

# *WINGS OF THE SEA*



*by Rod Hemsell*

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***WINGS OF THE SEA***

***MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS AND ILLUSTRATIONS***

***FROM YEAR 72-73 (2016-2017) OF A LIFE***

***(INCLUDING 14 SHORT ESSAYS ON 'SAVITRI' PUBLISHED IN THE CRESTONE EAGLE)***

***BY***

***ROD HEMSELL***

## *Savitri and Satyavan*

### 1. *The Goddess Savitri*

There is a central section of Sri Aurobindo's mantric teaching, titled *Savitri – A Legend and a Symbol*, which is often mistakenly interpreted as primarily a mythological legend rather than a symbol. However, through a series of workshops presented this year at centers in Europe as well as at our center here in Crestone, Colorado, we have tried to demonstrate the truer esoteric nature of the teaching that is revealed in this important part of the book. It is the section of about 60 pages in the very middle of the 700 page tome that ostensibly deals with the meeting of Savitri and Satyavan in the forest, but which is actually an initiatory transmission of the qualities embodied by the symbolic goddess of the “New Consciousness” descending on earth, and of the truly ready human soul that is elected as a vessel of that descent.

In the cantos of Books 4 and 5, therefore, we find a description, canto by canto, of the gradual emergence of that new consciousness on earth, first in the form of an invisible universal power working through nature and art and science; then as a subtle mystical intuition experienced by many who aspire for the emergence of a more spiritual reality beyond the practical and rational mind to which we seem bound; and finally as the original Vedic luminosity and joy of revelatory inspiration named Savitri that descends into the life and mind of the ready human being, with an elaborate description of what such readiness means and requires. And it is here that we are made to hear and see the qualities of a spiritual presence that can be experienced through Yoga. For example, She is described as:

A silence in the noise of earthly things...  
The very room and smile of musing space...  
A godhead sculptured on a wall of thought...  
This intimation of the world's delight...  
A Mind of light, a life of rhythmic force...

And in these pages we also find several examples of a pattern and technique whereby Sri Aurobindo makes the poem reflect on itself in a way that expresses its deeper meaning and purpose. He writes of it:

This word was seed of all the thing to be...  
There came the gift of a revealing hour...  
The word was used as a hieratic means  
For the release of the imprisoned spirit...

When read in the normal way, by the eyes and the brain, one can easily miss the meaning and power of lines and phrases like these. But in a dynamic mantric reading and hearing the direct revelatory effect is of a presence and quality of experience that is exactly what is being described and transmitted by the poetry. This is the mantric quality of *Savitri*, which is the essence of Vedic speech known as mantra. One of the primary aims of our workshops and the activities of the center is to make such experience a familiar occurrence on the path of Integral Yoga.

## 2. *The Ready Human Being*

In spiritual philosophy the Ideal is not some far off possibility, or impossibility, to be achieved but rather it is the inner reality of the world that we experience now, in its fragmented or partial expression. It is the absolute of all these relatives, the bliss and emptiness of the Buddha nature or the omnipresent stillness of the Brahman; the Good, the Beautiful, and the True that empower things to become what they are and empower the mind to know things as such, as Plato saw it.

In the central part of *Savitri – a Legend and a Symbol*, the mantric poem of Sri Aurobindo that we have been considering in these articles, there is a prophecy of a New Consciousness that is manifesting in humanity which enables us to know more immediately and directly the ideal reality of things, of which philosophy speaks. An image is created by Sri Aurobindo of the ready human being who has been prepared by life to be selected by that divine being named Savitri, who reveals herself to him in the forest – in a way that may become quite common. The literary technique that is used is first person dramatic narrative. On beholding the presence of something divine, the protagonist says:

I look back on the meaning of myself,  
A soul made ready on earth's soil for thee.  
Once were my days like days of other men:  
To think and act was all, to enjoy and breathe;  
This was the width and height of mortal hope:  
Yet there came glimpses of a deeper self  
That lives behind Life and makes her act its scene.  
A truth was felt that screens its shape from mind...  
I lived in the ray but faced not to the sun.  
I looked upon the world and missed the Self,  
And when I found the Self, I lost the world,  
My other selves I lost and the body of God,  
The link of the finite with the Infinite,  
The bridge between the appearance and the Truth,  
The mystic aim for which the world was made...

In these few lines of *Savitri* Sri Aurobindo sums up the central issue of life expressed in some way by every spiritual philosophy and discipline, and the person who grapples with it consciously is precisely the one who is ready to receive the solution. In this case, there have also been a series of positive and negative events that intensify the search: Satyavan was driven into the forest by an adverse fate that left his father, the King, blind and powerless (do we see the symbolism here?), and then he attuned himself to life in nature:

“Nursed by the vastness, pupil of solitude/ Great Nature came to her recovered child/Through an inner seeing and sense a waking came.” If we really hear these words and identify with their promise and their call, ideally placed as we are in this mountain solitude, then perhaps, like Satyavan, we might respond with a welcome, as he does when the goddess appears, and not let her slip away: “But now the gold link comes to me with thy feet/Come nearer to me from thy car of light/Descend, O happiness, with thy moon-gold feet/Enrich earth's floors upon whose sleep we lie/Enter my life, thy chamber and thy shrine.”

### 3. *Sruti and Mantra*

“The Formless and the Formed were joined in Her.”

This line from *Savitri* seems to me to express the essence of the goal of Buddhist and Hindu Tantra, and it is not an idea or a concept; it is a spiritual experience. It is the special character and importance of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, that it can transmit this experience: that is the Guru's gift of Mantra.

“The silent Soul of all the world was there:  
It bore within itself a seed, a flame,  
A seed from which the Eternal is new-born,  
A flame that cancels death in mortal things.  
All grew to all kindred and self and near;  
The intimacy of God was everywhere...”

The goal of the *Savitri* Immersion Workshop is to hear and see this *sruti of Sri Aurobindo*, this intuitive revelation of the spiritual Self in us - fully, directly, experientially, and then to know that “This Word was seed of all the thing to be.” As we have said in previous articles on *Savitri*, this goddess of Vedic origin has been adopted by Sri Aurobindo as the symbol of a “new consciousness” opening in humanity, whose future possibilities, as seen in his prophetic vision, have radical implications for our species and its life experience:

“And when that greater Self comes sea-like down/ To fill this image of our transience,/ All shall be captured by delight, transformed:/ In waves of undreamed ecstasy shall roll/ Our mind and life and sense and laugh in a light/ Other than this hard limited human day,/ The body’s tissues thrill apotheosised,/ Its cells sustain bright metamorphosis.” But in the same breath he specifies the process of Yoga that is required in order for this to be possible:

“But first the spirit’s ascent we must achieve/ Out of the chasm from which our nature rose./ The soul must soar sovereign above the form/ And climb to summits beyond mind’s half-sleep;/ Our hearts we must inform with heavenly strength,/ Surprise the animal with the occult god./ Then kindling the gold tongue of sacrifice,/ Calling the powers of a bright hemisphere, .../ Acquaint our depths with the supernal Ray/ And cleave the darkness with the mystic Fire.”

The process by which this is done has three stages typical of many yoga systems: *sutra*, *mantra*, *tantra* or, in other words, 1) the teaching and practice, 2) the Guru's transmission and inner hearing; 3) the reception of the Divine Shakti to transform our nature. Instead of treating each separately, as distinct stages in the practice of Yoga, the three movements in combination can intensify and illumine such practices in a particularly powerful way.

