

Confessions

of an

Eccentric Old Man

Sholder Greup

CONFESSIONS
OF AN
ECCENTRIC OLD MAN

by

Sholder Greye

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INTRODUCTION

This book came into its obsessive existence over a span of two weeks in 1995. Enamored of my creation, and the Internet (in the WWW form we know it) being new at the time, I immediately posted it at etext.org, thinking perhaps it would make its way into the etheric networked frontiers, and then mostly forgot about it. I found some years later that someone had discovered it and converted it into an ebook, which was a pleasant discovery, but now I think I shall release it in a more general way. If you have a Kindle, I have also made it available for that device.

(I offer no apologies.)

Cordially,

Yarrow Paisley, aka Sholder Greye

ypaisley@hotmail.com

FOREWORD

I present this volume as a curiosity.

A compendium of one man's madness, if you will.

You will find within its pages no profound wisdom, as its narrator would have you believe, and you will discover no original thoughts, no inspired poetry, no insight into the human condition. Indeed, if it does provide any shred of sagacity or penetrating vision, it tends, in my humble opinion, to do so in entirely a negative manner. That is, if one desires to be led blindly, then one must, in almost all instances, follow the direction opposite to that indicated herein.

Perhaps this advice seems extreme, or prejudiced, or even extremely prejudiced, and perhaps it is, but nevertheless, it is earnest and well-taken. We are dealing with a man who discounts God as folly, a man who denies *a priori* morality, a man who is misogynistic and misanthropic beyond conception. Need I say more? You will soon discover these things for yourself.

I believe that the narrator is (or *was*, I should say; he died soon after completing these confessions) insane, for during the months that I met with him, and transcribed exactly the words that issued from his mouth, I do not think he ever directly acknowledged my existence, or recognized my presence in the room any more than he might have registered a speck of dust on the bureau in the corner. He was entirely absorbed within himself, and frankly, I am amazed that he found the energies necessary to speak with such vigor as he did. Sometimes, he would mumble, and I could hardly discern what he was saying; then, with frightening suddenness, he would burst into wild, intense, staccato, almost incoherent passions, and the words would flow from his mouth, seemingly disjointed, but in the final analysis, surprisingly relevant. I admit, I found it all to be rather spooky. In the midst of his diatribes and rantings, nothing seemed to make sense, but when I went back over the recordings, and wrote the words down to paper, somehow they came together into a recognizable pattern -- like those pictures one sometimes encounters, which at first glance seem utter chaos, but upon further, minute investigation, when viewed from just the right angle or under precisely the right circumstances of slightly skewed perception, one

discovers that there is hidden within the randomness a scheme and a delicate proportion previously unsuspected. That is the sort of man who wrote these so-called "Confessions."

I never did find out his name; if he had one, he would not tell me. I asked him a great many questions, in fact, but he never answered directly: only obliquely, and after much rambling discourse. I would give up on the possibility of receiving an answer to my queries, and then I would realize that he had just spoken the answer I desired, after about half an hour of babbling and seeming irrelevance. He verged on the autistic in his relations with me, and I do not imagine he differed in this respect in his relations with anyone else, if indeed he carried on relations with anyone else. Well, I know that he had at least one acquaintance, as will be seen.

When I first saw him, I must say I was taken frightfully aback, enough so that I considered running in terror, for I had never seen anyone with such an appearance of extreme and terrible age. He seemed so frail that he would crumble into dust upon arising from his bed; of course, he never did arise from his bed -- he was too frail! His skin was hard and brittle, moulded into a million tiny wrinkles, and his eyes could hardly be seen through the mass of twisted yellow flesh that was his face. His hair was in white wisps which wafted about his head like floating clouds around a mountain peak. When he spoke, his voice seemed to travel through a thousand parched channels before finally emanating from his throat in a whistling croak. I don't think there was a drop of saliva in his mouth, nor a single tear in his ducts. He constantly drank glasses of water, which I supplied him at the rate of six or seven an hour, yet he never could quench that illimitable thirst.

The time I spent in that ancient house was utterly dreadful. I detested the man, I found the smell repulsive and the atmosphere oppressive, and I saw no value or quality in the material he dictated. Most of the time was wasted, anyway, constantly fetching his glasses of water, listening to him rant about this or that, cajoling him into speaking of his "Confessions" rather than the "damnable cat" which haunted the alleyway outside his window and kept him awake at night. I was lucky if I could extract a single page's worth of manuscript in a several hour session. Fortunately, when he finally did direct his attention to the dictation, he was incredibly focused and did not swerve from his narration to irrelevant topics, as might be expected from his more general behaviour; and he always seemed to know exactly what he planned to say. Then, when he was done with the

day's narration, he would return to speaking of the "damnable cat" or some such other nonsense. For months it was like this, and misery was my lot. Why did I do it? I honestly cannot answer that, for I simply do not know.

The circumstances under which I came into contact with the man are rather curious, and I will attempt to describe them, though paltry be my literary skills: I am only an editor -- no artist I!

Two volumes, which I edited, achieved some small amount of success, and were well-received by both the critics and the book-buyers, and so I was, as can be expected in our multifarious society, deluged with manuscripts and book proposals, phone calls and letters of enquiry; in short, every conceivable manner of approach was utilized, by every conceivable manner of author or agent, to solicit my editorial services. This grew rather wearisome after the initial novelty wore off, and at times, I longed for my former obscurity, if only to be relieved of the massive daily sacks of mail and manuscripts which flooded my desk.

One day, I received a visitor of the most curious sort, and in the most curious way. I was writing a critique of a promising book proposal, when I became aware of a presence in the room. I glanced up, and there, standing gawkily and awkwardly before my desk, stood (or I should say, *swayed*) a tall gangly man dressed in a long black trenchcoat buttoned all the way up the front, and a dark fedora hat, like those seen in hard-boiled detective movies of the Humphrey Bogart school. Needless to say, I was astonished, for I had no appointments scheduled, and my secretary had not announced any visitors, and I could not imagine how such a conspicuous man could sneak into my office without being noticed or causing a commotion. I stared, speechless for a moment, and I thought I heard a child giggling somewhere far away.

"Mr. Renault?" The speaker's voice was high-pitched and nasal, quite extraordinary, for I have never heard its like issue from any man's throat, before or since. His accent could not -- by me -- be placed: it sounded neither Eastern nor Western, nor, for that matter, from any area of the world with which I am familiar.

"Yes?" In my surprise, I could but stare and respond purely by rote.

