

Week Five

11/24/00 Friday's Rock, Moby Polyphemus

It may not be superfluous to point out that lay prejudice is always inclined to identify the child motif with the concrete experience “child,” as though the real child were the cause and pre-condition of the child motif. In psychological reality, however, the empirical idea “child” is only the means (and not the only one) by which to express a psychic fact that cannot be formulated more exactly. Hence by the same token the mythological idea of the child is emphatically not a copy of the empirical child but a *symbol* clearly recognizable as such: it is a wonder-child, a divine child, begotten, born, and brought up in quite extraordinary circumstances, and not — this is the point — a human child. Its deeds are as miraculous or monstrous as its nature and physical constitution. Only on account of these highly unempirical properties is it necessary to speak of a “child motif” at all. Moreover, the mythological “child” has various forms: now a god, giant, Tom Thumb, animal, *etc.*, and this points to a causality that is anything but rational and concretely human.

C.G. Jung
*The Archetypes of the
Collective Unconscious*

Georgie liked playing in Father's library. He liked the smell. And he liked the high, round window that made everything the color of honey in the afternoon. He liked honey. Sweet. Sweet. Georgie especially liked the mirror that was so much better than all the rest of the mirrors. In this mirror things weren't just flat, but looked just like the bookshelves looked, or like that funny round thing made out of white stone, with the carvings in it, where Father sometimes put the shewstone, when it wasn't hidden under its purple cloth and put over there where the honey couldn't touch it. You could, if you could get through the glass, walk right around things in there. He liked that. He would sneak up here when Escalarmonde or Mommy were not watching, and look and look, trying to imagine, what else could be in there, besides himself, and this room. Father said that it was *Abuelita's* back in England, and that in olden times it was a *curandero's*, but not like Tito or Escarmonde, not a *curandero* who made you well when you were sick, or talked with animals and birds, but another kind. What other kind?

he wondered. Father said that a queen of those times lived in there. In a long red dress of silk, with little tassels all over. But *Abuelita* was in there too. He saw her sometimes. And they talked when he wanted to know things he was afraid to ask Father or Mommy or Esclarmonde. He liked the Victrola, too. The way you cranked it so it would go, and make a tango out of thin air, with no players playing. You put on the black disc, and you cranked it, and it went round and round under the nail, and Carlos Gardel would come right out. Just like he was here, but scratchier. Singing like his voice was by the beach where waves fall, the fizzy sound behind him that made you feel small and think of monsters hiding under the sea, or under the bed. They were awful, and they could get you if you weren't careful. And sometimes they did get you, at night, in dreams. If you opened the doors, he would sing louder. If you closed them a little, he sang softer. A little. A little. A little more. Then all the way. It was fun to make his voice go loud or soft by playing with them. Doors were like mirror glass, but dark. But you still wondered what was on the other side. Mommy didn't like him listening to Carlos Gardel. She said it is not proper for a little boy. He liked Carlos Gardel. He was tough. And carried a knife. Not like his Father or Father's friend Señor Borges, who did not even smoke, and came late and talked rubbish, and was almost blind. But why did they wake him up sometimes to hide with Esclarmonde and listen? His name was the same as his, the English, Georgie. He was not sure that he liked that. When would they start calling him Jorge or, like Father, G. G.? He liked the books too, especially the Special Book, which Father called a funny name, *El Monumento*. It had squiggly monster writing and odd pictures inside. Some of naked ladies. The room had all sorts of things that were good in it. He liked these cards, too, which Esclarmonde said he could look at and play with. They were not like the cards that Father and Señor Borges used to play *Turko*. They had different kinds of pictures. Some, if you looked at real long, seemed just like the mirror. You could go right in there. Just like you were in olden days, where the sorcerers didn't wear feathers and shake corn stalks and talk about mesas, but had long robes, with pictures of the sun and moon and stars. Every afternoon while Esclarmonde was cleaning, and Mommy was doing tea with those awful women that Father said were *Advenediza*, he would sometimes peek through the doors of the drawing room. A little. A little more. A little wider. His eye, like a fly, lighting on a hand, another, on a full face, another, on a face from the side. What was the fly looking for? The queen with the time. Then he would come up here. Smell the smells. Play the Victrola. Or sit under the round thing of white stone and look at *El Monumento*. He would take the purple cloth off of the

shewstone, and look in there. And he would look in the mirror too, and talk to *Abuelita*. He would build houses with the cards, like the ones in the *Villas miserias*. He would build them up, and up. Then knock them down. The honey would be coming in, oh, oh, and everything would be just like he liked it to be. With no monsters under the bed, or in the writing, or in the sea. Sweet. Sweet.

Crying “GaGa! GaGa! Grendelkind breached his cave at eventide, his unfathomable appetites likely to fire a more colossal glamour than that of the Sun’s fierce setting. Bright Ocean muddied as he doused his head and bellowed for a feast, while snatching pods of narwhale, crunching both bones and teeth as though they were bonbons. The last of the day’s cold boatmen hied for harbor, raising their howls in prayer for an exorcist, some sage to quell his bloated ramrod furor. God, but he was a menace, mugging the nipples off the mountaintops for draughts of magma, or mucking up seabottom scum for what bites he could get of octopi. He made the viscera of foul scavengers crawl at the sickening sight of him, scarfing globs of tripe and slobbering sewery gruel as he gnashed his maw. “Ah! That was a foaming good gob of cesspool clabber!” Then detonating devastating belche,s and curdling gas bombs fit to corrode Himmalya’s pure white snows, he plumped down, stunned, at the close of his carousing, to foist a discard of snores on the unquiet night.

So Gredelkind slept, and salivating, dreamt. He dreamt of a light more delicate than a bubble, himself, one-eyed, and staring from a rock, into the opalescence where she danced — a pirouette, a leap, a swoon, a flight, a renovating gracefulness that calmed him, a grace that tamed his monster appetit.

When the Registrar of the Penal Cases Committee found these paragraphs floating, almost as if superimposed, above the virulent print on the letters of that fusty old blatherer Major Doctor Haig-Dunnen’s, attacking his subordinate, the merely Captain, Doctor Clive Izard, for miraculously healing damaged Tommies, he, the Registrar doubted not, to the extent that his reason could be said to be working at all, that this florid, nonsensical prose was no more than a side-effect of his medicinal associate, crouched in

his little brown bottle in the secretary and waiting to be channeled through the syringe and into the Registrar's ravaged blood and brain. Still, the Registrar, in his pain, in his stupor, could not help feeling that these words enclosed or illuminated a region of interest involving the strange goings-on at Lowestoft and the East Anglean environs. But would he live long enough to clarify the mystery? They tolled. The bells. The bells of St. Mary Le Bow. For whom? Desert musings. Might as well ask his empty bowler hat or Mrs. Rachel's ever-intruding cat.

This was a mad plan, she knew, the gun in her hand, the lump in her throat, the cold, grey stone in her heart. What was goading her to it? He was about to speak, address the cattle, so, so . . . there was a silly rabbit looking women next to her, her red nose twitching, her mouse-mouth munching mutely, her eyes burning a jaundiced fever. A rabbit-mouse with tiger eyes. *Da*, only in Russia. Perhaps she would try to stop her. No. No. Grace had rehearsed all that, been through everything, through everyone, in her rambling rampage across Europe, across Russia, through the seven times seven or nine times nine or whatever it was lands that were not even of this earth, wondering the whole time why she had ever left Paris, or the Company. She could be in the Louvre, right now, in that antiquities room where the old guard who was sweet on her would let her touch, yes, *da*, actually touch that . . . that . . . yes. *Da*. Her eyes watered, and from her bleak surroundings, she blinked back a spate of rainbow tears. Bakst's, Golovin's sets, Stravinsky's, Ravel's, and her beloved Rimsky's music, Vaslav, and even Fokine's choreography, they were so . . . so vital, so full of color, yet this man with his twisted little hatreds, and vulgar sloganeering, like the whole war, he was, like this whole fiasco of a revolution, except for the vivid blood, so squalid, so gray, so much like . . . *da*, but now, what difference did all that make? The Alma had guided her here, the gun was in her hand. Everything would become automatic, just like it was in performance after so many rehearsals. Rehearsals. Yes. *Da*. Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse. Then after? After, the curtain would go up. The baton would come down. And the spectacle would begin. The Golden slave would jump up and down, up and down. The virgin would be immolated in communal primavera ecstasy. The princess would be pricked by the spindle. And it would all be as if it were happening to someone else, like characters in a fairy tale, perhaps, or in a novel. And then it would be over, and the *Skomoroks* would look up from his wicked confabulation, wipe his leering,

snaggle-toothed mouth, and sponge for kopecs and Vodka. *Da. Da.* Give it to him. Why not? Yet, the gun was cold. She thought of Vaslav, his odd saying — prediction now she guessed — “I like people, and therefore I will not kill them with a revolver.” The crowd, and its smells, its un-Parisian Russian smells, was pressing in and jostling her, choking her in its crush. No. After all that had happened, she wasn’t sure that *she* did like people. Hannah. Gnade. In every way that mattered, they were infinitely better than the likes of Nikkten or Levin or that hooligan agent provocateur of the defunct Okhrana, he or she, whatever it was, still serving the hydra with no heads. Or God forgive, that pitiful cruel, dissolute, her unpaternal . . . eh, it was not worth thinking about now. In a minute it would all be over. *Da.* Yes, in a munite. Oh. *Intelligent.* He said: “I like *intelligent* people.” Yes, now, and who would they be? These cunning predators? And it wasn’t better, either, as this luniatic so lavishly promised, with the Tsar deposed, and the Grand Duke, incognito, and dead of laughter under a pile of birch leaves, where nobody but she would ever know. The crowd pushed again, bending her towards the cobbles, but the man next to her, in rags, with scatophagic breath, held her up, and said, with a thick peasant tongue: “May God bless you, little sister.” Intelligent? Hardly, but . . . there was the old Abbot, too, the mattermitter monks, and the invalid in the corklined room, and yes, the Anglais, the doctor, and his wonderful little bestial ward. And, of course, those mutilated troll-guides whose networks of ant tunnels reached far below and beyond any she dug with the other sappers at La Boisselle. Certainly, *they* were good. Certainly. *Da.* But, why were they all haunting her just now? Perhaps, she thought, it’s the remembrance of things past come to steady her resolve. The gun felt heavy in her hand, like the weight of history . . . ‘Don’t, darling,’ she said to herself, “start going all histrionic *now*. That kind of indulgence is for amateurs.’ Then she heard a couple of coughing sounds: Ack! Ack! What was that? Had she . . .? but the crowd foamed up violently, like water brought to a sudden terrible boil . . . and, and, was it, was it then, then that she heard the whistles, the creaks, the calls? Was it then that she felt those cold, cold undulations, saw, oh, yes, she did, she *saw* the great glass bubble at the bottom of the sea, so full of light in all that frigid darkness, so full of all those dancers, who, without pain, without effort were so so beautifully, so so gracefully . . . *Da.*