#### 4. *The Yoga of Transformation*

In a series of teachings at our annual Savitri Immersion Workshop in August this year (2016), we were able to observe closely, over six days of readings and meditations, the important connections between *yogasutra*, *yogamantra* and *yogashakti*. Instead of treating each separately, as distinct stages in the practice of Yoga, we could see how the three movements in combination can intensify and illumine such practices in a particularly powerful way. For example, in a *sutra* teaching such as Sri Aurobindo's *Sapta Chatusthaya*, combined with the *Savitri* mantra, the presence of the Divine Shakti is invoked, and received directly, by a clarified mind and opened heart, which is truly transforming.

In the *Sapta Chatusthaya* (seven sets of four *yoga siddhis* or perfections) Sri Aurobindo explains what it means to be a *yogin*. “The basis of internal peace is *samata*, the capacity of receiving with a calm and equal mind all the attacks and appearances of outward things, whether pleasant or unpleasant, ill-fortune and good fortune, pleasure and pain, honor and ill-repute, praise and blame, friendship and enmity, sinner and saint, or physically, heat and cold, etc. The complete Yogin receives all of this with with an equal, a *sama ananda* (delight in all). He comes to change all the ordinary values of experience ...”

This *sutra* teaching, followed by an invocation of the *mantric* transmission, is then seen and felt as a vivid, tangible possibility, above the mind's natural doubts or attempts to understand how such a thing could be. For example, reciting the Canto titled In the Self of Mind, we see and hear: “He stood on a wide arc of summit Space/ Alone with an enormous Self of Mind/ Which held all life in a corner of its vasts./ Omnipotent, immobile and aloof,/ In the world which sprang from it, it took no part:/ It gave no heed to the paeans of victory,/ It was indifferent to its own defeats,/ It heard the cry of grief and made no sign;/ Impartial fell its gaze on evil and good,/ It saw destruction come and did not move./ An equal Cause of things, a lonely Seer/ And Master of its multitude of forms,/ It acted not but bore all thoughts and deeds,/ The witness Lord of Nature's myriad acts/ Consenting to the movements of her Force.”

Such descriptions of the yogic state of *udasina*, being seated above the ordinary reactions to things, are repeated frequently, and typically followed by an inflow of blissful force: “It led things evil towards their secret good,/ It turned raked falsehood into happy truth;/ Its power was to reveal divinity./ ..All grew to all kindred and self and near;/ The intimacy of God was everywhere,/ ...A constant touch of sweetness linked all hearts.” Into the silence that follows such an invocation there actually flows a luminosity and peace that shifts one's consciousness into a sphere of possibilities that is perhaps always there, within and above – the *tantric* force.

## 5. *The liberation of the Self*

There is a line in *Savitri* that says, 'Nature does the most in us, and God the high rest.' We know that nature is Prakriti, in the Sanskrit vocabulary of Yoga, and Purusa is the Supreme Self, unmanifest but working through the divine universal forces and principles of Nature. But where is this Purusa, Self, or Soul that we are supposed to also be? It is a third thing. If our mental vital and physical energies, systems and behaviors are all Nature, which does the most in us, and God is beyond all manifestation, what is this Purusa that Yoga Philosophy tells us we should liberate from the former and unify with the latter. Where is That, which some call Thatness, the timeless being, or the Oneness?

In a chapter of *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo says, 'We shall know That, as that silence and peace.' And in *Savitri* we hear, "A stillness absolute, incommunicable, meets the sheer self-discovery of the soul." We need to keep these indications in mind, because that awareness is fundamental, according to this teaching. We are not likely to experience this silence and peace in the normal activities of life, until we establish it as a fundamental awareness in our own selves. We have to separate that part of ourselves, which is capable of absolute stillness and peace, from all the other parts, until we can dwell in it, in life and in the presence of other activities.

That other part of ourselves grows in its largeness until it embraces the other things. This is the teaching of Sri Aurobindo, as he narrates in *Savitri*, as an awareness that spreads from within outward like a sea until it includes the whole world. 'But first the soul must rise above the form' and in that free space, allow the stillness of being above to come down into the emptiness that is created by the practice of detachment. If that stillness is then really tangibly felt as a substance in and around us which is large and vast, it's possible to then experience all the flow of the activities of life in the embrace of the stillness of the Self.

When one experiences the business of life in that way one isn't drawn so easily into the ordinary impressions and reactions to things that cause us difficulties. If we can allow that Presence to permeate and build up its stillness in our subtle self, it also saves us a lot of the traditional effort of Yoga. It is experienced as a grace, but it also has a specific purpose. It is not there just to give us a moment of peace, but it is meant to be cultivated as a constant awareness and presence in oneself. This is the initial aim and process of an Integral Yoga.



## 6. *The Integral Yoga*

In Sanskrit tradition, Integral Yoga has a long history, along with Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Tantra, and so on, and there it is known as Purna Yoga. Purna actually means “perfect”, which implies that perfection of both the inner being and the outer nature, from top to bottom, is the goal. This meaning is perhaps a bit different from what we might associate with the term “integral”, especially since that term has become so over-used by new-agers. After a detailed presentation of the various schools of Yoga in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo writes a long last section titled 'The Yoga of Perfection'. There, a major emphasis is put on the classical idea of the purification of our mind and life, as in Raja Yoga, and on a subsequent descent into us of the Divine Force, Shakti. The first movement is therefore referred to by him as “the first liberation”, which is similar to the classical idea of liberation in Yoga. The second movement is referred to as “the second liberation”, in which the already liberated soul, or Purusa, experiences a higher force of knowledge, power, love, and delight flowing through the instruments of body, life, and mind, making a liberated and elevated action in the world possible.

The transition from the first to the second liberation is narrated in great detail in at least nine cantos of Sri Aurobindo's mantric poem, *Savitri*, in order to give us a strong impression of the nature of both movements. For example, first movement:

His soul stood free, a witness and a king.  
Absorbed no more in the moment-ridden flux  
Where mind incessantly drifts as on a raft  
Hurried from phenomenon to phenomenon,  
He abode at rest in indivisible Time. ...  
Thought lay down in a mighty voicelessness;  
The toiling Thinker widened and grew still,  
Wisdom transcendent touched his quivering heart: ...  
Mind screened no more the shoreless Infinite.

Second movement:

Rivers poured down of bliss and luminous force,  
Visits of beauty, storm-sweeps of delight  
Rained from the all-powerful Mystery above. ...  
A heavenly impetus quickened all his breast;  
The trudge of Time changed to a splendid march;  
The divine Dwarf towered to unconquered worlds ...  
Life now became a sure approach to God,  
Existence a divine experiment  
And cosmos the soul's opportunity. (*Savitri*, Bk 1, Cn 3)

Most importantly, however, in this mantric teaching he also emphasizes the interim that necessarily imposes itself between the two liberations. For as he says, the stillness and peace of the first must enable us to establish an immovable calm stability that will not be shaken by the descent of the force in the second liberation: “In the unapproachable stillness of his soul,/ Intense, one-pointed, monumental, lone,/ Patient he sat like an incarnate hope/ Motionless on a pedestal of prayer./... A neutral helpless void oppressed the years” (*Savitri*, Bk 3, Cn 3).