"Business with thee, prithee? Business?"

"Business?"

"Indeed, sir, indeed! Business of most the urgentest sort, I beg thee pardon! Urgentest!?"

I found this man almost unintelligible, and at times, he seemed to double over -- with pain or with laughter, I could not tell.

"What sort of business?" I was beginning to collect myself, and I was considering the possibilities of escape -- door or window? I was certain I was dealing with a deranged case, and I was unwilling personally to ascertain his capacity for violence, or for that matter, any other psychotic tendencies.

"Oh! The most urgentest, sir! It is thy interest which concerns us! Thy interest, and ours as well! For we mutually can all be beneficial in this matter! Mutually!"

The exchange continued thus for several minutes, the man's garbled language becoming more obscure and more incoherent as time progressed, his stature and posture becoming even more awkward and unstable. I felt that soon, either he would fall to the ground in a seizure, or he would run screaming into the street, hatchet in hand.

Throughout the conversation, I heard tittering and laughter, as of children playing, but I could not place its source. It seemed distant, but at the same time from close quarters.

Finally, we came to the crux of the matter. "Mr. Renault, sir! We must bring thee! We must show thee to where our master does inhabitate, and there thou can discover to whom the matter relatest in the utmost degree of authenticenship and scrupulousness!"

"I'm afraid that would be impossible. I'm a very busy man, you see, and I cannot take time out from my schedule. Perhaps if you would tell your 'master' to schedule an appointment with my secretary, I might be able to squeeze him in."

"No, sir! Thou required art! It is necessary that followshipment must occur at this moment, and not later, for required by master it is that this must happen!"

I cannot explain what motivated me to cancel my appointments for the rest of the day, and to allow this almost surely insane visitor to bring me to his "master's" home. Never before have I done such a foolish or dangerous thing, and I can not imagine ever doing it again. Perhaps if that visitor had come on another day, I would not have followed him. Or perhaps, there is another, more sinister explanation

-- hypnotism, for example, or some other form of subconscious coercion, although I prefer not to believe that I am so suggestible. *Something*, external or internal, prompted my unusual behaviour, and it discomfits me considerably that I cannot, even now, uncover what it was.

As it happened, I was quite safe all the time, and, as you can see, the incident ended in the production of this volume. When the strange, lurching visitor brought me to the Mad Philosopher's house (for I came to call him that, for lack of a name), he disappeared with a flutter of cloth and a last burst of that uncanny, childish laughter. I looked about for him, but I never saw him again, and the Mad Philosopher never mentioned him, and never answered my questions concerning him. At some point in your reading of this book, you might form some conjecture as to the nature of that visitor, and I do not discourage this, but again, I advise you to take everything mentioned in this volume with a strong grain of salt, indeed with as many grains of salt as you can manage.

I will delay you no longer from your perusal of this volume. Please, take pleasure in it, for you will find a certain, perverse sort of satisfaction in it. In places, it is quite subversive and evil; in others, it is surprisingly eloquent and rises above the general roughness and shoddiness of style which is apparent everywhere else. The narrator has an odd amalgamation of rhetorical styles, which I am not sure I have ever encountered in another author, and so in spots, it is tough going, but I trust the reader will make it through these unscathed, or at least minimally scathed. Sometimes, the constant addresses to the "Dear Gentle Reader" become a bit wearisome and tedious, and we begin to rankle at the narrator's oversolicitous concern for our approval and understanding (odd in a man who vaunts so vehemently his independence from the "muddy" realm of common man!); in fact, I will admit to some editorial intrusion, in that I omitted some of these addresses at times when they seemed overly abundant. I trust that our *Dear Gentle Reader* will not object!

Ichabod P. Renault

PART ONE

PREMISE AND APPEAL

I am a dabbler, this I admit. I cannot find it within myself to commit. My interests are wide and varied -- so much to do, to see; so little time to do, to see it in. I devote immense energies to each of my pursuits, but before I am finished, long before in most cases, my interest wanes, my energies lose focus, the project fades from consciousness and then existence. Ah, such is my fate! The vast reservoirs of genius which reside in my humble figure will never be discovered to the world at large: the only beings privy to my greatness -- myself and those within an extremely limited coterie. These shall be elucidated in due course, fear not Gentle Reader! The path of my life is convoluted and devious and bears closest scrutiny lest it slither and squirm like the slick ocean eel from thy most firm grasp. So take heed now, O Gentle Reader! Be prepared for most unsettling revelations! My confessions, delivered on my death-bed, do not, in the slightest, deviate from Truth; I have nothing to hide, Dear Reader, nothing to protect. I lay bare the most dark, most secret regions of my heart; to the judgment of a stern and unforgiving world; so that I may be relieved of any such guilts that may have accumulated during the course of this, my life. So perhaps, it may be divined from my words thus far, I depart with these confessions merely to relieve the anxiety of my approaching oblivion and with the hope of reconstituting my spirit so that it might be suitable for a more exalted experience in that transEarthly state which might or might not incurr upon the dissemblance of my corporeal essence; but let me assure thee, Gentle Reader, that my motives in delivering these confessions are more noble in spirit than that. Indeed, it is true that perhaps a small amount of selfish insight motivates the chronicle I am about to embark upon, yet mayhap this little transgression may be forgiven? On the most part, I assure thee, it is with the hopes of *education* that I endeavor to communicate to the world at large the varied escapades of my earthly life; it is with the hope that those who may consider to engage themselves in similar pursuits to mine might by some chance or contrivance be in the position to read of *my* life, and afterwards reconsider the course of *theirs*. Is this vain hope, Dear Reader? Perchance, is such a one as I have described -- *thee*? That question is one, who may answer but each individual to himself, and no other in his stead, unless he be

idiot or woman.