It was like those raster interference patterns on the old sets he kept in his garage, but this stuff was blizzarding through his head now, the screens,

losing all horizontal control, flipping before they could make any sense. “Rainbow Technology,” he said, groggy, but not so groggy that he wasn’t terrified by something that he was remembering, something it would be better to forget. He lifted his leadened rumped head from the mashed pillow, puddled with drool. “Ack.” “What’s that GaGa, darlin’,” said his wife, still half asleep herself, but already seeing her husband’s harrowed face torn at by the bedroom’s flitting moon shards, and feeling more than a little concerned about what had been happening with him lately. “What’s what?” “What you said, darlin’.” “What did I say?” “I think you said, ‘Rainbow Technology.’ A new project?” GaGa sighed. “I don’t know what it is, JoAnn.” He said her name, which meant, she knew, he was irritated. “Something I dreamt maybe?” “Yes, darlin’, that’s all it was. Somethin’ you dreamt.” But he saw a dark, bestial form in the room that was not just the afterimage of a nightmare. “You been workin’ too hard.” He did not answer, but his eyes were wide, and glowed with more than moonlight. “Ever since you spotted The Sacrifice on that there Qifter gagit you got set up in the gay-rage.” Carl was reaching for his glasses on the nightstand, although he did not know what he expected to see, his hand slapping spastically in the dark in response to some command perhaps from that other world which he could not, could not, just could not make sense of. “Darlin’, you know you gots to be careful when you’re workin’ with the Skull.” “Maybe,” said Carl, ignoring his wife, and talking to, well, she couldn’t rightly say who he was talkin’ to, but it wadn’t her, and maybe it wadn’t to himself neither. “It’s the answer to a mathematical problem. It’s so simple, a multiplication problem, maybe, but . . .” It mortified him that he, the hot-shot math genius, the Mighty GaGa, was going to have to arrive at the X by simple counting. Counting. Continuously counting . . . but sleep was stalking him again, or else that monster extruded from the darkness, lurking in the room, a stoney pocky face with tiger eyes, and as he, as he was smothered back into blackness, he saw a series of numbers scrawled by an unsteady hand on a tablet of some kind, suspended . . . $12 + 12 + 12 + 12$. . . “No, no, that’s not right.” But they kept coming, and coming, counting and counting without a solution . . . And the man that was writing — who was? . . . — kept saying something like “Vot. Vot.” Counting, counting, continuously counting . . . “No.” said Carl. “No. Cannot . . . cannot count me . . . No. No!” “Of couse they cain’t, darlin’, said JoAnn, trying to comfort her husband, though she had no idea what or who could not count him, or count on him. And besides, as she looked at the black mass, on the pillow, wordless now, and starting to snore, she knew he was past comforting.

11/25/00 Saturday's Rock, Aesklepios, the Folly Master

The episode with the carved manikin formed the climax and the conclusion of my childhood. It lasted about a year. Thereafter I completely forgot the whole affair until I was thirty-five. Then this fragment of the memory rose up again from the mists of childhood with pristine clarity. While I was engaged on the preliminary studies for my book *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, I read about the cache of soul-stones near Arlesheim, and the Australian chringgas. I suddenly discovered that I had a quite definite image of such a stone, though I had never seen any reproductions. It was oblong, blackish, and painted into an upper and lower half. This image was joined by that of the pencil box and the manikin. The manikin was a little cloaked god of the ancient world, a Telesphoros such as stands on the monuments of the Asklepios and reads to him from a scroll. Along with this recollection there came to me, for the first time, the conviction that there are archaic psychic components which have entered the individual psyche without any direct line of tradition.

C.G. Jung

Memories, Dreams, Reflections

Just Before Dawn, the Rocks Have Tongues

In the desert, after the arguments on style,
Master and student, resting from their ardor,
Sit, while the earth revolves into the darkness.
The ground, in the glass of sand, in the vessels of rocks,
Holds remnants of that light poured into them
By the fecund beaker of the physical sun.
The skies darken. The earth glows.
The stones wear glorioles.

The student asks: "Before dawn, at the smallest end
Of night, will darkness be complete, will all
The arguments on outward forms, on style,
On stones, on sand, be silenced then, only to
Waken when the sun returns?"

And then the Master,

Waiting, as darkness hums, picks up a rock
And hands it to the student. "Watch, till the small
End of night, the stone in your hand."

The student

Watches. His style of seeing expands.
The fecund beaker hidden in the rock
Pours light into the funnel's narrow end,
Igniting, at its mouth, the rising sun.

R.D. — How can I know on Saturday events of the Thursday hence? Or be cognizant of places and of minds not housed inside the confines of my head?

A., T.F.M. — I like you, because you are such a fool. And one of the great virtues of a fool is that you'll believe anything. You'll shout "eureka!" at the discovery of the slightest correspondence. You've seen the Waite/Coleman-Smith Rider imprint of the Tarot card, the zero, the one of the *puer* with a staff in one hand, a hyacinth in the other, and a little doggy nipping at his heels? That's you. Of course you are staring off into space, and of course you are strolling blandly towards an abyss. That is the nature of a fool, his tragedy and gift. It is also, in some ways, the mythic principle of Aesklepios. Consensus opinion is the solid ground, but the fool moves always towards the eccentric, the precipice, the repressed, the curious, the bizarre. As to your silly question about foreknowledge or the seeming ubiquity of consciousness, look at it like this: A man has made friends with a certain bird, say a raven or a starling, and for the sake of being eccentric, bizarre, let's say that bird is white. The bird flies far, sees into many things, and slips, not only through air, but also through time. The bird returns to the man with intimate knowledge, knowledge about his distant lover's betrayals.

R.D. — You are telling me about my wife, Mary Ann.

A., T.F.M. — No, I am telling you a story about my father and my mother. But let's leave personal biography aside, and say, instead, that I am giving you a travelogue of the Peloponnesians, of the ruins of Epidauros, of the sanctuary at Kos with its sacred grove of cypress. (Did you know that the penalty for cutting one of those trees was a thousand drachmas? Well, times change. Now money is made by destroying sacred trees.) On our tour, we see, as if from the raven's overview, many wondrous and terrible things. There shines the beautiful lake at Nemi. There rises its sacred tree. And

there stands the king, ant-sized, from our great height, the famous *Rex Nemorensis*, with generations of victims at his feet. He never sleeps for fear of deadly rivals.

R.D. — Is the tree the phallus of the jealous lover? And the raven the vigilant sweep of his suspicions?

A., T.F.M. — How Freudian! How true! And how banal! Let me refer you to another headshrinker, to Gaston Bachelard's translation of Paul Diel's book *Symbolism in Greek Mythology*. The French shrink speaks of two pathologies: the struggle against exaltation and the descent into banalization. Here are a few of his insights into the latter, so much better, in my estimation, than the dreary Viennese Jew's tiresome repetitions concerning the poor blind king. Excuse, if you will, the professorial style (what can I say, he's French) and also my irrepressible interjections.

Essential suffering — the cause of guiltiness in the neurotic individual — is expressed in the banalized individual by vague feelings of boredom. This is the consequence of an inner void which he endeavors to fill by frantic grasping at pleasure {the sin of the hedonist} or by an automatism of obsessive work {the sin of the stockbroker} which is an attempt to realize exalted desires of material possession and of social position {the sin of the celebrity and the politician}.

The conventional form of banalization is the vast but hidden danger which wastes and undermines the cultural and social foundations of men's {and women's} lives. Intellect which loses its lucidity is no more than thought pervaded by primitive affectivity {he means contemporary politics and religion} blinded and extremely open to common errors {in contrast to fools, like yourself, who are open to errors both common *and* uncommon}. The fact does not prevent the conventionally banalized {conventionally sodomized} individual from proving himself wily and designing in pursuit of his individual aims, which are frequently unavowable.

Contrary to the clairvoyance of mythology and to its symbolic psychopathology {you know — the brutal murder of former lovers, the snatching of fetuses from funeral pyres — those kinds of "symbolic" pathologies} modern pathology takes this psychic distortion {you

know — driving in rush hour traffic, working one-hundred hour weeks, watching TV, craving cars and department store clothing — those kinds of modern pathologies} because it is so frequent — for the normal condition of life. This impedes all true understanding of human psychology {which is to say, all true understanding of anything whatsoever} which is the basis of the translation of the myths.