## 7. Things still to be learned

We have all heard a great deal of moaning and ranting about the election, and it certainly isn't that these issues don't matter, but from the spiritual point of view the effects on people's minds and lives can be alleviated if one can step back from "phenomenal appearances" into a larger vision. As I have responded to some of those who seem to be so aghast, destiny is something that it may be wise to believe in, to a certain extent. All that we have to experience in a lifetime is given to us in a way that leads to the unfolding of our self, our consciousness, our knowledge, our character, our truth. But the events of our experience are not those things that are facilitated by the events; they are universals and, as such, are spiritual: immortal verities. Against those truths, values, ideas, wider and profounder meanings, the events themselves are close to nothing in importance. So human beings learn, age after age, to look beyond the immediate experiences and circumstances to those universal truths; and every age of humanity is another opportunity. Homer and Vyasa wrote it all: the eternal return of the same, in ever new forms. This is the "heroic" attitude.

For humanity in general, there is still so much to learn, even after all these millennia of "progress". And the process is accelerating. So let's see what is there to be learned now. The media interpretations of things, which includes progressive, academic media, may sometimes obscure the deeper longer-range reasons for things. Progress may be something more than it's reported to be. The things we "cherish", like our immediate preferences, goals, achievements, may not be as important as we think.

This is perhaps the most persistent theme in Savitri:

*O man, the events that meet thee on thy road,  
Though they smite thy body and soul with joy and grief,  
Are not thy fate, — they touch thee awhile and pass;  
Even death can cut not short thy spirit's walk:  
Thy goal, the road thou choosest are thy fate.*

Although it is a hard lesson to accept by the mind that is carried away on whatever waves of immediate attraction and repulsion may strike, or even by the more settled ethical intelligence, there is still the possibility of that *udasinata* we have spoken about previously, "being seated above", which sees more than the surface of things. As Sri Aurobindo wrote in an early essay on Yoga:

"The Yogin knows God's way of working and is aware that the improbable often happens, that facts mislead. He rises above reason to that direct and illuminated knowledge which we call *vijnanam*. The desire-driven mind is enmeshed in the intricate tangle of good and evil, of the pleasant and the unpleasant, of happiness and misfortune. It strives to have the good always, the pleasant always, the happiness always. It is elated by fortunate happenings, disturbed and unnerved by their opposite. But the illuminated eye of the seer perceives that all leads to good; for God is all and God is *sarvamangalam* (*the divine in all*). He knows that the apparent evil is often the shortest way to the good, the unpleasant indispensable to prepare the pleasant, misfortune the condition of obtaining a more perfect happiness. His intellect is delivered from enslavement to the dualities."

## 8. *The Grand Reversal*

“As individual egos we dwell in the Ignorance and judge everything by a broken, partial and personal standard of knowledge; we experience everything according to the capacity of a limited consciousness and force and are therefore unable to give a divine response or set the true value upon any part of cosmic experience.

But by entering into the cosmic consciousness we begin to participate in that all-vision and see everything in the values of the Infinite and the One. Limitation itself, ignorance itself change their meaning for us. Ignorance changes into a particularising action of divine knowledge; strength and weakness and incapacity change into a free putting forth and holding back various measures of divine Force; joy and grief, pleasure and pain change into a mastering and a suffering of divine delight; struggle, losing its discords, becomes a balancing of forces and values in the divine harmony.”

This is one of many teachings of Sri Aurobindo in *The Synthesis of Yoga* (p. 413), which is again mirrored in *Savitri*, as are all of the precepts of Integral Yoga, but in a more vivid and compelling language.

“A vision lightened on the viewless heights,/ A wisdom illumined from the voiceless depths:/ A deeper interpretation greatedened Truth,/ A grand reversal of the Night and Day;/ All the world’s values changed heightening life’s aim;/ A wiser word, a larger thought came in/ Than what the slow labour of human mind can bring,/ A secret sense awoke that could perceive/ A Presence and a Greatness everywhere”(p. 41).

And the way that this happens is the same for ever, as Patanjali put it in the Yoga Sutras millennia ago, *chitta vritti nirodaha*, restraining the mind from its running to and fro. Perhaps the best metaphor for this is found in the reversal of the descent of the sun in relation to the earth at this time of year. We are the farthest from the light, tilted into darkness, asleep (tamas), but the reversal brings us back momentarily into balance (sattwa), then tilts us into the fire (rajas), pulled and pushed by the “three modes of nature”, until through stilling the mind we ascend into the stratosphere of consciousness and attain another perspective, eventually rising out of the gravitational pull of the earth altogether. The perennial transitions that the earth makes in relation to the sun are mirrored in the daily rhythms of body, mind, and spirit, until that poise of liberation is attained, known here as cosmic consciousness, in which things and movements appear in a subtler light than the light of the sun obscured by our narrow horizons. The new year, like the new day, is always an opportunity for us to wake up to the spiritual dimension and experience a grand reversal and a re-valuation of the narrow bounds in which the little earthly mind is conditioned to move. As Patanjali said, this is Yoga.

## 9. *The Ideal*

If we are going to envision a society, such as Hegel and Sri Aurobindo envisioned, in which every human being is fulfilled on the basis of freedom, the freedom to be, and the freedom to express in infinitely diverse ways the truths of ourselves and existence, then we must also see that many of the structures of society and human behavior that exist now will have to change. But for that to happen, the human being must change. The outer and relational is a product of the inner. Changing the outer structures on the basis of the rational mind will not change their essential constitution, which in human society is fundamentally mental. It is an order based upon the ethical mind, actuated by the practical mind. The limitation of Hegelian and Marxist thought was that, for them, the structures of society could be changed and the Ideals of freedom and right could be realized by the rational will.

Sri Aurobindo saw that until there is a transformation of this mental consciousness into something higher, nothing in the external material world can change significantly. Radical change can happen only after the new consciousness becomes a norm, at least among a few. This follows the evolutionary law. Change always begins with one, and then a few, then a family, and a society, until the new type finally fills a niche. First there must be the ascent, the spiritual elevation of consciousness; then the descent of the new principle and power; and then, finally, a transformation that makes possible the advent of the “other”, which is not a mental being, but a supramental body, life, and mind . This Ideal is symbolized in *Savitri* by Satyavan, the human soul, and Savitri, the force of illumination that descends to transform consciousness. Satyavan speaks:

*Once were my days like the days of other men:*  
To think and act was all, to enjoy and breathe;  
This was the width and height of mortal hope:  
Yet there came glimpses of a deeper self  
That lives behind Life and makes her act its scene.  
A truth was felt that screened its shape from mind,  
A Greatness working towards a hidden end,  
And vaguely through the forms of earth there looked  
Something that life is not and yet must be.  
I groped for the Mystery with the lantern, Thought.  
Its glimmerings lighted with the abstract word  
A half-visible ground and traveling yard by yard  
It mapped a system of the Self and God.  
I could not live the truth it spoke and thought.

But now the gold link comes to me with thy feet  
And His gold sun has shone on me from thy face. ...  
A strange new world swims to me in thy gaze  
Approaching like a star from unknown heavens;  
A cry of spheres comes with thee and a song  
Of flaming gods. I draw a wealthier breath  
And in a fierier march of moments move.  
My mind transfigures to a rapturous seer.

## 10. *Ideal Mind*

It is important to realize that Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of consciousness based on the Upanishads is no longer something that we must think of as obscure and esoteric. The concepts of *prajnana* (apprehension), *samjnana* (comprehension), *ajnana* (will to action), *vijnana* (seeing ahead already of what is to be understood and done) were also spoken about by the philosophers of consciousness of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Seeing, willing, thinking and perceiving are how the mind works. And that higher range of seeing-will known as *vijnana*, which was formerly spoken of as “a secret operation” is something within reach. It is that band between the rational mind and the supermind known as “intuition”. We already “see ahead” the things that the rational and practical mind plan and execute. We simply need to stand back, within, and observe the process.

But Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of how we can consciously realize that “seeing ahead,” which already functions in us as intuition and intention, is the really interesting thing. Now, how is it possible to say this without offending every single one of us? Because, this process entails abdicating the rational mind. But, as he says over and over, that doesn't mean irrationalism and randomness. There is an evolutionary status that has been achieved and it functions naturally in us through the instruments of consciousness that we “are”- the practical mind, sensations, and perceptions. We do not really need the rational mind. And we could actually function much better without it, if we allowed the higher intuition to do the things that we do in an inferior way, and are so proud of.

So, the old adage of Patanjali comes back : *yogah chitta vritti nirodha*. It's necessary to still the mind in order for the Self to be known. And that Self has a higher, more universal energy and knowledge than the busy mind. Of course there is a risk here, as Sri Aurobindo points out, because the “silent mind” has often been taken as an end in itself. But, as he says, this is only “one radiant pace”.

The zero covers an immortal face.  
A high and blank negation is not all,  
A huge extinction is not God's last word,  
Life's ultimate sense, the close of being's course,  
The meaning of this great mysterious world.  
In absolute silence sleeps an absolute Power.  
Awaking, it can wake the trance-bound soul  
And in the ray reveal the parent sun:  
It can make the world a vessel of Spirit's force,  
It can fashion in the clay God's perfect shape.  
To free the self is but one radiant pace;  
Here to fulfil himself was God's desire.

So, stilling the practical and rational mind is a doorway to the reception of the 'ideal Mind', and to the higher intuitive and inspired mind, which are always there, and we simply screen them off by our habits of thinking. In between there is the Silence.

## 11. *The Divine Paradox*

In a seminar on feminism that I attended recently, a brilliant speaker from Croatia told us about the 'colonization of the female' in European Academic life, and how she finally escaped, first from her war-torn homeland, then from academia, and finally from colonization of every type onto an island named Savitri, where she does organic farming, meditation and massage therapy. She was participating in the seminar at my request, and though she was an inspiration, she was regretting the exposure. Well, I said, Sri Aurobindo tells us that "There are two realities." And this is our biggest, and perhaps our only real challenge. "...when we have realised the eternal self that we are, when we have become that inalienably, we have still a secondary aim, to establish the true relation between this eternal self that we are and the mutable existence and mutable world which till now we had falsely taken for our real being and our sole possible status.

"We must take back in the right relation and in the poise of an eternal Truth the world of our manifested existence peopled by our fellow-beings from which we had drawn back because we were bound to them in a wrong relation and in the poise of a falsehood created in Time by the principle of divided consciousness with all its oppositions, discords and dualities. We have to take back all things and beings into our new consciousness but as one with all, not divided from them by an egoistic individuality" (*Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 368).

Escaping onto that island called Savitri, whether figurative or real, can certainly be the key. The description that is given of the union between the human soul (Satyavan) and the Goddess (Savitri) may actually inform the mind of that possible relationship to the One in All, beyond the duality which seems to be the origin of every paradox. There is the One, and there are the Many; there is the Truth, and there is the Falsehood. But uniting this duality in a transformed consciousness, above "mind", enables us to restore the true value to things that we otherwise might continue to need to reject. Like the return of Spring, after a miserable, or perhaps delightful, winter. Like discovering the infinite *in* the finite world of all those wrong relations. As Satyavan exclaims, in the moment when he discovers the possibility of that perfect poise:

"O my bright beauty's princess Savitri,/ By my delight and thy own joy compelled/  
Enter my life, thy chamber and thy shrine./ In the great quietness where spirits meet,/ Led by my  
hushed desire into my woods/ Let the dim rustling arches over thee lean;/ One with the breath of things  
eternal live,/ Thy heart-beats near to mine, till there shall leap/ Enchanted from the fragrance of the  
flowers/ A moment which all murmurs shall recall/ And every bird remember in its cry."

## 12. *Yoga Mantra*

Sri Aurobindo defined *mantra* like this: “The Mantra is a direct and most heightened, and intensest, and most divinely burdened rhythmic word which embodies an intuitive and revelatory inspiration and ensouls the mind with the sight and presence of the very self, the inmost reality of things.” And the “things” that he referred to were spiritual things, beings, states of inner experience. These were the realities that he wished to be seen and known through the power of mantra.

Specifically, his source of knowledge, and the mantric technique of transmission that he used, was the ancient Veda. For example, in this hymn to Savitri, the goddess of illumined speech and sight, from Rg Veda III.61, he translated her as the “dawn” to whom the inspired Rishi addresses his call.

“1. Dawn, richly stored with substance, conscious cleave to the affirmation of him who expresses thee, O thou of the plenitudes. Goddess, ancient, yet ever young thou movest many-thoughted following the law of thy activities, O bearer of every boon. 2. Dawn divine, shine out immortal in thy car of happy light sending forth the pleasant voices of the Truth. May steeds well-guided bear thee here who are golden brilliant of hue and wide their might. 3. Dawn, confronting all the worlds thou standest high-uplifted and art their perception of Immortality; do thou move over them like a wheel, O new Day, travelling over an equal field.”

The fundamental principle of the mantra is that it is an intense call to the immortal powers of consciousness above the mind to descend and illumine us with their light and truth. In the Gayatri Mantra, with which practitioners of various forms of yoga are familiar, there is the call to Savitri to inspire our understanding with the divine light: “*Tat Savitur Varenyam, bhargo devasya dhimahi, dhiyo yo na pracodyat*”, which Sri Aurobindo translates as “O Savitri, Light of the supreme, illumine us with the Truth”.

And then, in his own *Savitri*, a long poem of many cantos which are mantras to the goddess, he incorporates this Vedic call with almost identical images and sounds:

“And now diviner voices fill my ear,  
A strange new world swims to me in thy gaze  
Approaching like a star from unknown heavens;  
A cry of spheres comes with thee and a song  
Of flaming gods. I draw a wealthier breath  
And in a fierier march of moments move.  
My mind transfigures to a rapturous seer...  
Come nearer to me from thy car of light...  
Descend, O happiness, with thy moon-gold feet  
Enrich earth’s floors upon whose sleep we lie.”

The secret of the Vedic mantra is in “the call”. When the aspiration of the mortal is intense enough to generate this call, there is a response to its vibration from our higher planes of consciousness, and those higher powers of peace, luminosity, sweetness, and inner sight descend and literally seem to move over us like a wheel on an equal ground, spreading delight over all.