TREATING OF MY CHILDHOOD

It would indeed be a long and arduous task to illuminate all those incidents of my childhood which might bear some influence on the later transactions of my life. Let it be said, in Words of great worth, that the Child is Father to the Man, and I believe this with every grain of my being. I shall begin my discourse with the elements of my earliest memories, incoherent and nonchronological and uncannily fragmented as they may be. Nevertheless, it is my duty, for I fear that any shirking of such on my part, especially at early date such as this, would impend doom, disaster, and insincerity upon the remainder of this work. I shall begin, of course, with the earliest image I can conceive; and that, of course, would be at the moment of my Conception. Ah verily, that moment I remember well, as must all who are conceived by man upon woman in this world! That blissful, floating ecstasy which followed so immediately from the void-sundering spasms -- it is a sensation which often I return to when contemplating the serenest aspects of my life. For eternity, it was, this immersion in liquid, conforming warmth, and darkness supreme, there was no need of that light from above, neither yellow nor waxen -- nay, verily, 'twas the utmost antithesis of such repellent notions. For now, would I not dispense with the light if not I needed it for the reception of glyphs on paper to mine eyes, or the direction of mobility for my limbs? For is not the light but an ugly distraction from the pure and most sublime thoughts of my head? For is not the light a distraction from the holiness of Man, casting its doubt upon every object in the Realm of existence, giving pause and molasses to the freewheeling thoughts of soul and intellect? For is not the light a deceiver, showing that which is not and casting shadow upon that which is? Yea, and more pronouncedly, YEA, the light is all of these things and more! And I, on the brink of eternal Darkness, am not afraid to speak on the Truth of life! I give warning to all generations of philosophers to pass after mine own passing: heed well these words! I forecast the Truth of all life in these pages, and it is not simple! The peace and tranquility of the interior of my mother's woman's belly was the formative experience of my life, I tell thee, and it would do thee well to look back on thine own memories of that time and recall the wisdom thou didst possess then, before the

intrusion of the light. Ah how I envy thee, O blind man! Didst the Lord cure thee, O beggar, when he smeared the Mud into thine eyes; or didst he indeed cast thee into the garish falsity of illusion and deception that is the light? Boon or curse I ask thee O blind man! Boon or curse that delivered thee into the mediocrity of Vision which so afflicts thy fellow Man? Ah well, there is no telling the foolishness of a Man! Let it be known, however, that upon my emergence into the light of this world didst my wisdom fade before the vividity of Sun and the ghostly pale of Moon. I do remember the wisdom, but not in its particulars; strictly in its vaguest outlines and shadowy figures. I benefit not from its numbers but rather from its structures. Return! Return, I, to the floating Between Void of the Nether-womb! Soon! Soon! This my hope! this my salvation! this my ever waxing ever waning torment of gloomy uncertainty! this the thread to which I cling in these, my last hours! Mayhap? Soon!

It is not the end of my childhood experience, that I emerged into this unKNowing light-filled world. Indeed, it is merely the beginning. For let me treat of the Crib. Rock, rock abye Baby! Indeed, these were confusing times! For these were the times that I was to dispossess every bit of wisdom which I had hitherto retained in rich abundances. Every language of the world, of the Universe, known and unknown, I possessed in fullest capacity. Yet the constraints of this locality, this limited sphere of peoples and communities, restricted my vocabularic development, so that I must cast away all former knowledges of all known languages in order to conform to the petit, inferior squawks and squabbles of those people who were my parents and neighbors. Like the shavings from a mould, or the rough marble from a statue, must I sweep aside and disregard and misplace my former command of Total Language, leaving only the tiniest, corpuscular husk which is English. Indeed, I may be grateful even for this -- what if, by some misfortune, I had been required to shave even further and descend to Italian or German, or even French! *One* small favour, at the least, I was granted by being born into England soil! (Although, I must admit, I have often speculated as to the mysteries of China, for those languages intrigue me -- language is the form of mind, and to the child, mind is reduced and structured by his father's tongue; so think on it, Descendant of India, what it could mean to have a mind structured by firm, discrete object rather than intrinsically meaningless glyph.)

The Cradle, the Creche -- this indeed was a distressing time. Accustomed only to darkness and spiritual unphysicality, I could not

manage to maneuver my material body in such deft fashion as those large creatures which perpetually loomed above me and swooped down upon me to lift me into soft, heaving bosoms; and so they, interpreting my incommodation to indicate inferiority in all other aspects, of which I could assure them the opposite, if only they understood Total Language rather than their own inferior brand of crude communication, treated me according to the provisions of relations with idiots and half-wits, only with less respect than *that* for *my* intelligence! Even though I possessed tracts and vast estates of knowledge of which they could only dream -- if even that -- I was in no capacity to relieve them of their trivial notions and most fallible observations. Imagine the frustration I discovered! Even further to my frustration was the gradual, steady *loss* of wisdom which accrued during that period of exposure and adaptation to the light. The light did outshine the wisdom until I was left almost the mewling, piteous babe which these creatures did perceive! How humiliating! For although I was bereft of these knowledges and wisdoms, I was not relieved of the feelings associated with them; I still felt the keenness of my former wit and superiority to the common man, indeed the uncommon man as well, and with this feeling came bitterness and despair, for I could no longer be worthy of it! Wretched, wretched was my state! I cried, and my mother took me to her breast -- and the suckling did for small times relieve my acrimony, returning me even briefly to the gushing warmth of that Before-time, but then the suckle did end and the light returned to me and the darkness fled, and the despair returned!

Perhaps, Gentle Reader, I grow tiresome in my lament for those early years of loss and depravity, of descent into the world of Man from some pre-Earthly state of bliss and full wisdom? Is this the case, then forgive me. But, pray, I must continue, for there is further to treat of in these early years of my life. Words were used to describe me as a child, words which came from the lips and minds of my parents and neighbors -- precocious, devious, disturbed, cold, loathsome, unrepentant, blasphemous, fiendly, Truthfull, insidious, ill-mannered, insubordinate, incorrigible, destructive, corrupted, demented, obscene, etcetera, &c.. These words were often uttered with a hushed voice, a troubled brow, a swift genuflection, a beseeching glance *upwards*. Even as a Child, I was not understood properly by my fellow Men. They did not comprehend the spirit which I brought into this world, which I succeeded in saving from the corrosive power of the light, which I managed to keep within myself uncorrupted and unprofaned, that small darkness which I

maintained and assiduously tended within the garden that was my heart. The taint of light never reached there, and I state verily that it never did, although at times it came perilously close, and that during my lifetime that dark flower grew and flourished within me (at admittedly varying degrees of vigor,-- hence these my Confessions!), so that now I am closer to that divine darkness of my preBirth than I was during my after-Birth childhood. Proudly, unshrinking I say this, and I defy the Church or the God it represents to make me wilt before the light! My explorations of the world were performed with the most noble aspirations in mind; I desired not more than to understand that which had destroyed my happiness and well-being in the first place; in the second place to contrive a means whereby I might cast away the light which ruined the perfect Before-state and return to that ever-remembered bliss.