The man {let's not leave out the women and the children} afflicted by this commonplace form of banalization gradually loses his personality. His life, devoid of all inner direction, is ruled by social convention, public opinion, prejudices of the time {and you wanted to shrink all this to the size of a jealous, deflated peepee}. He {and she and baby makes three} is formed by his environment. Convention is the common and unvarying standard of the banalized individual.

This reduction to a common standard and to a uniformity of opinion, in short, banal submission, is but a caricature of free adherence to the ineluctable law of the spirit {He means me, Aesklepios, the healer, the savior, the clown}. The banalized individual who has turned against the spirit has been unwilling or unable to submit himself {don't forget the ladies and the tikes} to this law. The state of his soul is punishment for his abortive revolt, which, in the final analysis, is only a kind of perverse submission.

Myths symbolize this deformation by opposing it to its counterpart: the neurotic state.

See, that's why I like you, the up-side of neurosis is myth, that is to say, the inner meanderings of a fool.

R.D. — Well, if all this rigmarole is true, how does one escape the violence of exaltation or the stagnation of banalization?

A., T.F.M. — By means of controlled folly.

R.D. — What the hell is that?

A., T.F.M. — Riddle me, riddle me that and this: When is a raven white? Deliberate, cogitate, meditate, expound.

R.D. — I don't know.

A., T.F.M. — When he is bleached to bones!

11/26/00 Sunday's Rock, Fergus's Druid Dreamstone

Metaphors of unity and integration take us only so far, because they are derived from the finiteness of the human mind. If we are to expand our vision into the genuinely infinite, that vision becomes decentralized. We follow a “way” or direction until we reach the state of innocence symbolized by the sheep in the twenty-third Psalm, where we are back to wandering, but where wandering no longer means being lost. There are two senses in which the word “imperfect” is used: in one sense it is that which falls short of perfection; in another it is that which is not finished but continuously active, as in the tense system of verbs in most languages. It is in the latter sense that “the imperfect is our paradise,” as Wallace Stevens says, a world that may change as much as our own, but where change is no longer dominated by the single direction toward nothingness and death.

Northrope Frye
*The Great Code: The Bible as
Literature*

(Note: Perhaps it was bound to happen. Today, I took a hammer to a stone, not one of the seven, but to another of the same constitution. I wanted to see inside, to learn about the constituent parts, to discover the infinite in the infinitesimal. So the scientist kills the poet with a chisel. He must atone. — R.D.)

The heavy green light of the cloudy morning pressed against the small panes of the wellhouse windows, recording the scene with interest. Dr. Izard turned his attention away from the large open tabulae of the portfolio to drop a lump of hard brown sugar into his blackest of black teas. The sugar hastened the thermal convections in the cup and brought burgeoning swirls of heavy cream blossoming to the surface. ‘Another emblem here,’ he

thought, entranced for the second time this morning. ‘Some message again from Francis, no doubt, delivered in this own inimical fashion.’ Gradually IZARD became aware of the accumulating weight of Dr. Bernole’s gaze, and without raising his head, he turned the portfolio around and slid it across the bumpy surface of their makeshift kitchen table. “If you please, Doctor, excuse my impertinence, but you must know that I am bound to ask. Is this your work?”

Dr. Bernole read.

F.D.D. — Having told this story before, there is no reason to tell it again, and yet one tells what has been told because of the compulsion. No one speaks of it openly anymore, but it is the compulsion that raised the rock dolmans at Glastonbury, at Slieve Pris, and at Stonehenge. It is the compulsion that caused the ignorant boy to stick his finger in the crone’s forbidden brew, and afterwards, flee through the year, in shape after shape, until he found the maiden and his death.

R. D. — Is the compulsion alive in the adman’s sirens?

F.D.D. — The compulsion is alive inside of rocks. Women and men adore it equally, though women are its vessel, men its fluid. For men are women disguised as warriors, and women are men disguised as weavers. The dream said as much in the loops of the alphabet. This knowledge is written in the skies and is embedded in the wheel of the seasons, and therefore is embodied in each stone. But to humans, the skies are disheveled and the scripts are scrambled. That is the work of politicians and admen and corporate moguls caught in the compulsion, as pebbles catch in eddies of the surf, bashing together thoughtlessly, until each thought is ground down into sand.

R.D. — Is this, then, the time foretold, the time of the end?

F.D.D. — The compulsion cannot be ended, it can only be channeled. Here is a garbled version of those answers the questions to which are spinning in the eddy:

For each day five items of knowledge
Are required of every understanding person —
From everyone, without appearance of boasting,

Who is in holy orders.

The day of the solar month; the age of the moon;
The state of the sea tide, without error;
The day of the week; the calendar of the feasts of the perfect saints
In just clarity with their variations.

R.D. — That's the tenth century Irish, *Saltair Na Rann*, Graves quoted it while mooning for the goddess.

F.D.D. — The answers to those questions is the hand that cups the curves and eddies of her form.

Dr. Bernole finished reading and rubbed the page carefully between his thumb and forefinger. "The paper is different."

"Yes, the paper is different. But did you write this?"

"Dr. Izard, I am surprised that you have to ask. 'Though the subject skirts close to subjects which might interest my mother.'"

"A charming woman, I am sure, 'though I've yet to have the pleasure of her acquaintance.'"

"Someday soon, Doctor. It is surely 'in the stars', as she would say."

"Quite."

"But your question?"

"A mere formality, Doctor, a test of my sanity, not your honesty."

Dr. Bernole tightened his lips understandingly, taking no offense at his senior colleague's obligatory inquiry. "You know, Dr. Izard, Haig-Dunnen is stalking us."

"Yes. Yes. Mucking about in that absurd countryman's outfit — the boots, the wig, the bent-spoked bicycle. It's too ridiculous to take seriously."

“But maybe we should take it seriously. He’s bloody mad, but damnably well connected.”

“Dr. Bernole, you’re not suggesting that this is Haig-Dunnen’s handiwork?”

Both men laughed.

“Haig-Dunnen perhaps on drugs,” sniggered Bernole.

“But Doctor, how did this get here? For I can assure you that it was not in the portfolio before, as I have poured over this document for far too many hours than I care to admit, and until this morning, this page was not a part of the Wild Man’s monument.”

Doctor Izard’s junior colleague read over the document again, his brow scrunched quizzically. “It’s damnably strange, and no two ways about it.”

“I have a theory,” Dr. Bernole.”

“Do tell.”

“I think it grew there.”

“Surely you’re joking?”

“Perhaps I am. But it’s no stranger a phenomenon than all the others: your Stonehenge incident, the regeneration of these poor boys’ blasted limbs, and, for that matter, the existence of the portfolio itself, it’s indecipherable contents, the bizarre manner of its delivery . . .”

Dr. Bernole heaved a heavy sigh. “No, Doctor, no stranger.”

“But I don’t mean that it’s growing in an organic sense, as say, a seed or a cell grows.”

“What then?”

“I mean that it’s growing inorganically, as for example, in the manner of a crystal.”

“A book that grows?”

“Quite.”

11/27/00 Monday's Rock, Sandro Lingam

So I agree that spirit and matter have fallen apart in the wrong way — but in both! And what is lacking?

Answer: The anima.

Yes, the psyche, that which is between the two. That is why in both opposite positions, in both enemy positions, there is a separation of mind and matter. There is no *vinculum amoris* (bond of love) to unite them, for the anima is lacking.

Marie-Lousie von Franz
Puer Aeternus

Having thrown her own self-vaunted *conscia mens recti* to the proverbial winds, Shirley Razos had become Surely Crazy, so that these days no quantity of gin and vermouth seemed capable of dousing her suspicions about her husband's recent bizarre behavior. It was not jealousy, at least she told herself that. Half a century of life with Lovernios had long ago cured her of that green malady. Besides, she knew for a fact that his old meat was far too flaccid to find a niche anywhere else than his own dribblestained boxers. But something was goading Shirley to extremes of intrusivity that drove her passed anything she had perpetrated in their younger days when he really was chasing co-ed tail and had enough wick left to dip, if said tail turned favorably in his professorial direction. Still, she always knew her grip on him, and had never before had to resort to what she was doing now: following him surreptitiously, pawing through his drawers and secret hiding places in search of what she didn't quite know. The discovery of verbal diarrheas like the one she was now holding were only the usual suspects, the kind of crap he had been dishing out one way or another on his decades-long climb to *emeritus* status, and the find did not appease her. But there was something about this oddly bound notebook, its strange skin-like cover, the antique-looking paper, the shear hodge-podge of its slough of balderdash, dates, lexicons, facts, all mixed up as a kind of medieval scholar's deranged dump site, that made her suspect, that under all of this irritating

dishevelment, some kind of code, or secret language might be lurking, something, anything at all, that would allow her into the inner sanctum of her husband's mind, that would enable her to understand, to perhaps even alleviate, or at the very least share the burden of this impossible load of grief. She would put this monument back in the place where Lovernios had hidden it. She would follow its development. She would track, as best as any spate of tears can, in their downward traversal through life's dust, the twisted, drying course of this flood of words.