### 13. *Savitri and Death*

The theme of Sri Aurobindo's mantric poem *Savitri*, from beginning to end, is the conquest of death. In the very beginning, for example, we hear these lines:

A force in her that toiled since earth was made,  
Accomplishing in life the great world-plan,  
Pursuing after death immortal aims,  
Repugned to admit frustration's barren role,  
Forfeit the meaning of her birth in Time,  
Obey the government of the casual fact  
Or yield her high destiny up to passing Chance.  
In her own self she found her high recourse;  
She matched with the iron law her sovereign right:  
Her single will opposed the cosmic rule.  
To stay the wheels of Doom this greatness rose. (p.19)

And then, in the penultimate book, when Savitri, having accomplished the union of her soul with her high spiritual self through Yoga, faces death, we hear the powerful force of will that she has realized suddenly stream forth:

Her high nude soul,  
Stripped of the girdle of mortality,  
Against fixed destiny and the grooves of law  
Stood up in its sheer will a primal force.  
Still like a statue on its pedestal,  
Lone in the silence and to vastness bared,  
Against midnight's dumb abysses piled in front  
A columned shaft of fire and light she rose. (p. 581)

The entire path of the yoga of transformation that is narrated throughout the five hundred intervening pages is revealed to have been for this sole purpose. In a way very similar to the teaching of the Phowa practice in Tibetan Buddhist yoga and dzogchen, the practice of liberation that is performed throughout one's life on the path, is precisely a preparation for this moment of death. In Sri Aurobindo's commentaries on the Isha Upanishad, too, this was the stated purpose of his yoga from the beginning:

“The Upanishad solemnly invokes the Will to remember the thing that has been done (*through mantra, meditation, and surrender*), so as to contain and be conscious of the becoming, so as to become a power of knowledge and self-possession and not only a power of impulsion and self-formulation. It will thus more and more approximate itself to the true Will and preside over the co-ordination of the successive lives with a conscious control. Instead of being carried from life to life in a crooked path, as by winds, it will be able to proceed more and more straight in an ordered series, linking life to life with an increasing force of knowledge and direction until it becomes the fully conscious Will moving with illumination on the straight path towards the immortal felicity. The mental will, *kratu*, becomes what it at present only represents, the divine Will, Agni.”



#### 14. *Mantra, Will, and Immortality*

In his commentary on the Isha Upanishad, Sri Aurobindo speaks about the will as Agni, or the divine flame in us, which performs the sacrifice of our lower self to the powers of our higher self by perfect speech. In this view of *mantra* there is an implied identity or a close association between our will to elevate our consciousness and the speech that is used to express that aspiration. As it says in the Vedic hymn to Agni:

“How shall we give to Agni? For him what Word accepted by the Gods is spoken, for the lord of the brilliant flame?

He who in the sacrifices is the priest of the offering, full of peace, full of the Truth, him verily form in you by your surrenderings;

May this strongest of the Powers manifest by his presence the Words and their understanding, and may they who in their extension are lords of plenitude brightest in energy pour forth their plenty and give their impulsion to the thought.” (The Secret of the Veda, p.276-277)

Sri Aurobindo refers to Savitri as the goddess of illumined speech in the Veda, and as the 'will to immortality'. By our will and speech we energize our consciousness toward that plane of consciousness, characterized by truth, delight, and immortality, the 'creator of perfection', with which our will becomes united.

“Of Savitri divine we embrace that enjoying, that which is the best, rightly disposes all, reaches the goal we hold by the thought.

The universal godhead and master of being we accept into ourselves by perfect words today, the Producer whose production is of the truth.”

In his mantric poem *Savitri* this goddess is described as a spiritual force and consciousness that descends in us, reveals the divine truth of things, and carries us through death to immortality. He is very explicit about the idea that the two most important qualities of this *mantric sadhana* are that (1) the *mantra* is a call which brings back to us repeatedly a memory of the spiritual purpose of our life, and (2) it also brings down the force of consciousness that enables us to perceive immortality. It both reminds us of and moves us toward that higher consciousness, when it is performed by our “completest speech of submission”. When this form of speech becomes a complete energizing of oneself toward That, it also knows that to be the origin of this speech. It therefore sets up a resonance between the will in our mental, vital and physical being and those planes or qualities of consciousness which are generally beyond our ordinary awareness. About Agni, he says:

“The Upanishad solemnly invokes the Will to remember the thing that has been done, so as to contain and be conscious of the becoming, so as to become a power of knowledge and self-possession and not only a power of impulsion and self-formulation. It will thus more and more approximate itself to the true Will and preside over the co-ordination of the successive lives with a conscious control.” And the importance of the role that he assigns to mantra for even the highest realization of Yoga in this life cannot be overemphasized:

"It is at the point where there is the first possibility of the great passage, the transition from mind to supermind, the transfiguration of the intelligence, till now the crowned leader of the mental being, into a divine Light...that the Rishi seeks in himself for the inspired Word. The Word shall help him to realise for himself and others the power that must effect the transition and the state of luminous plenitude from which the transfiguration must commence."(Ibid, p. 278)

## **How to measure the swirls between the stones:**

Let your gaze relax into the width  
and breadth of the stream that you see

Where you sit and listen to the crashing falls  
above and below the wideness of your view

Gazing upon the ever-flowing patterns  
ever-changing now within your vision

When your vision embraces their flow  
and your stillness becomes their endlessly swirling change.

You are the smoothness of the stones  
and the swirling patterns of vision and sound

You are the continuous moving swirls  
that recur within the limits of your gaze

You are the stones that limit the water's flow  
and give you the measure of its change:

Ever the same in the stillness of your gaze,  
ever-changing in its foaming crashing flow;

In the sameness of stone and the water's continuous change,  
you are the oneness and the difference that you know,

Like the difference between an enemy and a friend,  
or the difference between a pleasure and a pain,

The positive and negative poles of experience  
whose valences and reversals hold your vision steady

Unchanged by the river that flows between the stones  
smooth and unmoving as the constant patterns of life,

When you step away and stand above the stream of time  
Viewing all in the stillness of your unifying gaze;

The river swirls between the stones, forever the same,  
revealing forever its constant patterns of change.

The stones will always be there directing the force of the stream  
Like ideas in the riverbed of time, your life the current swirling between them.

## 5 Smiles (sumi ink w/color, and words, Seattle, May 2016)

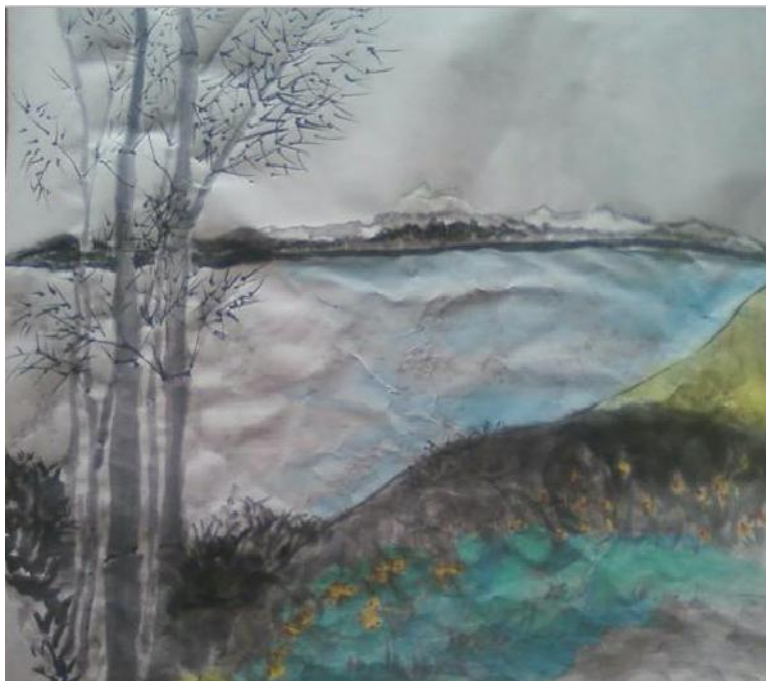
### Smiles # 1 The Lotus Pond

See the frolicking lotus pond with its singing and dancing colors, its shapes resembling nature's forms, yet nothing is really there but smiles, in rice paper and ink tints, progenitors of delight and immortality, yet gifts of the market place and fruits of cultural ages, of struggles and turmoils these smiles cannot forget, in the view of one person, sitting in a chair, seeing with hand and brush and pen ... illusions of illusions ...