Dear Gentle Reader, perhaps thou laughest mildly to thyself, remarking that I was but a foolish lad -- for is not the state of Death that which I sought? Well, let it be known, sir, that I was never convinced of this notion, still am not even on my death-bed, for why should it be so, other than that it is unknown, unfathomable, and therefore associated with the type of transcendence which I remember from the womb? Well, let it be known that the end of corporeal existence does not, by no means, prove that transcendence! For hearken to this little logic -- my memories extend back to a finite point -- the moment of Conception -- and that moment represented the inauguration of my corporeal existence -- and it was in this time that I possessed the wisdom of which I have spoken -- therefore, if Death represents the end of this corporeal existence, then it will surely not return me to that childhood being which I seek. It may deliver me into unknown realms, of which I may have possessed knowledge whilst in the darkness of my mother's woman's womb, but these are mere speculations and unworthy of incorporation into the memoirs, the Confessions, of such Eminence as mine.

There is much to be said of this period in my life. Although my fellow children did fear me and keep considerable distance betwixt themselves and myself in their play, I did not return the sentiment. Indeed, I barely considered their existence at all, except when it suited my needs, as when I was performing my investigations into the nature of this crude, corporeal world. My parents did fear me as well, and they were wise to let me roam unhindered, both in mind and in body, as I explored the furthest reaches and realms of philosophy, mathematics, geography, astronomy, astrology, magic,

alchymie, literature, aquatics, demonology, religion, politics, science, and a host of other pursuits, some more arcane and undiscovered to the largest host of humanity, others most familiar to almost every man in the world, including even the most primitive tribesman of woolly Afrique. Sometimes, a child would disappear from the neighborhood, and although it was never spoken in public places or uttered within hearing distance of my presence, speculation as to the disposition of such a child would often include my person in its argument; indeed sometimes such speculation came quite close to the Truth of the matter, for indeed, I did often, in order to elucidate some point or query in my studies, abduct a child or a goat from the neighborhood and investigate its material or psychological workings with some great detail. Aware of the delicacy which such operations would require, keeping in mind the disposition of the neighborhood towards my person and towards the persons of the various children, I performed the abductions with the utmost in secrecy and professional subtlety. I left not one single clew in any case which might represent that I had been the person responsible for what they dubbed a Crime.

Let it be known, Dear Gentle Reader, in case thou dost smile to thyself and think of the title to this manuscript, the "Confessions," and confidently assert that I feel guilt for such actions as I have described; let it be known that my guilt runs along entirely divergent, indeed parallel, courses to those for which the common man may feel guilt. The taboos of an artificial construction, that many are mistaken to believe the limits of human consciousness, are as nothing to me -- I ignore them as the Crocodile ignores the perching birds upon its back: mere trifles, nuisances hardly to be bothered with. What is the life of an ignorant mortal?-- who will die soon in any case, most likely in even more ignorant a state than that in which I snuff him! If anything, this is a mercy, not a horror! Unfortunately, such is understood by few; most will rely on the arbitrary morality and uninformed doctrine of their Church or community. I am here to say: rely on no one thing but thy self! For thy self is the one True Verity in thy life, the only constant companion which thou canst trust and upon whose confidence and judgment thou canst rely! Thy Self! 'Tis the crux of my position in these Confessions. Remember -- if all other matter from these pages should leave thy brain, at least keep this one Thing; Thy Self! Thy Self! Thy Self!

TREATING OF THE AGE OF REASON

There is a point in childhood which the world concurs and demands that the child has reached that level of understanding which is requisite in preparing himself for the life of an adult. This is the Age of Reason. Perhaps my parents and neighbors expected that my early endeavors into the mysterious realms of knowledge, those thresholds beyond which they feared to step yet through which I with tremulous breath and frenzied spirit did verily *run* with all excitement in my gallop; that these might recede and that I might gradually morphate my consciousness to become like unto them. Their hopes were not to be realized, for I was only still on the very earliest verges of that Countrie which I longed to explore in its fullest extents and boundaries -- if indeed such boundaries existed. It was my most full intention to embark upon such adventures as even their most vivid, most vibrant, most fantastic, most poetical imaginations could not conceive. But so varied and so ecstatic these adventures may be that my short material existence on this Earthly plane could not possibly contain even the merest fragment of them! Imagine the desperation of such lad as I -- who dares to dream the immortal thoughts, and yet is constrained to the lowliest humble vessel of mortal life! Oh despair is not the word, neither despond, nor defeat, nor gloom, nor misery, nor doom, nor melancholy, nor grief, nor sorrow, nor wretchedness, nor tribulation, nor ordeal, nor terror, nor hideousness -- but instead is the accumulation of all these words and all those words unspoken which may also cast understanding upon my state!

This was the Age of Reason: the realization that all was not, could not be, for me; that cursed implacable time was mine enemy and that this enemy could not be overwhelmed or defeated or even bargained with or pleaded with; that only the smallest portion of experience was mine to be had, and that I may enjoy it only for the briefest, numberless moment; that I might live my life in splendor, sating every desire and appetite I could conceive, but that these would be nothing compared to the vast, infinite ocean that lay at mine and the world's disposal, and that I might dip only the puny, piddling cup of my hand into this ocean and drink of it, and fill up my being with it, and yet be the most pathetic creature imaginable in comparison with He whose hand could cup this entire ocean and have room for another and another of comparable size. Why?! I beseeched the World. Why not I?! Why this accursed light to fade away and outshine the tremendous knowledge which I felt within my reach yet which danced perpetually and sprightly just *beyond* my reach? Why

could I not speak the Total Language and commune with True Nature? Torment, anguish, woe!