The Birth of a Cynic or The Suicidal Romanza of the Codependent Male

The dapple-gray most carefully picked her way
Through gravel scruff that buffed the windswept fell,
Descending through the leaf-laced canopy
That sheltered the enchanted dale below.
Even atop the crest he heard the rush,
The throaty gush of pebbles in the stream.
And as they entered this green world, new leaves
Of alders and of willows cupped their hands
Over the newborn eyes of hyacinths.
Both mare and man were swaddled by Enchantment.
Here manikins and elves and fairies roamed,
Darting just past the reach of physical sight,
But weaving chains of laughter as they hurried,
For birds to follow them with snips of song.
This was the magic world where he dismounted,
Throwing his body to the verdant earth
To moan, unheard by any, save these mockers,
Of that most steep investment in his love,
Which she who scorned him swept to utter loss.
Let's say he was distracted, yet distraction
Made delicate his avenues of sense,
So that a sweet, expanding radiance
Colored his mind with loneliness and death.
His was a sorrow well worth weeping for.
The mare unrecking, browsing near the stream,
Tore at the tender green with eager teeth.
He listened with a heightened listening,
And from the calm destruction of her grazing,

Envisioned how the wonders of the spring
Would soon enough be stripped and frozen white.
This was his comfort: Spring's green world would die.
His fear was that it died only to rise.

One of the more disgustingly persistent news stories of our time is the tale of a berserker male, who, after the breakup of his relationship, runs amok, killing his former wife or lover, his children, himself and others. This is a kind of male-psyche Gotterdammerung in which the love-scarred fool plunges into a despair so deep that he not only wants to die, but wants to take the whole world with him. The troubadours coped with and channeled this insanity by carefully choosing words to sing its praises. In English, Spenser is their most flagrant heir.

His art varies from homeliness to splendor, from the remoteness of romance to the realistic suggestion of common life. His greatness as an artist lies not in one sphere or the other, but in the fusion of the two.

E. DeSelincourt
*Introduction to the Poetical
Works of Edmund Spenser*

As we mature, we often lose that curious quality of human consciousness, which always seems to be pining for an imagined antique. We seem less capable of creating that never-never land in a remote and ideal past where youth is unblemished by mawkishness, where gold shines on the very dew of the grass and where there are never bills to be paid nor dishes to be washed. But this is our loss. Because it is always to this quality that we turn in times of great crisis or great elation. Torn by our grief or annihilated by our ennui, we pray that our hearts will pulse once more with its romance, which can never be sullied by fulfillment, nor ever be far from the moment of consummation. Here is where the artist lives, the mystic and the poet. But most of all, this is the abode of young lovers, of any age, those ineffectual ones who always appear to rescue us from the mundane and unspeakably banal tragedy of everyday life.

His distinctive quality is to be found in his language and its melody. To an archaism which is inimitable because it is purely capricious, he was drawn at once to its reminiscent picturesqueness and by its musical possibilities.

Ibid.

So oft as I her beauty doe behold,
And therewith doe her cruelty compare,
I marvaile of what substance was the mould
The which her made at once so cruel and faire.

Sonnet LV, *Amorotti*
Sir Edmund Spenser

The immense betrayal that we all endure, yet all forgive, is the betrayal of a beautiful world, which keeps on living while killing all her lovers.

This may be why the oilmen, the cattlemen, the lumbermen, the admen, and the moneymen are so bent on destroying her, because her beauty and her unconscionable deadliness are an affront to their accounting formulae. They beat their chests and boast of their own greatness. She bows her head, and turns them into ciphers. Beneath every CPA's gray suit and spreadsheet brain is a troubadour's motley and a lovelorn poet's heart.

Well, whatever Loverboy was feeling or doing, and it was more, she knew, then these verbose *generalia*, she was going to unearth it, and when she did . . . 'well,' she thought, 'hell hath no fury . . .'

11/28/00 Tuesday's Rock, Serenity Pitt, the Zen Master

I reflected that every coin in the world is a symbol of those famous coins which glitter in history and fable. I thought of Charon's obol for which Balisarius begged; of Judas' thirty coins; of the drachmas of Lais, the famous courtesan; of the ancient coin which one of the Seven Sleepers proffered; of the shining coins of the wizard in 1001 nights, that turned out to be bits of paper, of the inexhaustible penny of Isaac Laquedem; of the sixty-thousand pieces of silver, one for

each line of an epic; of the doubloon which Ahab nailed to the mast; of Leopold Bloom's irreversible florin; of the Luis whose pictured face betrayed the fugitive Louis XVI near Varennes. As if in a dream, the thought that every piece of money entails such illustrious connotations as these, seemed to me of huge, though inexplicable importance.

Jorge Luis Borges
The Zahir

I still read the newspaper, and today, I chanced to glance at the business section while I was throwing it away — as it is a thing I always shun like swarms of feces-bred flies. When suddenly all of the ink printed there raised its black finger and touched me on the soft spot below the sternum. I cried, or rather, a giant being towering darkly over the city, cried through me. Here was a wound, soft and small and black, that kept being compressed tighter and tighter, like the gruel at the bottom of a global landfill, which would never crystallize to cleanliness, a wound shared by everybody, perpetually festering with the accumulated stench of discarded desires, a wound that chronically oozed from the very center of my own discarded self. What was I to do? I needed money, and yet every way that I had ever devised to procure me that commodity had added to the immense mountain of refuse that was forming this abscess and also crushing it. I fell to the floor and rocked to and fro, hugging myself desperately. If I did not hold tight, I felt that this monstrous realization, whose tumor my whole life had revolved around, would now break through my papery skin and bleed its forever-black stain as a vast collective grave on the innocent earth. Had I been orbiting earth from space at that moment, I might have seen that stain spreading out from one tuberosity of civilization after another, heaping enormous amorphous monuments where future some archeologist would be toiling, astounded, trying to fathom the mysteries of our trivial debris and wondering what dark spirits had compelled us to destroy this blue-pearl of a planet for billions and billions of happy meals and mounds of junked internal combustion engines and sloughs and sloughs of plastic water bottles. Why? Why? Why? That voice was still crying in my ears, when another voice ensued, the voice of Serenity, rational, solemn, and sweetly comforting.

S.P., T.Z.M. — Dear Friend, if money were not of spiritual import, our true Friend, Jesus, would not have sent Peter to the sea's edge, instructing him in

careful manner to draw up the fish whose mouth contained the tribute. For he had it in his power to make the miraculous creature spout scripture, but, nay, he preached pure gold. And, dear Friend, if money were not of spiritual import, our Lord would surely have abstained from instructing us in its proper use as he did in Luke, Chapter 20, verse 25 where he commands us clearly to “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesars.”

On this earthly sojourn, Friend, money is the body’s protector, and is thus solicitous of our care. Notwithstanding the reckless use of specie in thy time, where only one in thirty sovereigns is used in the exchange of goods and services, the rest being set out as the apostate’s bait, given to speculation, and to those other such instruments of destruction that thy century’s financiers refer to as arbitrage, commodity futures, debt, debt service and the like. For so alacritous have some been in these capital pursuits that if all the wide world’s accounts were to come due, there would not be enough of God’s creation or man’s industry to settle the deficiency. Thus, from the false surmises of these speculators and usurers, Judas can be reckoned to have made a proper bargain by purchasing for thirty pieces of silver his six-foot plot of lowly potter’s field. For true it is that these Over-Reachers too have bartered for promissory scrip the forests of Brazil, the tribes of Afrique, the magnificent tigers roaming the Bengal. For to these benighted ones, Money is Desire, the endless grasping of Cupidity. It is the grasping for a tangible Heaven of Compound Interest, of Securities, of Bonds, of Trusts, and of Annuities paying out farthings forever. But it is likewise true, dear Friend, that Money is more permanent than our Bones and more ephemeral than Lucifer’s once bright Nimbus. And while it is undoubtedly true that “some are as eager to be Rich, as ever they were to Live: For superfluity as for substance,” yet, my dear Friend, if some be guilty of gluttony, the Lord does not therefor enjoin the righteous to abstain from food. Money is yet a necessary — as Jesus himself has shown us — as much, perhaps, as is scripture, for the orderly conduct of a spiritual life. For the penurious often fall prey to hopelessness, venality, and sloth, which likewise prevent their passage through the needle’s eye.

R.D. — But in the Meetinghouse you found a different freedom, an inner light that made your body fly, commanding views beyond all gross perceptions. Your vision belied both money and the body.

S.P.,T.Z.M. — “And do I not owe all to God? And if paying what we owe makes the Moral Man, is it not fit we should begin to render our Dues,

where we owe our very Beginning, our All?" For "where Charity keeps pace with Gain, Industry is blessed" and how, dear Friend, can one be charitable who is himself impoverished? When the need for money arises, I beseech thee, dear Friend, that thou doest as the Lord did for Himself and Peter: Get some.

R.D. — When I seek clarity on this manner, I find poetry instead:

Stranger's Tribute

I

I have watched and wondered and waited
Until the swirl of elements
Gesticulated into form:
A fish alive in its own nutrient,
Moving for safety
Towards darker, colder waters,
An eye that turns its flat, revolving disk
At a suspicious-seeming shaft of sun,
A wariness fastened on that troubled mirror
Through which the talon and baited hook descend.

II

After floating in darkness and praying for too long a time,
Gaze fixed upon the undulating aleph,
The slit in my forehead
Where one eye opens to starlight,
I come to the words *I love*,
Which are far different than the words *I want*.
I drop to my knees and I receive *the gift*,
Not the slick blood-thrill of the hands in need of possession,
But the fulfillment of compassion,
The gift of tears in the heart of the gift of bliss.

III

Here, mercy grows high on either side of the path,
Foxgloves and jasmine and clusters of purple bells,
Bright blossoms as wild as the wondering, watchful heart.
Here, the sound of wood on wood will lead us down,
Where boats washed in cross wakes rock,

Which elements distinguish choreographic movements from all others?

They are governed by rules: they must be in harmony with the aesthetic of the time and place of their execution.