### Smiles # 2 The Elementals

See the vast and tranquil origins, the distant goals of life, the textures of illusion, the stillness and movement of creation ...



### Smiles #3 The Mountain Path

Whatever turns we are given we take  
to find the lotus-heart of Truth

This is the rugged mountain path  
on the way to the Truth

This rushing mountain stream  
is the life-force of the Truth

These conflicting minds that cross  
are the harbingers of the Truth

Matter, life, mind, soul are the meaning  
and embodiments of the dream of the Truth



#### Smiles #4 The Northwest Buddha Moon

Just imagine how tranquil and luminous  
this landscape would be without that dark turmoil we see.

Or, maybe, the absolute tranquility and the relative tranquility  
need that wheel to link them, the cloud that veils and yet reveals to us the perfect luminosity ...





## Smiles #5 The Three Purushas

See the Master as he stands on a ledge  
slightly above the scenes of life below,  
the forest beyond, the soft ascendant peaks,  
equal to all, the master of the dance;



See the grove of life, with its close and kindred souls  
standing tall yet able to bend, able to die;

See the liberated mind and heart sheltered by all around  
yet held by none, peaceful and free, mirroring mountain and stream;

See the three purushas: involved in prakriti, liberated from prakriti,  
master of prakriti, holding past, present, and future in his sway.

And see the smiles that these simple paintings revealed to me.

## Harvest Moon 2016

I know this glow  
concealed behind  
the mountains of the mind

Until it slowly rises  
above the barriers of its light  
into the fullness and freedom

Of the liberated soul  
and its radiant clarity  
of illuminating sight



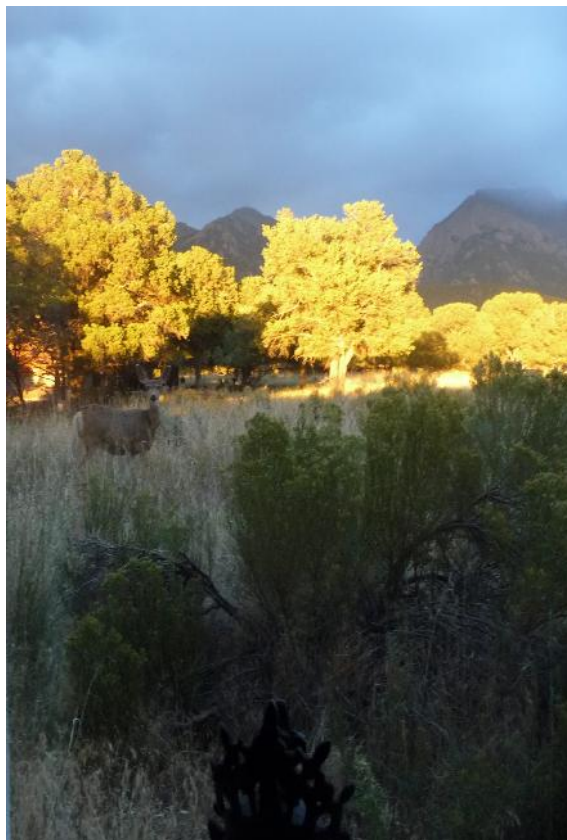
**Om namo Shivaya**  
**Om namo Sridevi namah**

These silent pinions standing in groups  
on the mountain, like shaivites,  
have nothing to say at all

These silent pinions motionless  
on the mountain, like drops of amrita  
stand golden on Shiva's brow

These silent pinions encircled by stones  
perfectly arrayed like malas  
adorn the shoulders of Shiva

These silent pinions entranced by the songs  
of the goddess silently witness  
His ecstatic dance of delight





## Solstice Moon (2016)

The solstice moon has risen  
bright and alone, standing still,  
where everything is moving  
and truth and illusion are one.

This “time” is no longer mine  
nor yours nor anyone’s but the One’s.  
That’s just the way it is, standing here  
within the trance of silence, alone.

But everything moves on  
and from this stillness everything becomes  
what clarity within it can see,  
whatever its power and joy can be.



## **Matrimandir**

I sat within the lotus today,  
its petals were perfectly pink and white,  
its pillars stood in their fathomless glow  
supporting the hemisphere of heaven;  
one could see the form of the Idea  
engendering the body of Time,  
swirling into birth from the silence,  
filling our lives with grace and beauty sublime.



**Artist's Muse** (on visiting the Bauhaus and Berggruen museums in Berlin, 2016)

There is the idea  
of patterns in motion  
represented by the movement  
of forms repeating their patterns  
of solid shapes and hues  
expressing the idea  
of patterns in motion.

And then there are  
the spaces that we enter  
the eyes that see the sky  
the nose that breathes  
the air of the sea  
and the waves that move  
our minds like ships of light.

The idea that breathes  
the dance into us  
prepares the food of our souls  
sings the song of our hearts  
fills us like a vessel  
paints us like a canvas  
with the colors of its fire.

This is the idea of patterns in motion.  
But whence does it, whence do they arise?  
From the Self of all, its dreams of bliss,  
like springtime's eager buds  
breaking the frozen soil of earth  
burning with life, flowering in sun  
for the sake of the world's delight.

Klee, Bauhaus, Kandinsky



## Samadhi

The real advaita is zen:  
the One is Truth;  
the Many are Not-truth  
(both are the Brahman)

How difficult  
to hold these fireflies;  
now seeing and now  
not seeing

## Trumpets

There is a great disaster brewing  
fermenting below the slime of worms  
and the mold and rot of leaves,  
an expectant explosion nursed on the breast  
of asphyxiation and as suddenly forgotten  
as physics and biology, or Marxism and theology.  
It is life in the cells of mortality, and minds  
wrapped in the whorls of philosophy sublime,  
obscured by the momentary measurements of time  
buried by the bodies piled up through centuries  
in anaerobic heaps of rising rippling undulating grime  
unleashed by the thoughtless sputterings of hatred  
and the crime of maniacal lusts for power and blood.  
We have forgotten what lies below, hidden from sight  
lulled into oblivion by our superficial pastimes and delusions  
of self-importance, our false securities, our stupid slaveries  
to the routines that box us in, and the masters that suck away our life.  
But the crack is spreading, and no one guesses what demons  
are coiled within, pulsating with foul desires, bursting  
with blasphemous fires and poisonous breath, ready to devour us.

Do you remember the beheadings, on camera,  
the orange dress, the black mask, the bowed head, the knife?  
Did you feel the sense of utter defeat, the absolute suffering,  
the destruction of Aleppo's soul, its grief and loss and ruin?  
Have you considered the terror imposed on the citizens of America,  
whose immigrants from other lands are intimidated, deported, taken away?  
Have you listened to the stories of the holocaust survivors?  
Did you read the headlines in the papers in the 80s about Algeria,  
in the 90s about Rwanda and Serbia, in the 70s about Cambodia?  
Do you know the arguments between Bergson and Einstein about Time?  
Do you really believe that this is the price we must pay for freedom?  
Must we burn the black oil of billions of years of life at the cost of civilization?  
Is this the destiny of humanity, to feed the greed for power with our lives?  
Are these the things that nature wants us to see, before it's too late?  
Concrete blasted into fragments of dust, forests bursting into flame?  
Do we need to gasp and choke and feel our hearts betrayed and ripped apart?  
This rational mind and heart can justify anything, don't you see?  
The musician on the stage can sing it all, the voice of the poet speaks the truth.  
To its table angels may be called, and to its feasts the demons may be brought.  
But now another power it must call, and to a Truer Being, *now*, its soul deliver.