Yes, gentle reader, any and all thy conceptions of my distress would be but shadows of the true Beast. So far did I descend into despairing that I came to the conclusion one day that if wisdom could not be had in total by myself in this short lifetime, then wisdom was not worthy to be had! Why should I bend myself into tortuous, crooked conceits, when the bits of wisdom they provided were but bitter, taunting, teasing hints at the greater wisdom that lay beyond and behind, but never within! I decided that I would indeed reject all pursuit of such wisdom and direct the recourse into the body which I could master with little difficulty here on Earth. Turning my face from the Stars, I stared into the Mud, and proclaimed the Mud more satisfactory to my senses! Yea, I verily dived into it, wallowed and wiggled with glee and madness! Bare fourteen summers had my body witnessed, and already had I perceived the limits of my petit existence in this insignificant speck of dust that is the Earth. I settled for these limits, for I despaired of exerting effort for a fruitless purpose. Why not give myself to the forces which the world would happily provide? So indeed did I. Women, women, women. What easy fulfillment of bodily delights they provided! The merest appetite would appear, and they would fall over themselves in order to service it! My appendage would increase in proportions, and their eyes would widen with apprehension, and they would position themselves most skillfully in order to sate that organ's insistent demands for pleasure. My hunger for food would grumble itself from my stomach, and they would jump to the kitchen to prepare a full repast, the grandest meal which they, with their unlimited abilities in manipulating the fruits of the earth, could conjure, and they would leap to serve it to me on silver platters and pour drinks within golden chalices, and feed me by their hands, and clean after me by their hands, and bask in the glow of my pleasure at having been served by them. My eyes would droop with the onset of drowsy slumber, and these women would charge ahead to prepare the bed for my impending torpor and sleep; and they would coo and sing and pave the road to peaceful dreams with the golden bricks of their purring voices. Women were indeed the foundation of all my material indulgences in this period of my life. Women were the Earth, and they were persistent in their wiles to lure me into a premature burial within that Earth. Their wombs were the early sustenance of wisdom, and I remembered that, I still remember that, but they are, at heart, the Earth Mother, and they will

attempt to bring down the Sky to them, for they desire to drape themselves in the Sky. I was the Sky, the boundless Spaces of Eternity, but yet I felt the urgent need and desire to bind myself to the Earth. Did I fear to float away; did I feel afraid without the anchor? If so, then Woman was the anchor, and I did not fear, at least not for a little while.

Oh, how I wallowed in thy Mud, O Earth Mother, O Woman! I drank thy Wine; I lay my head on thy silken Pillows; I inhaled the fragrance of thy Perfumes; I seethed and pulsed and swooned within the velvet enclosure of thy Womb; I became as the wanton, and reveled as the toper, and laughed as the jester, and soliloquized as the philosopher, and expostulated as the fool. But what of wisdom? Have I deserted thee? Oh no! Never! This was but the briefest interlude. My quest shall not end here! My quest shall be eternal, and this shall be but the smallest smirch on that grand canvas! I awoke to this reality after the passing of my thirtieth summer on this Earth. Hence, I shook away the women which clung to me like fleas unto the scalp of the hairy dog, and cleansed myself of the dirt of the Mud in which I had wallowed, and embarked again upon the search for wisdom. That dark flower within my heart, dangerously close to wilting away forever, I again carefully diverted my attention to, and cared for it as never before, nursed it into healthful bloom. The infinite vastness of Space awaited me, and the power of that flower would provide the source and the germinating will which I would need to explore that eternitude.

The women crept back to me, creeping creeping, wily, beckoning me unto their bounteous bosoms, hoping to crush the dark flower between their buxom breasts, but I merely laughed and brushed them aside to flutter away on the wind like seeds of the poppy. Their velvet caresses did mean nothing to me any longer. I would fain pursue higher objects now. I would turn mine eyes from the Mud, back up to the Stars. I would reascend into the Sky, my Home, and dance there with the Angels of Heaven. For there did wisdom abide. In the Earth, in the domain of Woman, I exhausted all inquiries almost instantaneously; too easily were resolved the questions of the flesh: the simple answer to it all was, if it does grow hungry, then feed it! If thy belly does grumble, then feed it! If thy appendage does swell, then feed it! If thine eyes do grow drowsy, then feed them! Feed! Feed! Feed! The questions of Sky are infinitely more subtle and diverse, and it was my intention to discover the source and possibility of every *question*; thence to divine the *answer* of each!

That I may not within my material lifetime achieve this goal bothered me not; no longer. I resolve to achieve as much as I may within these limits, and perhaps I may discover a way which I heretofore had not considered. The world rebirthed anew with fat possibilities. I felt the prospect of knowledge swell within my heart and within my mind, and pride in my own apprehension of that knowledge. I buzzed with anticipation and fluttered with certainty as to the outcome of my life. Great would be my fate; great!

Oh, giddy were those first days! Renewed faith in my Self -- that most important of worldly commodities; renewed faith in my pursuit of Knowledge; renewed faith in the existence of Wisdom. I could perceive no limitations on my desires for freedom. I would conquer the world if need be. I would hold emperors between my thumb and fingers if need be! No Earthly force could hold me back from my goal. Enemies would cringe and tremble before my might, and melt from the path to wisdom like cubes of ice under the lamp of my Self.

I decided that strength, perhaps, lay in numbers. If I could convince enough people to join me in my quest for wisdom, then perhaps together we might accomplish what one, alone, could not. Perhaps we could discover independently, then share with the rest, and so increase our knowledge exponentially more quickly than would be possible if each must find all for himself. So I created the Society of Equals. We met yearly in the Sheridan Castle, secret, hidden in the mountains of Scotland. Each year, we would gather together and hear the reports of our comrades; we would learn from them all the knowledge which they had acquired during the previous year. Men from around the world belonged to my Society, and each brought to it his own unique perspective. Much I learned in those years, much indeed. Oh that I could impart but a fraction of the wisdom I acquired into these pages; but it would be useless to do so, for each must come into it on his own, and will not believe it when he reads it in the pages of a book, especially in the pages of a confession such as this.

Before, oh gentle reader, thou dost give voice to several doubts which must arise within thy mind concerning the aforesaid, let me do resolve thy concerns. Although it cannot be communicated through mere words, we were able to share with each other, within the Society of Equals, the wisdom we accrued throughout the year, through a special means of transference, which I developed in my youth, and which I call Thought-Weave. There is a way to rearrange the structure of mind so that the gaps between individuals may be,

albeit only over short intervals of time and space, woven together, so that all knowledge may be shared between the component minds. I will not enter into the technical details for fear it may drive those who attempt its mysteries without the proper precautions into madness and spiritual dissolution and disintegration. It is not a simple matter; only those properly initiated into the Art may attempt such a thing. Pray do not, gentle reader, take it into thy head that thou art prepared for such undertaking; I assure thee, thou art not!

In any case, great wisdom did I amass from my experiments with the Society of Equals. As judged from the name, all within that Society, in principle, considered themselves as equals to each other, in the respect of spiritual and intellectual development, and superior to the rest of the world in that respect; as evinced by the phenomenon of Thought-Weave, in which all individuals were but components of the greater Weave. Of course, although they did not realize this, I alone was superior to them all, for I could keep out of the Weave whatever wisdom I so desired, and this I did, not wishing to share *everything*.