The Book of the Ballet
Genevieve Guillot and
Germaine Prudhommeau

I can hardly say her name, and I do not think she is coming back. Yet her presence has suffused everything in the house, and not only *in* the house, the house itself, and also the molecules whose dance creates my disintegrating body. It reminds me of that time after Mary Ann's . . . ah, I have been so diligent in trying to forget that loss, but certain wounds, even for the man, stick. And yet, today, I feel calmer than I've felt for quite awhile, my chat yesterday with Serenity, taking root in the loose soil of my loneliness, as if no matter how crippled an animal I have become, there is some entity who is herding me safely to paradise. Isn't that an odd statement for a dying man to make? A few times even I thought of that aborted presence, who drove an ever-widening wedge between the two of us, pouring the gap full of grief. Today, that grief, like a personage almost, began to lighten a bit, its persistent maroon brightening just here and there, and ever so subtly, to vermillion. I am not quite ready to confess to anything so buoyant as happiness, but with Diva on my lap, and the slow lights of the day moving quietly through the house, my emptiness is certainly touched by grace.

G. M. — You know, *mon cher*, *la danse* is not only made when we feel moved. *Non*, it is made when it is programmed. It is a pregnancy, it comes to term. Art, like the rock, suffers the pressure of time. In dance, we are precise. We divide *les* movements into poses. These poses flow from one to another. And so we make successive moments of movement. It may be that these moments of movements will evoke the feelings; they may evoke the ideas; they may evoke the images, but these considerations are *tout* secondary. The precision of the moments of movement exist *suelement* for their own sake. This is the way of the *unvivers*. This is the way of the dance. *Par exemple*, in even the most simple *entrechant*, the changes momentous occur. *La danseuse*, beginning from the fifth position, executes *un pli *, makes the leap, *et* crosses the right foot more pronouncedly *un*

devant, behind, then alights, returning to the fifth position, with the left foot *en avant*, forward. We begin with the pose, *un* stasis artificial, and finish in the same place. The two poses are *exactement, non? Mais* with a difference *extraordinaire*. The difference is made by time. *Por la danseuse*, there are myriads of these moments of movements, but they are *tout* conscious. They are executed in time, on time, and on the mark. To do less is to lose the child that longs, of all things, to escape from it's unearthly paradise, and to be born, here, in the midst of all our imperfection. Ah, *mon cher*, if you could peer at *les* quarks making the movements in the domain quantum, you would see also this precision of the moments of movements. It is an adherence to a cosmic aesthetique, an exfoliation of the beauty for its own sake. It is, *mon cher*, the exquisite movement of the mastery of time.

R.D. — But I am puzzled. Why is your double crude, brute force? Why does your mirror show, in its dark depths, the stalker of whales and the whales themselves in the sea?

G.M. — Because, like them, I have no room for error. When one is exposed in the element of time, one may be drowned or crushed in a single instant. Is it not the same for the whale as for the hunter? *La danseuse* swims through the element turbulent, completely controlled *dans la mer incontrôlable*.

Besides, *mon cher*, you have *made a* mistake common. The hunter, he is not my double. He is my nemesis, my stalker. He is my body, my feelings, my thoughts, my losses *tragique, mais dramatique. Peut-être même nécessaire. Toute les choses* which try to kill my art. He is the injury, the sickness, the advancement of age. He is all that which destroys the achievement of the *aesthetique* perfect. Does he not stalk us all relentlessly? Is he not cunning? Is he not divine? And will he not certainly kill us in the end? You know him, too, do you not? Is he not *le fantôme dans votre rétroviseur*? But we, *mon cher*, we two are different. Our double, as you call it, is another. He is the great *and* noble leviathan. He is the animal at one with the ocean, dancing profoundly where there is no breath.

11/30/00 Thursday's Rock, Giles Nagual

Sunset in the desert. Enfeebled by prolonged fasting, the hermit finds himself unable to concentrate his mind upon holy things. His thoughts wander; memories of youth evoke regrets that his relaxed

will can no longer find strength to suppress, — and, remembrance begetting remembrance, his fancy leads him upon dangerous ground. He dreams of his flight from home, — of Ammonaria, his sister's playmate, — of his misery in the waste, — his visit to Alexandria with the blind monk Didymus, — the unholy sights of the luxurious city.

Involuntarily he yields to the nervous dissatisfaction growing upon him. He laments his solitude, his joylessness, his poverty, the obscurity of his life; grace departs from him; hope burns low within his heart. Suddenly, revolting against his weakness, he seeks refuge from distraction in the study of the Scriptures.

Vain effort! An invisible hand turns the leaves placing perilous texts before his eyes.

Gustave Flaubert
*The Temptation of Saint
Anthony*
translated by Lafcadio Hearn

Sitting with Diva today, stroking her fur, thinking of nothing in particular for hours on end — a pastime that I am becoming blissfully accustomed to — I noticed that a certain wonderful kind of synchronization was occurring. Our breaths were not flowing in perfect unison, since the relative proportions of our bodies would put one or the other of us severely out of physiological kilter if that were to happen, but we were in harmony nonetheless, separated, as it were, by only an octave on the scale of existence, each of us following the same pitch sequence, while moving melodically, harmonically together with such an exact symbiosis that for some period of time — for who knows how long on the clock? — what I was as a human being ran parallel to what she was as a cat. A weaving of consciousness and perceptions was slowly intertwining in the most languid and relaxed way, but still with an edge of predatory alertness that I recognized as spine-tinglingly feline. The room took on different shapes, different colors, or rather colors that were pastel and washed out, as if the light of day were overly harsh. I squinted a little, and noticed that what I lacked in color awareness, was more than compensated for through an increase by several orders of magnitude in my visual apperception of contrast. Life movements were blaringly apparent: the movement of gnats whirling through floating dust motes in light shafts,

of tiny spiders witching their wiles in unswept corners, of ants moving furtively along baseboards and across the grainy surfaces of the oak flooring. The world was an emptiness as far as concept was concerned, an absolute desert, but as far as presence was concerned, it was a squirming hybridized unity of pulsating silvers and ebonies. I was entranced. It was as if a primal awareness of the Principle Order of Things were twirling all around me, emptied of everything, except wonder. And yet my human mind, flowing beside this undulating flux, merging and separating with it, kept wanting to understand what was happening. At last Diva turned to me, blinked her piercing yellow eyes very slowly and very deliberately, once, twice, thrice, and the book was closed. I had been allowed to see more than I deserved, and still the human voice in me was crying “more”.

G.N. — (sarcastically) Certainly the desert can be read like a book, but who will teach you the meaning of its signs? But the desert is what it is. You want to have an “experience,” to indulge yourself in some Neolithic romanticism. You want to add to the anonymous totems in the anomaly of rain. You want to walk head-down in the waste and find a raven’s skull, its big eye-socket implying acerbic innuendoes. These wastes are not pages. You should grow up. Your whole approach is ghoulish, childish, and comically so, unfit for a person of knowledge and of power.

R.D. — (indignantly) Well, these things, if they are not really happening to me, are happening to someone. Someone did add to the totems. Someone was almost drowned in the desert. Someone did find a raven’s skull in the desolation. Someone merged with a cat.

G.N. — (pointedly) And knowing that this someone somewhere exists in what way changes your habits of perception?

R.D. — (accusingly) There’s a persistent and domineering punishment in your tone, desert-like, in the sense that it’s uncaring. I come to you for training, for awareness, and I get these eccentric sorcerer’s opinions.

G.N. — (Socraticly) Do you see this stone? Its eccentricity? Its scars? Wisdom and folly share some common themes. Both are unruly, aloof and even lewd.

R.D. — (disgustedly) Well, the desert is not glib. It may be hard-hearted, but it is never truculent. Your words can smear the most luxurious gold with the sickliest yellow.

G.N. — (carpingly, evolving towards imperiousness) So you want a numinous relationship? You want a desert guru, angelic and genteel. You should prepare yourself to accept things, which are seemingly less, but which conjure so much more: harsh beauty, emptiness, heat and truth.

R.D. — (scathingly) You drop words like those oviparous lizards that drop eggs, leaving them unattended to spawn monsters. Thank God for the discretion of the sun and the endless wiles of desert predators that keep these populations well in check!

G.N. — (with quiet and compassionate authority) You have read many books. So you have become urbane when you should be astute. Do you observe any lachrymal fluid, dripping from this or from any other stone?

“Stone.” That was the final word of our argument, and then the dusk ensued with tactful silence. Hospitable shadows quelled the desert heat. An inappetent languor pressed upon our hearts, drawing them nearer to each other. We felt nothing. Thought nothing. Wanted not one thing. And yet the stones wore saintly glorioles.

Interregnum: Fifth Week's Summary

Dear Mr. Parks,

I have received the transmissions from your holographic projector of the one that your wife and her associates quaintly refer to as “The Sacrifice.” I must say that in spite of their small size, the verisimilitude quite exceeded my expectations. Even more impressive was your experiment of communications through a combination of chemical transmitters from certain foods (Italian, a nice bow to my native land, *grazie mille*), and the inculcation of the sounds of selected strange memes. The fact that you were able to exert maximum influence, while still allowing maximum freedom, was most gratifying, and most aligned also with our wishes for this subject. A tip of *le cappello* to you, my good friend. Your genius, you have my warmest, most personal of assurances, will be immeasurably useful for the execution of our plans. And as for your enclosed — modest, I might add — budget, you may count on continued funding for your part in this noble work that we have embarked upon *insieme*.

Your ever devoted friend,
Dr. Sandro Lieto
L'Auberge, Sedona
Enclosure: one cashiers check

. . . the true biography of an artist is that of his work. It is also the only story that does not end with death. Proust said of Ruskin: “The events of his life are intellectual ones and the important dates are those in which he perceives a new art form.