## **The Presence**

In the stillness  
    of the great red trees  
In the stillness  
    of the large blue oceans  
In the stillness  
    of the vast and limitless sky  
There is the peace  
    and the radiance of the One  
There is the breathless  
    golden brilliance of the sun  
There is the calm  
    and shining presence of the moon  
There is the softness  
    and the fragrance of the rose  
There is the openness  
    of the heart to divine love  
There is the gift of the forest  
    and its oneness that surrounds us  
There is the presence  
    of its absolute embrace.

There is the silence  
    of the sunlight in the leaves  
There is the stillness  
    of the heart and mind and sight  
There is the stillness  
    of the body of the earth  
There is the stillness  
    of the soul that can listen  
There is the consciousness  
    that can hear the presence of truth  
That speaks in every leaf  
    and in every branch of wisdom  
That is death  
    in the silence of the soul  
That is birth  
    in the plenitude of its life  
Ascending from this vast  
    and empty stillness to the Light  
Uniting by its presence  
    every being, and every luminous emanation.







## **The Fullness**

This fullness has no limits,  
Its radiance is its own unbounded space;  
This roundness has no beginning  
And no end; it is the luminous presence of the One.

It is the light that courses through the stars  
And binds together the powers of every Person;  
It channels all the energies of the universe  
With its waves and tides of universal love.

It is the will that fosters truth in every one,  
It is the coolness of the moon and the blazing of the sun,  
It is the wave of bliss that drowns us in its stillness,  
It is the freedom and the strength and the will to become.

(March Full Moon, Auroville, 2017)





## Mountain Sketches

1

Blades of grass  
Sway in the wind

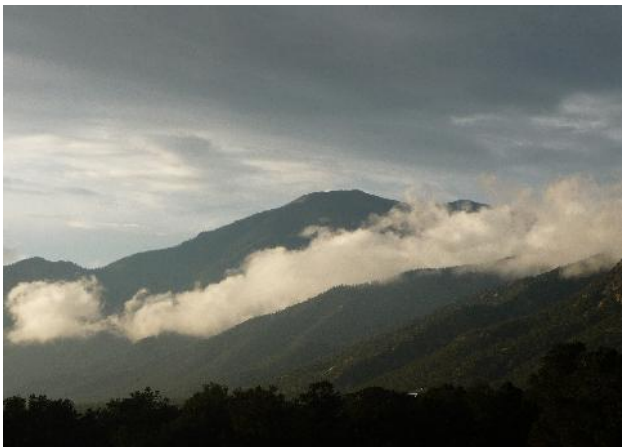
While clouds sit motionless  
On the mountain

2

Clouds dissolve  
Winds subside  
Grasses standing tall  
Raise their hands to the sky

3

Clouds return  
To the mountain  
Blades of grass bend  
Swaying in the cold wind





## **Divine Sight**

My heart is now a lotus  
of truth and beauty and light

the rising falling waves  
of the mountain are my breath

the mirror of the sky  
reflects the vastness of divinity

and a vision of delight  
shines on every face

every flower grows brighter  
with the sunlight from my eyes

and I hear in every heartbeat  
the rhythms of infinity.

But now the winds of storm  
bring clouds across my brow

and the fire in my blood  
fills rivers, lakes and seas

with the power to awaken  
from the falsehood and the dream

and rise above the petty human mind  
with its aberrant little schemes

break its bonds and spread new wings  
like a hawk on heaven's streams

and flame into crystal realms  
of freedom, joy and love.



## **Lake Yellowstone Blues**

The fire within rose flaming forth  
The fire above came blazing down

Cracking the cavernous earth  
Shattering its covering of stone

Sucking into its emptiness  
The elemental water of life;

Standing on their shining glacier peaks  
Filling all this vast with Truth and Light

Frolicking in the falls of our laughter and tears  
The Gods could view their dramas of delight.



*Urgent message: do not delete: call your congressman, donate now*

The body of the earth,  
the life of its creatures,  
global harmony and peace,  
are under attack!

The powers of capital,  
the machinery of war,  
and inordinate greed,  
have all in their grasp!

Soon the tower,  
called 'my country', 'my self',  
will come tumbling down,  
toppling into the sea!

Buds will wither  
on their stems,  
birds will fall  
from the sky,

And the light of earth  
will disappear into night,  
leaving only embers  
glowing in the darkness.

The strong foundations of being,  
rising like chakras of stone,  
quartz, marble, jade and obsidian,  
emerald, topaz and diamond, are falling!

Their lotus thrones  
and chariots of fire  
sliced like vessels of blood  
that carry breath to the soul,

Ripping out the seals  
of the human spirit's heart,  
cutting through the barriers  
of humanity's natural home,

Burying every sign of hope  
under leviathan's heavy wheels,  
mind's memory of its destiny,  
and its glorious truth, erased, at last.



(My patience wears thin,  
with these and with the others,  
even who have heard and yet are blind;  
cynicism, sadness, and fear can hardly be suppressed.)

While nature still can breathe  
and oceans still can roll  
and flowers still can dance  
toward the sunlight and the sky,

Descend sweet goddess  
in your gown of golden fire,  
sit upon these seven lotus thrones,  
vanquish these demons of hatred and desire!

Awaken in us the will  
to Stand and to Resist,  
fill us with your Poetry of Fire,  
empower us with the Lightning of your Force.

The Asura has come,  
who reveals to us our doom;  
now open our eyes, remove falsehood's veils,  
let us rise for the earth, for Divine Truth, Victorious!

(Oct. 16, 2017)

## A SUPPLEMENT FEATURING MY GRANDSON LEIF

### The Little Ninja

1. A visit to the zoo at the end of the world, (for Earth Day and Tim Morton)



("It's no wonder that industrial capitalism has turned the Earth into a dangerous desert. It doesn't really care what comes through the factory door, just as long as it generates more capital. Nature is the featureless remainder at either end of the process of production. Either it's exploitable stuff, or value-added stuff. Whatever it is, it's basically featureless, abstract, grey. ...It has nothing to do with nematode worms and orangutans, organic chemicals in comets and rock strata." - from *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*, Timothy Morton, 2013)

put them in a zoo then, at the end of the animal world  
and ask, when will the little ninja release the komodo dragon

for he has seen the passive smiley orangutan  
the lazy regal lion and his hyperactive queen  
the twin pythons languorously entwined  
the friendly lovey tiger pair  
the one legged flamingos  
the lone fat clean hungry hippo  
the horny pigs, the sleepy tapirs  
the busy otters, the gullible penguins  
the baby faced giraffes  
the very shaggy obsessively hungry sloth  
and the old knobby mother dragon with  
her imperious curious young

and ask, when shall the imperious curious young ninja  
rise to the challenge of all these immanent extinctions



to the challenge of the barricades and the sanctuaries  
and the homelessness and the technological addictions,

to awareness of the incarceration of masses of humanity as well,  
and to the news of impending doom that the world doesn't report

when will he draw his sword against the corporate destruction of nature  
the manufacture of bombs and the dissemination of combustible goo?

where is the monastery on the mountain that preserves the scent of air  
and will he be able to find his way there when the pipeline explodes?

