elements – earth (green plain), water (river), fire (sun) and air (wind).

The boys are released from a level of consciousness of darkness when the coffins are opened. Then the boys reach a place where it is spring; there are flowing rivers where

---

[26] Stanislav Grof, *The Future of Psychology* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), 54.

they purity themselves, there are green plains where they run and play, and there is the experience of the warmth of the sun. Spring indicates a new level of consciousness. 'Shining in the sun' means that the boy's divinity is again evident, not just in their hair, but in their entire being. Finally, by ascending on clouds, the boys reach a level of consciousness where the wind of God blows.

The Divine Child and the Conscious Feminine

In Jungian terms, Tom's vision is of the Divine Child emerging from the ashes work in the kitchen. The soot is being removed (washed in the river), and the dance with the King, or numinous principle, has begun.

In The Divine Child, Robert Bly warns of approaching the King too fast. He refers to the experiences of many Westerners in approaching Buddhist meditation, where the Eastern guru does not realize that the Western psyche must approach the light slowly so a person does not become psychically burnt out. Bly recommends removing the soot slowly, dancing, flirting, and playing with the King.[27]

In the fairy tale "Allerleirauh", there are three stages of psychic growth symbolized by three dresses, "…one as golden as the sun, one as silvery as the moon, and one as bright as the stars…"[28] She wears a different dress to each of three balls.

---

[27] Robert Bly and Marion Woodman, *The Divine Child*, (Audio Literature), 1991), cassette.

[28] Marion Woodman, *Leaving My Father's House* (Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, 1992), 367-368.

Allerleirauh's identity as a Princess is revealed at the third ball. The tale ends with the marriage of the King and Allerleiruah.

The myth of "Eros and Psyche" involves four tasks of initiation of the feminine, the final task requiring a journey to the underworld to confront death itself. The outcome of these tasks for Psyche is the marriage to the god Eros on Mt. Olympus, the drinking of the Ambrosia of immortality, and the birth of a daughter named Pleasure-Joy-Bliss.[29] The mastery of the conscious feminine, followed by the surrender to the Divine will, resulting in the birth of the Divine Child, is described by Marion Woodman in The Eternal Feminine:

> The Divine Child comes very late in our psychic development. It comes out of a mature feminine. In myths…the mortal feminine came to a maturity when she could open herself to receive the Holy Spirit and say 'Not my will, but thine be done.' Out of that union, the Divine Child is born. It takes huge consciousness and courage to surrender that way, to the Holy Spirit.[30]

Marion also describes what it is to be the conscious feminine:

> …receptivity, honoring the process, accepting the paradox of life, the capacity to be in the moment…to hold a conscious feminine position when everyone is gone back into power…it takes immense consciousness to hold that position.[31]

For Psyche, the moment of total surrender comes when she opens the casket that is supposed to be filled with the ointment of beauty. It actually contains a potion that induces a death-like sleep. Eros comes to the aid of Psyche and awakens her from this sleep. This theme is similar to the fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty, where the jealous

---

[29] Erich Neumann, *Amor and Psyche* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 140.

[30] Marion Woodman, *The Eternal Feminine*, (San Francisco: New Dimensions Foundation, 1991), cassette.

[31] Ibid.

mother-in-law figure, the Queen, gives Sleeping Beauty the poison apple, which causes her to go into a deep sleep. She is placed in a glass casket until the day when the handsome prince comes and awakens her with a kiss.

Marion speaks further of the Divine Child:

> This is the energy you are trying to connect to for healing. This is the energy that can make you whole, and it is only at this level that you can be make whole…when you start moving into that essence, there is often a healing crisis. When the body moves to a new level of consciousness, it is agony…the Divine Child is the possibility of a total new consciousness…when you start on a path with the Divine Child, you have no idea where the goal is. Being on the road is enough.[32]

---

[32] Robert Bly and Marion Woodman, *The Divine Child*, (Audio Literature, 1991), cassette.

WORKS CITED

Bly, Robert and Marion Woodman. *The Divine Child*. (Audio Literature), 1991. Cassette.

Grof, Stanlislav. *Psychology of the Future*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000.

Hoffman, Edward. *The Kabbalah: Doorway to the Mind*. Highland, Indiana: Creative Audio, 1986. Cassette.

Hoffman, Edward. *The Way of Splendor*. Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, Inc, 1981.

Jung, Carl. *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*. New York: Random House, Inc, 1963.

Mitchell, Stephen, ed. *The Enlightened Heart: An Anthology of Sacred Poetry*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989.

Moyne, John and Coleman Barks. *Open Secret: Versions of Rumi*. Putney, VT: Threshold Books, 1984.

Neumann, Erich. *Amor and Psyche*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Pinkola Estes, Clarissa. *The Creative Fire*. Boulder, Colorado: Sounds True Recordings, 1991. Cassette.

Pinkola Estes, Clarissa. *Wild Women Archetype*. Boulder, Colorado: Sounds True Recordings, 1991. Cassette.

Progoff, Ira. *The Practice of Process Meditation*. New York: Dialogue House, 1980.

St. John of the Cross. *Dark Night of the Soul*. New York: Doubleday, 1990.

Tishby, Isaiah. *The Wisdom of the Zohar*. Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1991.

Woodman, Marion. *The Eternal Feminie*. San Francisco: New Dimensions Foundation, 1991. Cassette.

Woodman, Marion. *Leaving my Father's House: A Journey to Conscious Femininity*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc, 1992.

Z'ev be Shimon Halevi. *Kabbalah: Traditions of Hidden Knowledge*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1979.

Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi. *Adam and the Kabbalistic Tree*. York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc, 1974.