Jean-Yves Tadie
Marcel Proust: A Life

In 1988, Editions La Decouverte, Paris, published *Phrasikleia: Anthropologie de la lecture en Grece ancienne* by Jesper Svenbro. I find arguments in this book, which bear directly upon this persistent problem of words and stones. Professor Svenbro's study delves with philological

subtlety into the analysis of the inscriptions carved into ancient Greek sepulchral monuments, the so-called *sêma*. Not being a Greek scholar, and, in fact, having to rely on Janet Lloyd's 1993 English translation for the Cornell University Press, I nevertheless found provocative parallels between Professor Svenbro's speculations on Greek attitudes on reading and the problems I am encountering analyzing the text of week five's Rock Gazing Exercises. The question dogging my interest is simply this: who or what is speaking in these texts? And this is the same inquiry that Prof. Svenbro addresses in his anthropological study.

I have previously spoken of these seven stones as if they each have a persona. I have assumed that each persona has its own voice. Except in the psychological sense, via the abominable mechanism called "projection," this assumption appears to be completely absurd. Stones do not speak, and yet they somehow seem to generate speech in others. And so it is with the Greek *sêma*. Their stones, like my stones, often refer to themselves in the first person singular. For example, the protagonist of Prof. Svenbro's study proclaims: "I, Phrasikleia's *sêma*, shall always be called girl {*koure*}, having received this name from the Gods instead of {through} marriage." Am I, or is Phrasikleia's *sêma*, projecting? Since it is both rational and obvious that stones are *aphtongos*, that is, "voiceless," how else can these words exist? And yet, as Prof. Svenbro points out, that while "the *sêma* itself is silent, whomever recognizes it in passing by will speak. The stone will trigger speech." In the case of the ancient Greeks, the word *sêma* radiates various shades of meaning, i.e., *sign*, *signal*, *symbol* and *tomb*. What, then, is the stone, or rather its inscription, doing, but proclaiming its presence? Speech comes from presence, and only takes place in the present. The stones, or their scripts, serve the reader as notes on a page serve the musician. They prompt the reader, who is present as they are present, to renew their life by decoding them with the living instrument of the voice. This resurrection grants the *sêma*, and by association the person whom it commemorates, *kleos*, renown, or what we might loosely refer to as *fame*. But, as Prof. Svenbro, clarifies, "*fame*, though it is the common one, "is not a very satisfactory translation for *kleos*" because "*kleos* is the technical term for what the poet bestows on individuals who have accomplished something remarkable." And further on, the Prof. states "*kleos* belongs entirely to the world of sound. If *kleos* is not acoustic it is not *kleos*." Fame exists because it is bruited, because of its ability to resound.

The words prompt the reader to decode them, and to bruit the fame of the stone. Prior to this moment, the words are entombed. They are the funerary monuments of a once-living, i.e., once “present,” writer who is now absent. What Prof. Svenbro brilliantly expostulates is that the writer is effaced by the act of writing, in that he silences his own voice and gives it to another, that is, he bestows it on the reader. It is the art of speaking, of reading, and specifically, of reading aloud, that creates presence, that is to say, life. When the words of the stones are read, what is present, what is alive, according to the ancient Greeks, is not the writer, nor the stone, nor the signal, nor the script, it is the reader’s voice, the reader, who, through the act of reading, withdraws his own persona and projects the *kleos* of the inscription.

This activity of the reader can be denoted by one of several Greek words translated into English as *reading*. To borrow again from Prof. Svenbro: “the activity is denoted by the verb *ananemesthai* whose literal meaning is to ‘distribute.’” Thus, “whoever approaches the stone is expected to ‘read’ the name of the deceased, making it resound.” By reading, we proclaim our presence, and distribute life. In a more contemporary parlance, we allow our voice to “channel” an entity who existed, or who still exists, in another place and time.

But what does all this have to do with the seven texts constituting week five of these Awareness Exercises? The texts of 11/24/00 (Friday’s Rock, Moby Polyphemus) of 11/25/00 (Saturday’s Rock, Aesklepios, the Folly Master) seem to prompt an explosion of signifiers that are certainly not mine — for that would bring us back to the doctrine of psychological projection — nor are they the stones’ — to imply that they are would be to sink us into the primitive folly of animism — nor are they the reader’s — for the reader is only a channel, an expressive channel, perhaps, but still only a vessel — no, words like

breached
eventide
bonbons
exorcist
ramrod
octopi
scarfing
clabber

libation
spasms
limpid
kelp
escapades
androids
larvae
lapidary
origami
slaughterhouse
viscera
kaleidoscope
kowitz
evangelist
entrails
assassin
polychrome
extravaganza

are not the projections of the writer nor the voices of stones, rather they are (may be? — ah, I am out of my depth here) vortices of renown gathered from many places and times, crowding into consciousness, and clamoring again for speech to give them life.

Now, this brings us all — writer, script, reader, listener — to the question of place, the question of time. And it brings me, in attempting to grasp all this, to the results of a series of experiments involving water and the moon. I quote from Theodor Schwenk's book, *Sensitive Chaos: The Creation of Flowing Forms in Water and Air*.

. . . water shaken in a vessel can be caused to move in such a way that the inner surfaces thus created all slide past each other in the moving liquid. As soon as the movement ceases, the formation of inner surfaces, and thus also the great impressionability, is arrested, and the "sense organ" closes itself.

Herr Schwenk claims that things in flow are "impressed" by cosmic influences as the various spirals and vortices of movement create innumerable receptors on their sensitive "inner surfaces."

By shaking vessels of water and activating the inner surfaces at specified intervals during a complete solar eclipse, Herr Schwenk was able to control the opening and closing of the fluid's sensitivity to the cosmos. To make the "voice" of these "encoded" messages visible (as, say, the sculptor, through his inscriptions, has made the speech of the *sêma* visible), Herr Schwenk sprouted wheat grains in each vessel. He then graphed the progress of each blade's subsequent growth against the water's "memory" of the impression of the eclipse. The results were dramatic and unequivocal. In the "region of the total eclipse," the grass blades' growth in the water so impressed are significantly retarded.

The mathematically minded or skeptical can check the statistical rigor of these experiments in Schwenk's book *Grundlagen de Potenzforschung*.

What Herr Schwenk purports to demonstrate is that things in "flow," like water in vessels, like air through the human larynx, like words across synaptic circuits, capture precise impressions of places and times. Analogously, I hypothesize that the fluid dynamics that made these seven stones have also encrypted them. The actions of words, even the strange words listed above, must do the same. And as the writer writes and the reader reads, places and times resound and come alive.

Now, the assertion of Fergus's Druid Dreamstone on Sunday, November 26th, 2000, regarding the five essential "items of knowledge required of every understanding person" begins to expand in import. By knowing the day of the solar month, the age of the moon, the state of the sea tide, the day of the week, and the calendar of the perfect saints, we are literally "in touch" with these activated inner surfaces of awareness — whether they are open and flowing or whether they are calm and closed.

If it is not the writer, nor the script, nor the reader, nor the listener resounding *kleos*, what is it? Isn't it space itself, and time itself? Isn't it the Word made flesh? When on Monday, November 27th, we "resound" the troubadour's speech on unrequited love, or on Tuesday, November 28th, we activate a Quaker preaching on the spiritual values of money, or on Wednesday, November 29th, we distribute the polyglot musings of a great danseuse on dance, are we not hearing the audible impressions of signifiers that have captured these places and times? And by so doing, are we not adding our own place and time to the brew?

But now we come to the desert, Thursday, November 30th, the place of stillness, the place where the maddening flows of impressions close. Now we know that Saint Anthony's agony is also our own. We know that an invisible hand is also placing perilous texts before our eyes, and making us want to cry against their onslaught. It is no wonder that the stones are glowing.

The trip to Alpharetta

There is a precise, technical word for the loose accumulation of flesh that greets me in the hotel bathroom's multiple mirrors: *fabiform*, *def.* "shaped like a bean." This trait, like so many others, I share with hoards of American males who have managed to crawl through time on a fast-food diet and reach the milestone of their fiftieth year. I review this small, obvious, and seemingly insignificant fact from my room at the Holiday Inn Express at 5455 Windward Parkway West, Alpharetta, Georgia. (The seven stones, with all their lapidary wisdom, have traveled with me, their seven envelopes carefully wrapped in an old, unraveling Abercrombie and Fitch sweater.) I iterate this observation because the mirrors here tell me that the past week has added to my girth, my fabiformness, if you will, and have made me realize how much I miss Mary Ann, and how unlikely it is that I will ever be considered attractive to another woman. This realization makes me hate the body I have constructed for myself with a lifetime of bad habits, a half-century of kowtowing to the demands of my advertising-duped entrails. I now know that every day, perhaps every moment of every day, offers a choicepoint, and it seems that I, like so many others, have reached those bifurcation nodes and more often than not chosen poorly, even perversely. Perversely, I know, I now find myself longing for the wasting promised by the doctors as a symptom of my cancer. But, here I am — in Alpharetta — a Human Bean, one of the many bloated, unsproutable seeds that will erect no magic stalk to the giant's never never land of stealable treasures. I have been here for the whole week, first to take Sadhana, Inc.'s workshop on Conscious Breathing (of that, more anon), and second to . . . well, the truth is I don't exactly know (as they would say at the C.B. workshop, "at the conscious level") *why* I have stayed — unless it was to gorge on aperitifs, pasta, ensalata, and dolce. I only know that the breathing exercises have opened up a floodgate of intuition, which the sleeping exorcist of my reason could not expel, and which seemed to compel me to remain. This compulsion has included a weird kind of pica for Italian cuisine. I have sampled most of the Italian restaurants of the town: Buca di Beppo's and Fazoli's on Mansell Road, Fratelli Di Napoli's on North Point

Parkway, Altobeli's on Old Alabama Road, and, of course, Vinny's, just next door to the hotel, on Windward. I am not Italian. I know no Italians. I enjoy, but am not generally addicted to Italian food. I do like Italian shoes, perhaps the pair I have been wearing has been not so subtly guiding me. I can only explain this week-long obsession with my anticipation of the probably apocryphal legacy from the Italian Doctor in Arizona, Sandro Lingam, oops!, I mean Sandro Lieto. It is as if the Universe (Uni to her close personal friends) wanted me to be in precise places at precise times to overhear conversations at adjacent tables. (Ah, finally my rudeness pays off. I have always fantasized about owning a restaurant with microphones hidden at each table. For some reason, I adore eavesdropping on conversations that would bore me to tears if I were actually forced to participate in them.) And what did I learn from this gluttonous spy-fest. Plenty.