I would speak of the various, enlightened experiments which those members of the Society of Equals did perform in order to attain that wisdom which we so yearned for. Perhaps the common man would shudder and make the sign of the Cross to hear of such, as he would reverence them, "horrors." But the enlightened man will understand necessity and defer to the requirements of the pursuit of wisdom. In order to nourish that dark flower within our hearts, we must needs do things which perhaps our flesh would revolt from doing.

Women were a great fund of information regarding wisdom, for although they represent the Earth, that Earth doth reflect and absorb much from the Sky, and by observing the darkness within Woman, we may discover the darkness within our own hearts, and thus rejoice. Many investigations were conducted: one explored the fertility of Woman. A man procured a woman in the usual manner of abduction (such abductions were far more common in those days and far more acceptable than they be in these modern times; they incited little remark beyond the initial register of disappearance upon the consciousness of those persons intimately associated with the subject; unless they be personages of social note or political importance, in which case ransom soon would rectify their concern), and opened up her womb while still she lived, so that he may witness the mechanisms by which that creature doth incur the first sprout of life. With luck on his side, this man did discover that the

woman which he abducted was several months in the way of Child, and he was afforded with a most wondrous view of that child in the making. Although, it may be considered a tragedy, in a sense, because that poor entity was forced to be admitted to the light long before it ever needed to be, and perhaps because it was not yet ready to handle the stress of such experience, such deadening of the world of Mind, that it did die within moments of its illumination. The woman did soon die as well, but not before we had uncovered much invaluable information as to the processes of life and its conception. Another investigation discovered to us the reason for hunger. Again, we did abduct a woman and open her up, this time to reveal her stomach. Whilst we did closely observe this organ, we did feed food down her throat and watched to see exactly how it did enter into the stomach. After this, we did subtly alter the mechanism, and watched to see how this did affect the hunger of the woman. Much did we learn -- that hunger is not necessary if one does but bind the energy of one's body into a self-rejuvenating circle, such that the fuel and energy that earthly sustenance does provide is not necessary; that one may draw from the fund of infinite soul and spirit, and that no debt will result therefrom, that indeed all the unities of the universe are enriched by such an action. Numerous were the mysteries into which we of the Society of Equals delved. Uncounted and invaluable; much I owe to that institution which I founded singly and by myself at first, but drawing greater and greater numbers to my banner, as the promise of wisdom is most alluring to very many men in this world, for the man is naturally attracted to the Sky, and naturally wishes to partake of its glory. I promised such -- and did deliver!

After a certain number of years, I grew weary of the Society I had created. Grateful as I was to this means by which I had procured much knowledge and wisdom, I was yet dissatisfied with it. For a long time, this dissatisfaction was felt rather than acknowledged, and I roamed the Earth with a vague sense of unease in my belly. I could not attribute a cause, and I could not discern a reason for such an occurrence. Then one day it came clear: the Society of Equals, although lofty were its goals, still descended, in its methods, to the level of the Earth, of the Woman. Indeed, most of its experiments dealt with women and the mechanisms by which they kept men constrained to the Earth. In treating such this way, the Society became as of the Mud from which it attempted to escape. It searched for wisdom within the bodies of the Earth, and squeezed only a few drops thereof, when it should look Skyward for its answers, and

there find a greater treasure than ever it could discover in the Mud.

Freshened by this new understanding, I approached the Society and conveyed to them the gist of what I have just described, although in much greater detail and subtlety and accuracy; for, gentle reader, thou couldst not conceive the language used in Thought-Weave. At my revelation, the Thought-Weave trembled, then crumbled. The other members of the Society could not accept the Truth I brought them. They rejected it and desperately dug deeper, deeper down into the Mud which I denounced. Their wisdom was not as great as mine, because of that which I withheld from the Thought-Weave, and so they could not comprehend the Truth of my thoughts. So I and the Society of Equals parted ways.

The Society still does meet, and perhaps, thou, dear gentle reader, art a member of that esteemed, illustrious body of men, and perhaps thou dost scoff at what I reveal in these pages, but be warned, I know greater wisdom than a thousand Societies of Equals all put together, and I foresee thy doom if thou dost continue along that dead-end path. Thou dost, all unknowingly, follow the way of Woman in seeking wisdom among the dirt, and thou must *become* woman in the end if thou dost continue in this way. I say again -- be warned! But then, I know the futility of this: no one will listen to the advice of another, for no one, if he is truly to trust his Self above all others, will appoint another's forbearance higher office than his own. He will heed only the callings of his own soul, as I in my life have done, and regardless of mistakes or wrong turns, as indeed I have done. So I do not judge thee, O Society! indeed I sympathize; for I recall the difficulties which I suffered in removing myself from the fleshly Earth of Woman and Mother. It is so much easier to compromise in one's search for wisdom, to allow grains of earth to seep into one's sensibility and rot there and poison all. Yes, I do sympathize!

For -- hear me World -- I, too, have spent my life amidst the Dirt! Yes, I who proclaim boldly to execrate all that deals with the Earth have myself spent nearly all that parcel of Eternity which was mine to spend in the sewers and stinking crevices of the Earth! Even while I aspired to heaven I smeared my face in Mud! Even while I raised my arms to Sky, I wallowed in filth and the excrement of swine! The lures of the Earth, disguised, compelled me into ways not those of Wisdom but of the Brute! Hear, World!--

Hear my Confessions as I tell them, you!

TREATING OF MUDDY PASSION

Here I will relate in detail a particular incident of my life, not from its individual importance, but from my desire to convey the core essential of my disgust with the nature of the world it represents. I shall not often, be assured worried sir, relate the singular uninteresting corporeal chain of events which constitutes my span on the Earth. Thou shalt in the main be informed of my discoveries, and of course the climactic event which terminated my prospects for unlimited wisdom in this Earthly state. But for now, I implore thee to pay closest attention to the hypocrisy, the unreasoning jealousy, the womanish flesh-indulgent passion, the sheer supremacy of folly in the events which follow.