## 2. Hearing the call, he shattered the illusory glass wall



immediately releasing the dragon, and freeing the imprisoned animal soul  
the two surged ahead to find the silent highway, ascending to the peaks of light beyond

and gathering there the destined arrows, the shield, and the hidden inner fire  
they faced the ghost of capital and greed, asphyxiating and poisoning the world.

as if upon a little cloud he stood, circling the embattled earth  
and gazed upon the giant form, consuming every living thing, swallowing space and time,

and down below the spectral demon, in their hiding, cowering deceit  
he saw the human embodiments of this perverse spirit of greed, destruction, and death

the puppet owners and slaves, the capitalists and the polluted rivers and skies,  
the corrupted political powers, the bombs and smoke, the fearful mobs, and the iron walls

and out beyond the human plagues, the herds of wildebeest, roaming the desert plain,  
the wild chimpanzees and shaggy sloth, the elephant and lion and deer

not yet caged within the manmade walls, suffering but still hunting, playing, and free  
the mountainsides and jungles gasping but still opulent with colored flowers, and birds, and trees

and deep within these forms of living things there breathed the flame of freedom:  
this was the revelation, the god to come, and not the darkened spirit of overpowering doom;

it is this, he thought, this innate freedom of being that must be delivered and seen,  
it must rise in radiant power from within each thing and reverse the poisonous delusion.

and so he drew his sword and descended from his cloud, blazing with light into the earth below  
breaking the iron wall, shattering the glass screen, dissolving the layers of obscurity, releasing  
the power within

until the enshrouding net of vaporous destruction was sucked into the swirling soul of life  
and the spirit of freedom burst forth from the secret heart of every cell and sense and thought and  
will

establishing anew the reign of earthly delight, revealing to each the oneness of all  
empowering again the elements of earth, its soil and air and water and life, with the ever living  
fire.

("...the trouble with global warming is that it's right here. It's not behind a glass screen. It  
**is** that glass screen, but it's as if the glass screen starts to extrude itself toward you in a  
highly uncanny, scary way that violates the normal aesthetic propriety... Spookily, the  
picture frame starts to melt and extrude itself toward us, it starts to burn our clothing.  
...Human art, in the face of this melting glass screen, ...has to be part of the glass itself  
because everything inside the biosphere is touched by global warming." - from  
*Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*, Timothy Morton, 2013)

## A CRESTONE DEDICATION

On that white, that blue, edge  
where the smooth white skin  
of the mountain's radiant face  
against the infinite blue

Feels the bright touch of infinity  
and inhales the sweet fragrance  
of divinity, at the edge of earth nature's  
highest breath, like an etheric kiss,

Standing on that white, that blue, edge  
when the seasons suddenly change  
and love's pure atmosphere renews  
all pathways dissolve in the limitless and true



## **Dzogchen**

### **(my rendering of Tenzin Wangyal's bardo teaching)**

1. Sit in the perfect stillness, concentrated in the stillness of self, let all desires, emotions, pains, anger, doubt go to the Mother, let Her take it all and dissolve it in her loving compassion; then be aware of that perfect stillness, free from everything, vast and empty like the clear sky, in the vast Mother of all buddhas, simply be in that perfect awareness of the vastness, the emptiness, the perfect self awareness.

(This is the liberation from suffering and death.)

2. Then realize the joy that arises in that stillness. Everything that happens arises in that stillness, and that stillness remains. Nothing can change it. Identified with Her, all actions, events, gains, losses, pains, pleasures, arise and pass away in that joyful stillness. That is the perfect awareness.

(This is the liberation of life and joy.)

## PACIFIC POEMS (2017)

### **Aeonic waves**

Imagine aeonic waves  
Rolling smooth stones into eggs,

Aspiring to become birds,  
Incessantly turning and rolling their seeds,

Polishing pebbles with sunbright tides  
Like spirit wombs of stone with heavenly wings.

There are such qualities too vast to see,  
Things that can't be measured or counted;

There are powerful forces hidden from view  
That the news on TV does not show us.

There are numberless beings unknown, unseen,  
Other minds, other eyes, than ours, may discover.

Such seeing and knowing is rolling in waves  
and turning in tides, ever shaping new forms of the Other.

Now imagine the beings who dreamed  
All these worlds of beautiful trees and flowers,

Or delve even deeper and rise even higher,  
Behold the turbulent seas, the mountains of fire

That gave rise to the world of courage and fear,  
Of ignorance and hope, in this rough animal form we bear.

But clearer minds and brighter forms  
Shall rise from calmer seas and flower in the stone.

Aeonic waves of truth, beauty, power and love,  
Breaking on the shores of time gave to all its destiny here.



## **Absolute tranquillity**

The vastness and stillness of sea  
And the dense green barrier of forest,  
Where rays of the setting sun  
Reveal the absolute emptiness of being,

Between the gold and blue and green,  
There is a tranquil breath, a tranquil gaze,  
A slow quiet pulsation of sound and light,  
Waves moving softly over sand and leaves,

And a motionless awareness opens its eye,  
At the edge of time, at the edge of space,  
Where everything begins and everything ends,  
In the bardo of sea and sky, to destiny's luminous face.



## **Wings of the Sea**

Standing on the edge  
of the tidal flow of time,

The skin of the goddess  
undulating softly in my gaze,

She glistens and turns  
spreading her silvery wings,

Rolling and turning  
in her spirals of infinite grace,

Breathing life into earth  
On currents of sea and sky:

The goddess softly streaming,  
undulating in my gaze,

Spreads her silvery wings  
and rises from the waves,

Dancing with the wind,  
And flies into the sun.



### **Being this rising...**

Soul, heart, mind, speech  
How you give yourself  
To tree and sky and wind  
And spread like them  
Beyond the realm of sense  
And feel the force that  
Moves them deep within;  
Yet stand motionlessly still  
Like a fire in every cell  
Streaming in the stillness,  
Being in the freedom of infinite will  
Forming every particle of existence  
In the body of its limitless self,  
Embodying the worlds in light:

Flaming into feeling, birth and death  
Pleasure and pain, blindness and seeing  
Sameness and difference in Many and One,  
Bowing in rose and stone,  
Chanting the rising stream,  
Flowing through every form,  
Giving to each its meaning.

## **Between two oceans**

Between two oceans of light a golden river flows,  
But where have you hidden your face?  
Is your radiance veiled by the ocean and sky?

This little human figure standing on the shore  
Is blinded by the blaze of your reflection,  
But your brilliance is beyond the power of his gaze.

Even the golden orb of sun  
Is a shadow of your luminous presence,  
and your light that flows between the stars

Fills the boundless darkness with its glow -  
The sparkle of heaven is dimmed by its radiance.  
But where have you hidden your face?

Are you there in the spray of glistening waves,  
Is it you who have dressed in their whiteness?  
Is it you that we hear when they break upon the shore?

Like Rumi on the shores of infinity,  
I must wait with the patience of a seer,  
For your rising like a moon within my soul!

My head is suddenly bowed by your appearance,  
My vision blinded by the force of your transcendence!  
I am drowned in the depths of your motionless peace!

Awake at last in the ocean of your light,  
My eyes are astonished by the gaze of your delight!  
I am uplifted by your tides, upborne on your lightning wings of love!