I learned that Alpharetta has a whole heap of red dirt, and that that oxidized earth-skin is being furiously excavated to accommodate a building boom whose speed and intensity, if not height, would shame Nimrod. And I learned, too, that Alpharetta's main citadels, however busy the surface developers might seem erecting support infrastructure, were beneath that red dirt, in miles of cable underground. Alpharetta is the heart of the largest fiber-linked network in the U.S, and it is the nesting place of information processing and technology giants: Nortel, AT&T, Equifax, MCI, Digital Equipment Corp., Lucent Technologies, Automated Data Processing, Hewlett Packard, Siemens, and last, but certainly not least, *vis-à-vis* this country's unfolding electoral drama, Choicepoint. You could say that Alpharetta is a kind of cultural brain dedicated to information gathering, processing, and control. For all those fretting the outcome of the recent seemingly indecisive presidential extravaganza, let me assure you, that if the conversations that I overheard at Alpharetta's Italian dining establishments have any validity, the outcome of this election has never really been in doubt. The president, it seems, was chosen long before November 7th, in so far as the plus and minus charges whizzing through the networking nodules of Alpharetta's vast android brain have long-since determined the pattern of our merely human future(s).

At Buca di Beppo's, while scarfing down the mortadella, pepperoni and pepperoncini of the Di Beppo "bend at the knees" 1893 salad, I overheard some 30 somethings (would-be alpha male types of which there seem to be many in Alpharetta) talking about how pissed Marty was to have that A-hole from the *Guardian* sniffing around about the voting list purge in Florida.

There was plenty of fratboy laughter, some use of the N-word — which my years in Texas taught me to recognize as Old South Money or pretensions to Old South Money when pronounced ‘nigra,’ — and the usual mish mash of clabber around the animals they had killed and the women that they claimed to have boffed. All this of course was hardly significant enough to record. These were mere verbal aperitifs, bonbons to help stave off the limpid tide of my personal loneliness. But midway through my side dish of 3 “big as your head” meatballs, I began, in my carnivorous stupor, to realize that the conversation might have something to do with the disputed presidential election.

“I thought Vin Weber was going to have a hissy fit when Rather projected Gore in Florida.” ‘I’ll poison that S.O.B., sure as shit,’ he says, ‘see if he don’t wake up with anthrax in his wheaties, I ain’t about to let one of my bought boys get uppity on a deal that could cost us the White House.’

“And was Safir there?”

“Ya, sure, and Fagan, too, and me just a goffer trying not to bust a gut when they start ooglin’ over K.H. like there was a snowball’s chance they could get through that cake of make-up and suck face.”

“You think Jeb’s playin’ sticky finger there?”

“Oh, my Jeeesus, she’s a good Christian white woman sure as the Pope’s Catholic — but I got my suspicions.”

By the time I finished with my Buca (“stretch pants are your friend”) Bread Pudding Caramello, I begin to connect enough of the dots to think that the headlines about court decisions and absentee voters were about as important to the story of the election’s outcome as a pig’s feelings are to a bacon-eater. I returned to my room at the Holiday stuffed, ah yes, and overstuffed.

The next night, at Fratelli di Napoli’s, while forging though the Calimari Fritti and Mussels on my way to the Veal Piccata, my passive escapade into conspiracytheory-and-fattycalorieland continued. I think I must have blacked-out from my meal of mini-octopi, at least for a moment, because I thought I heard the most astounding things about the new (still officially un(s)elected) President’s plans for the future.

“Choicepoint’s gonna get that doe-mess-tic security gig sure as Momma’s gonna get the vapors in August. They ain’t gonna be a lib’ral’s toenail clipping or dick-spasm that ain’t scrutinized to a fare-thee-well by Big Daddy Cheney and his cohorts when the Shrub gets in.”

That night, back at the hotel, I lay flat on my back, trying to digest, and had a vision of rows and rows of wooden crates lined up in a dark warehouse, and each little veal-calf was peering out through the bars with Ralph Nadar’s milky, soulful eyes.

I drove around Alpharetta the next day in my white mid-sized rental car, winding my languid way through the tidy industrial parks and the monotonous new suburbs, like a ribbon of disconnected kelp drifting through the twisted currents of some secret, ominous tide. I wonder how it ever came to pass that boxes of concrete or clapboard painted in neutral shades of gray and beige had reached such an ascendancy in this culture. How in the world did “nice” get to be a word that could stand in for “bland” in any neighborhood in the country and be accepted as the fulfillment of the American Dream? How did we come to adopt the cubicle as paradise? Come eventide, I found myself at Altobeli’s (est. 1988), and dined on the Salmon Rosêmary with a dollop of “fried garlic mashed potatoes”, “sopro lo lato,” steering clear this time of any of the three veal offerings (Francese, Marsela and Romana) and enjoying (well, tolerating, at least) the piano stylings of Lionel Lyle at the black and whites. My habit of eavesdropping, somewhat chastened by the atrocious information I had gleaned on the previous evenings, was, I am sad to admit, so engrained in me that you could say that I unconsciously absorbed certain conversations while traversing the slippery audio slopes of Lional’s overly-lavish renditions of 50’s Italian pop songs. During the course of the evening, I imbibed some unspeakable libations of prognostications about the world’s political future along with the superfluous embellishments of fatty arpeggios. Words from adjacent tables came to me as smoothly as the Vaselined nozzle of an enema to a stoved up invalid, but their coherence and overall sense was really too outrageous for the rational mind to swallow. The phrase “full spectrum dominance” and speculations on a Unocal pipeline through “Taliban-land” (whatever that means) along with snippets on how “George senior has the fix in with the “bin blah blah’s” (something or other Arab-sounding, and other verbal meanderings that I couldn’t quite catch, and which at the time I thought must

have something to do with the owner of the restaurant.) The owner, by the way, was one Al Bashiri, who may or may not have been Italian. He graciously circulated through the diners and even stopped at my table to inquire after my “satisfaction,” intoning his words in suave accent that I could not pin to any specific region on the globe. He left a card with me identifying himself as a member of the “Alliance of Wedding Professionals,” and I wondered if I was giving off some kind of “father of a prospective bride” type vibe. I thought of the tragedy that Mary Ann and I had so long ago endured, and my heart sunk further into its thickening blanket of cholesterol, stunned by the grief of what might have been. The character of the place was different from that of Fratelli di Napoli’s or Buca di Beppo’s. The menu listed its entrees as “gourmet” and there were white linens and carnations on the tables. Ironed napkins, folded like wedges of origami, peaked elegantly, like some breed of headless, miniature swan, from the water goblets’ crystal mouths. The waiters wore starched white shirts with black ties and addressed the male patrons as “sir.” Lots of O.P’s. about masticating salty cheeses and veal while complaining about their various alimentary canal dysfunctions. And yet — how can I say this without unduly insulting the good senior citizens of Alpharetta? — there seemed to me to be something sinister beneath all this upper middleclass surface gentility, something that could bite the heads off babies without missing a beat in their conversations about “them Falcons’ chances for the playoffs.” I was beginning to get more and more creeped out, not so much by Alpharetta *per se*, but by the whole tenor of the nation, which managed to exude an almost predatory stench while at the same time giving off a flowery perfume of utter innocuousness. I did not feel so well when I returned to my room at the Holiday Express, and after a brief session of Rock Gazing, I fell back, dizzy, on the bed, wondering if it were possible that one man could epitomize the sickness of an entire nation. The king mattress’s bedspread was crowded with cabbage-sized exotic flowers, and each of those blooms morphed into a human face as I tried to regain my sense of equilibrium. These were the faces of the damned — children, women and the elderly mostly — unknown to me, foreign, and etched with unspeakable expressions of physical privation. I wondered who they might be, and a voice, not mine (perhaps one of my stones, breaching the confines of its envelope) simply said “refugees of the coming wars and ecological disasters.” I felt nauseated and the emerald-mist and dusty-rose Zuni-zigzag print on the armchair was not helping. A kaleidoscope of polychrome visions ramrodded their way through the last vestiges of my tenuous grip on external reality, and suddenly I found myself by a dry streambed in what once must have been a forest, but

was now only factory dust, stumps and irradiated ashes. The round stones of the streambed, white with some unidentifiable desiccated viscera, were intruded upon by what seemed to be the skulls of enormous bears. As I looked on these relics, I began to breathe in the same pattern that I has been taught at the Sadhana workshop, but my breath formed a sickly green vapor-cloud before me, which smelled, appropriately enough, like rosemary.