My wisdom was great by this time, and although I kept to myself, my renown was wide and shrouded in mystery. Across the world, I was known, and spoken of in hushed voices, much as my parents and neighbors had spoken of me when I was younger, and it was said of me that I had access to worlds unknown, and that I commanded legions of demons who were at my disposal to commit whatever foul deed my whimsy happened to muse upon. My powers of magick and demonology were widely exaggerated, I assure thee, and my reputation far exceeded my reality. This however was not known to the King of England, who hearing of my powers, summoned me to his Court to meet with him concerning a private matter. I was much dismayed, as thou might imagine, dear reader, for I preferred to keep myself detached from worldly things, especially such Muddy pursuits as politics. Kings bored me -- wars, diplomacy, nationhood -- it was all so much la-de-da as far as I was concerned. Alas, one could not disobey the summons of one's King, so I swallowed my apprehensions and journeyed to meet the King.

I was received and presented with utmost haste, and the King appeared very much disturbed when he spoke with me. He cut a grand figure, I will concede, and did indeed befit his station well, at least in the physical attributes one would expect the bearer of such title to possess. He beseeched me to help him, for his daughter, the princess, was not well, and none of his doctors or court physicians could even diagnose her malady, let alone cure it. He told me that if I did not cure her, I would be executed. This did not sit well with me, and I informed the King of my objection as graciously as I

could, but he remained firm. He declared that he would go to any length, no matter how extreme, to secure the health of his only beloved daughter. If it be required that he behead every physician in the land, then so be it. He showed me a room where there was an array of pikes, each adorned with a human head, each head experiencing a different stage of decay. There were dozens of these heads. This display, I suppose, was intended to impress upon me the urgency of my situation, and perhaps even to intimidate me, but let it be known that I am not easily intimidated. My wisdom was advanced enough at this time, that I did not fear for my life, no matter what the outcome of His Majesty's daughter's life.

I was confident, nonetheless, that curing her of her malady, whatever it may be, would present me little difficulty, for had I not devoted twenty years of my life to the investigation of matters of the Body? The Society of Equals, under my tenure, had achieved tremendous knowledge pertaining to the female body and its various functions, such that almost every aspect of its operation was known to me. I assured the melancholy King that curing his daughter would be but a small matter, and he took some heart from my confidence. Thus, he led me to the chambers of his daughter, the Princess.

I insisted upon being left alone with the Princess, for I knew that my attempts to diagnose her illness would not be met with congenially by any lookers-on. My methods would be considered quite unconventional by any other practitioners of that ancient art, Medicine. Thus, I stood and looked upon the figure of the Princess, lying delicately upon her satin pillows, beneath her lace coverlets, all rosy cheeks, luxuriant flowing locks billowed beneath her porcelain skull, thin transparent lips, eyes gently shut. Her breast heaved slow and almost imperceptible. She lay in deep coma, and according to the King, had been thus for a year and a day. I advanced to her side and removed the coverlets. Then I quickly removed her night dress so that she lay unencumbered upon the bed, easily accessible to my proddings and investigations. I thence proceeded upon a methodical examination of her body and its mechanisms. I lay my ear close to her stomach to hear the workings therein, and also her heart and her lungs and her womb. I discovered that the problem lay in the heart; that that organ did fail to circulate properly the feelings and emotions which are so essential to the governance of a female Earth body; that instead, that organ kept contained within itself every ounce of what it did produce in way of Earth properties. Thus did her body languish, its enemy a jealous heart. It would be a simple

matter to suck the coveted fluids from out that mean, misguided vessel and to distribute them to the various starved nodes of lymph and juice throughout her body.

I summoned to the bedside a tarantula spider, through means which some uninformed people might attribute to magick or supernatural contrivance or some such other nonsense, but which in reality are very much elemental to Nature and the unexceptional, indeed commonplace, workings of the World. Simply because they are not personally acquainted with these processes, people will insist that they do not exist, and therefore any man who does demonstrate the veracity and True existence of such phenomena is summarily persecuted, and often even executed, for merely discovering Truth! The tarantula spider I summoned was a large and hairy beast. It possessed eight legs, which it manipulated to very complex effect, merely to ambulate in the same fashion which humans can accomplish with but two -- thus displaying in quite visible fashion its inferiority to Man. Black beads for eyes it did have, and most crucially, sharp pincers and mandibles, with which to suck the life from its victim-prey. In this case, it would be utilized to suck the closely guarded Earth elements from the miserly heart of the Princess, and to distribute those elements to the deprived reaches of her anatomy. I grasped the tarantula spider up -- it was the size of my hand -- and I programmed into it the necessary knowledge for it to perform its function correctly and with exactitude, for there was little room for error in an operation such as this. Then I spread apart the King's daughter's nether lips and allowed the tarantula to crawl within, the map to her heart inscribed in its tiny, but adequate to the purpose, brain. In a desperate defense, her heart directed her legs to close, to deny me access, but she was malnourished and weak, and it was but a simple matter to keep them pried apart, and soon the tarantula began its journey.

Several hours passed before the tarantula spider managed to crawl to the Princess's heart. In open space, the tarantula might have completed the journey in seconds, but the interior of a woman's body is far from being open, indeed is crammed full of organs and fibres and spindles and vessels to transmit the blood and various other appurtenances to the Earthly life process, so that the journey of the tarantula spider must have been a long and exhausting one. I could see its progress by the bulge which its mass did effect to produce against the interior surface of her skin. This appeared on cursory examination to be a static, unsightly lump, for it did not appear to

move, its progress was so gradual, but if one were to watch it for a more protracted period, one would discern that its position was indeed altered, that although not one indication of movement had been apparent, its position was markedly different from what it had been upon first glance. I waited patiently, and watched, and eventually, the tarantula did reach its destination, and enacted the program which I had set to it.

I could envision within my mind's eye, the actions of that furry creature. First, it would plunge its mandibular array into the meat of the rebellious organ. Then, satisfied that its grip was firm and would hold, the creature would begin to suck the vital juice from that heart until it was but a shriveled husk of tissue, all its components now transferred into the body of the spider. Now, the tarantula would resume the duties of the heart, meting generously that which its predecessor had been so stingy to distribute. Soon after the tarantula had succeeded in its task, the eyelids of the Princess began to flutter, and it was clear that my cure had proved efficacious. She gradually came into awareness and consciousness until finally she opened her eyes to behold my visage gazing down upon her. She started and shook her head mildly in bewilderment and confusion, a natural reaction to having slept for a year and a day and awakening to discover an apparently young man looking down upon her (for although I had seen fifty summers pass during my lifetime, my visage remained that of youth, for I had from the Thought-Weave, and from my own pursuits, learned many secrets of prolonging the attributes of youthfulness, as well as the stamina and the spirit). She, blushing, attempted to cover her nakedness, but I assured her I was a physician, and that she must remain unencumbered for now, for the process of her cure was not yet complete. There remained but one step. After waiting an hour, that step did incurr: the yellowed, transparent, eviscerated, pus-leaking husk of her former heart evacuated from the same place where did the tarantula embark upon its journey.