Next morning, still drugged by a mercifully dreamless sleep, I slunk down to the lobby about tenish for the Continental Breakfast buffet. (I wonder, do they really eat this stuff on the continent?) Like the other patrons (mostly men in suits, important men, men who had, not only jobs, but careers!), I marveled at the plastic wisteria vines festooning the wall above the Formica-covered sideboard, and felt relieved to know that spring, scentless and immortal was no longer confined to the fickle whims of nature. I left untouched the bowl of suspiciously perfect Delicious apples and Dole bananas. Instead, I piled a gob of cream-cheese smeared bagel chocolate-glazed donuts and bearclaws in my icefree ice bucket and retired back to the lair of my room to savor (?) my sugary feast. I brewed myself a cup of java in the mini-coffee maker (conveniently provided, along with a hairdryer and phone, on the bathroom's vanity), having to add a load of chemical whitener and sweet and low to soften the acidic edge of the cheap, stale caffeine-laced Robusta grind. I then proceeded to watch CNN, mute, and eat, as was my custom back in Houston. My plan was always the same: gorge until my gut was full of wheat, fat and sucrose and my head was emptied of thoughts and fears. The donuts passed. The hours passed. The faces on the screen, banner headlines streaming below them, passed. And I saw all, like the evangelist, through a glass (i.e., a cathode tube) darkly. I tried hard not to derive any significance from the conversations I had overheard in Alpharetta. I tried hard not to piece together, from these shards of phrases, a future that smacked more of hobnail boots and brown shirts than any conception that I had hitherto cherished of a Norman Rockwell America. But the weaver kept weaving, and all I could see was that silly senseless smirker in a white Stetson smiling over smoking shifting sands. The S's kept hissing, the serpentine phrases kept writhing round the sotted synapses, and I kept slipping and sliding toward the salacious consensus abyss. Toward dusk, I ventured out for grub, choosing for a restaurant, in keeping with my weeklong theme, Fazoli's, situated conveniently, as the yellowpage ad boasted, at the Northpoint Mall.

At Hartsfield International in Atlanta on my journey here, along with the post-Thanksgiving hoards, I found myself swamped by a herd of conventioners from the Amusement Park Industry, men and women whose sole focus in life is discovering how to entertain the American Family. Now, as I walked into Fazoli's, I wondered if there were an actual corporate braintrust whose shadowy job it was to mesmerize children with some kind of weird combination of reproducible ketch and dietary fat. The restaurant was swarming with the hatched-out larvae (maybe the tragedy of my marriage was a disguised blessing) of Alpharetta's covens of young professionals. Here was a pandemonium of bloodcurdling screaming, temper fits, bodies rolling on the floor, and so on, and not all of it by children, which to me seemed ironic for people who were ostensibly having fun. The ad that I read promoting the establishment had boasted that it was "not your typical quick-service restaurant," but I could find no evidence of the truth behind that statement. It was one of those places where the employees are called "team members" or "associates" (mostly teens or welfare-to-work single mothers), who are encouraged to rah rah rah the C.O.R.E philosophy (**C**ompetent **O**rganization with **R**esponsive **E**mpowerment) of some enormous corporation that pays them minimum wage and requires them to wear logo T-shirts and baseball caps that say things like "real Italian — real fast." The festive Italian atmosphere was maintained with lots of red, white and green stripes and a variety of press-on wall murals sporting the appropriate ethnic theme. Large jars of oil and dusty wicker baskets of plastic peppers were strategically situated around the impervious-to-damage floors, tables and walls. One particularly grotesque but typical touch was the "art work" of the actual child-patrons. These were the crayon-colored line drawings of what were supposed to be lovable cartoon company spokespersons, *viz.*, "Tony Tomato and his Pasta Pals." These drawings were scotch-taped everywhere to the walls, even in the bathrooms, and fluttered in the general bedlam like unanswered Tibetan prayer flags in an unholy desolation. Tony was one of those Disneyesque figures, so-prized by Americans as lovable mascots — his belly and head a single amalgam, in this case, consisting of a large, smiling, distinctly fabiform, tomato. Tony had flexible pipecleaner arms and legs, and his turned-out feet (loosely second position, French school) were housed in curious balloon-like combat boots, each imprinted with the letter "F." Tony's arms, with their three-fingered gloved hands, were held in roughly the fourth position, the right, *demi*, and allowed to drift akimbo to the side, while the left, *haute*, elevated a mini-version of himself, a tomato, which Tony's eyes ogled hungrily. I am not sure what the corporate message to

children was supposed to be: ‘eat your own kind?’ I think my Rock Gazing has begun to make me see deeper messages in the pervasive public icons that I previously accepted in the overall flow of Americana. I cannot say that I am altogether pleased with this added “depth” perception. Perhaps my brain tumor is simply driving me sane.

Taking the menu’s suggestion to “wrap your appetite around a Submarino and you’ll know what we mean by Sub-stantial,” I ordered what I considered to be a modest selection, the “value-priced” turkey, and tried to shake off the premonition that I would be visited by the spirits of abused birds later that evening as a part of what was coming to be a very uncomfortable digestion process. I had placed little foam earplugs (my “mute” button for external reality) in my ears to dampen the perpetual din of the place, and also to eschew any possibility of overhearing something “untoward.” My precautions were working well, and I was enjoying, as I now did the news broadcasts, the pantomime antics of the other patrons, mostly moms and kids, the Dad’s off, I guess, conquering (too literally I now imagined) the world. It was a curious experience. I had the feeling that I was watching the revenants of some hidden disaster whose consequences the victims had not yet awakened to. The worldwide axiom regarding spirits is this: “the dead do not know they are dead,” and as I watched the denizens of this incubator of corporate profits disguised as a restaurant, I fell into a kind of trance, in which the soccer moms and their asthmatic progeny began to speed forward in time, not in a generalized sense, but toward a specific moment, a moment somehow planned for by their scheming and absent husbands and fathers. What was this moment? I saw them all watching TV sets, and all were focused upon one image. And as they watched, all of the children and their mothers were infected by a single realization, that the flesh of their flesh was a mirage, that their hands, when they held them over their faces to shield them from what they were seeing, were falling into ashes. The dead suddenly realized, that, yes, they were dead, and that the earth, dispersed now to atoms, was whirling away through the blackness of space, all of their dreams of suburbia, with their SUVs and fast food and Disneyfied aspirations, reduced to a drifting borialis, unwitnessed by any physical eyes, and lamented only by disembodied ghosts. No wonder, I thought, these children are so often crying. Yet, what was this image? But that I could not see. And as I tried to focus my internal vision, I was interrupted by one of Fazoli’s valued-priced team members, standing before me, Red Riding Hood-style, with a wicker basket full of the menu’s “unlimited” breadsticks, all phallic and golden and brushed with garlic butter. I ate. I was growing

accustomed to the intrusion of non-ordinary mental states by now. And I had realized that eating quelled them. The children, silent and roiling, resumed their roles as consumers. The mothers continued enacting their roles as mothers. I had a piece of “chock-full of chocolate” cheesecake and returned to the motel, determined to embed myself in the most mundane of activities until a hopefully imageless sleep usurped my awareness. And yet, I had to look at a rock. I had to gaze upon a portion of reality too opaque to be anything but profound. I looked, I wrote in my journal (it was Wednesday), I turned out the lights and I watched the blue digits of the radio-alarm clock click one after another toward the deepest pit of night. I think I did sleep, but the sleep was like a long fall, as if I had leapt from a burning skyscraper, knowing that the impact of the dawn was an assassin, waiting for me, and for all these others whom I judged so harshly, with some hard, ground-zero-choicepoint of disaster. Oh America! America! Where is your future going, where has it gone?

On Thursday, I spent the day playing, rather idly, even absentmindedly, with a Tarot deck I had purchased at Sadhana, Inc.’s gift shop — one eye on the mute TV and one hand in the ice bucket filled with an all-day supply of Continental Breakfast items. It was the Rider deck, and I kept asking different questions, and laying out different spreads, attempting, in the meandering hours, to correlate the drawn card with the silent events taking place on the TV screen. I don’t know what I expected to unveil. Certainly not any truth about the future. But I did notice an uncomfortable synchronicity. Every time an image or reference to Bush or Cheney or one of their “associates” was made, the card that was showing was “The Tower.” I hoped against hope that the meaning of this was that the men of Alpharetta had been mistaken, and that the election had not yet been decided. But, as I am learning, it is unwise to hope. It is not my gift. And eventually, as the afternoon wore on, I reduced any personal feelings about this probably meaningless coincidence to zero. (There was another card, of course, for that.) As evening arrived, I experienced the need to venture forth for something more Sub-stantial than bagels and pastries, and, feeling spent by my wider tours of Alpharetta, chose for a restaurant, Vinny’s, walking distance (but nobody here ever walks) from the motel. Vinny’s, as it turned out, was more than just your typical Italian restaurant, it was also a “Steakhouse.” I ordered the grossest cut on the menu and devoured it in silence. Nothing happened at Vinny’s. Nothing at all. I don’t even recall the décor of the place. I had visited the slaughterhouse and sampled its fare, and now I decided it was time to be going home.

All of the above I recorded dutifully, only to discover upon my return, and my review of the Week Five texts, that I had never left. Or if I had, it was as a doppelganger who traveled to Alpharetta, while another me sat at home demurely petting my cat. I had read about the ubiquitous nature of certain saints, bi-locating Padre Pias and such, appearing here and there in space, without regard to any separations in time. The fantastic nature of such enterprises, although legendary, did not seem to me in any way possible. But here I was, with a few extra pounds of souvenirs from Alpharetta's Italian eateries, plus my Tarot Cards from Sadhana, Inc.'s giftshop, my suitcase unpacked in the bedroom, and my chair still warm from where I had been sitting, night after night, both in Georgia and in Texas, in the deep, deep south, rock gazing.