Now, the Princess's cure was done, and I did allow her to pull her night dress upon her. She expressed desire to stand and move about, but I insisted that she remain abed, for a period of rest amounting to a week would be required before her new heart would be strong enough and experienced enough in its required duties to support her in more strenuous circumstances than those of lying motionless under warm covers. When the King beheld his daughter alive and well, his gratitude was so overwhelming that he commanded me to

take the place of his Court Physician (whose rotted skull adorned the very first spike in that before-mentioned room).

As often occurs in cases where a young maiden is cured of some terrible malady by a handsome, young physician, the Princess developed quite a powerful attachment to me; deemed herself in love with me, no less. I being the Court Physician and she being the King's daughter, our proximity remained close, and so I was unable to escape the darting glances, the blushing encounters in the halls of the castle, the hand-clasped bosoms whene'er I passed, etcetera, &c. Perhaps the feeling that she owed her life to me motivated her infatuation, or perhaps she felt some genuine attraction for me, not a proposition unheard of, or perhaps the spider that was her heart felt a kinship with me, I being he responsible for its present program and position in the bosom of the daughter of the King of all the land of Ing. Whate'er the reason may be, it is certain that my life as Court Physician was not the most comfortable or propitious that may be imagined. For it would not befit the daughter of a King to marry or carry on a relationship of less than wholesome quality with the lowly Court Physician, who although revered as the healer and saviour of the Princess herself, nonetheless did not carry within his veins the thick, divinely originated blood of Royalty, which may not be corrupted by mixing with the thin, watery juices of common folk such as I. If such a thing were to be suspicioned, then it might prove dangerous to me, and my head might join those of my fellows in the Pike Room. I, of course, would never let such a thing happen if it should come to that, but there is little wisdom in allowing things to come to that in the first place, so I attempted to deflect those unhealthy attentions which the Princess found it necessary within her Woman's Earth Bosom to direct my way. My days of swimming in the Muck were long over, as I have stated, and so I was not entrapped by feelings for her -- a situation which would inevitably have complicated matters considerably.

As time progressed, however, it became increasingly difficult to avoid her less and less subtle entreaties. She would discover all kinds of excuses to see me: her head ached so, and could I prescribe some salve or pill to ease her pain? her arm, there was a twinge, could I massage it perhaps, with some soothing ointment? her thighs, they ached terribly, could I perhaps examine them, for she was certain she could overcome her modesty in lifting her dress to improve my Medical access to that region? her bosom, it itched, etcetera, &c. She contrived all manner of ailments to encourage my

explorations of her body, which provided no small amount of pleasure to her; for when she was sure I was not looking, she would recline her head and dissolve into her pleasure at the touch of my hands on her body. She being the Princess, I could find no way of disobeying her commands to examine her, and so I did as she wished, although I knew that no good could come of it.

Thus grew the amorous Princess's advances until one day, the entire affair came to dramatic conclusion. I sat at my desk in my Physician's Office, reading over an ancient, only recently unearthed manuscript pertaining to the divers ways in which the "magickal doorways to heathen realms" may be accessed and utilized, when in burst the Princess, her bosom heaving mightily. Tears streamed down her cheeks and adorned like dewy droplets the extreme ends of her lashes. Her hair was in much disarray, and she appeared to have been exercising heavily, most likely in running from her chamber to mine, no small distance, for her flesh was in a state of most florid flush. She let her true feelings in an outburst, and made known to me in no uncertain terms that she had been enchanted with my figure and form ever since first she opened her eyes to a newly coloured world and beheld me dancing with the light like a magickal fairie, and that she wished more than anything in the world that she might feel my hands caressing her, not with the touch of the clinical doctor, but rather with the touch of the rapturous lover. To this end, of seducing me into complying with her fervent, voracious demands, she brushed aside the cloak which she had been wearing to reveal that there was nothing beneath but the rosy, pliant skin in which she was born.

I was little surprised, for I had been quite well aware of the Princess's feelings for me, but nevertheless, the bald boldity of this advance I could hardly have expected. She had already embraced my face into her bosom before I was ready to react, and it was at this state of affairs that the King himself burst into my chambers, prepared to complain of some minor malady which had been bothering him for some little time. The sight which greeted him, gentle reader, was one which struck him into the veriest core of his being: here was the roseate, supple flesh of his daughter, all exposed to the world and defiled by the touch of a man, and not merely a man, but less than a man, a *common* man, a man whose blood did not run thick with the divine grace of God. The Princess screamed upon sight of her father and ran to snatch the cloak up and drape it about her body, but the King's rage prevented her. He grasped her by

her arms and bellowed with all the force of his lungs into her face, and she trembled and quaked with fear and desolation. In his eyes, she was defiled forever, whether or not she had been consummated in her passion with me, and therefore he must perform the symbolic act of that horror.

He hauled her by the hair to my desk and hurled her down upon it, unbuttoning his trousers and emerging his Man-Dragon, swollen not with desire but with revulsion; he plunged it into her quivering Womanness. She screamed with pain, and much blood flowed forth, and then she fainted or collapsed, and her head became limp, and her breathing stopped. The King, oblivious, continued to pump his anger into her still, unresponsive form until he himself screamed with agony more extreme than even thou, worldly sir, canst imagine in the recourse of thy most potent nightmares. For he withdrew his Man-Dragon post-haste, and, attached to its scarlet, swollen nose, pincers sunk in deep and fast, was the tarantula spider which the King's passion had driven from its home in his daughter's heart.

INTRODUCING MY ADVENTURES IN THE EARTH MUD

A great period of physical activity was thus inaugurated in my life. Always previous a Man of mind alone, I had never embarked on much in the way of adventures, for such did not, in any sense, interest me. I was content to read of the adventures of others, as set down in travel books and memoirs (such as thou readest now, dear reader!), but I felt no longing to experience them for myself. They represented to me the Mud of Earth, and I must reject all such. Even during my debauchment in the time of my late youth, I did not travel or enjoy the world in that way; I stayed with my women and ate of their pleasures solely, for that was enough to satisfy me then. Then, in my days as founder and supreme leader of the Society of Equals, I performed many investigations into Nature and Earth, but again, I did not engage in any particular adventures. Now, however, having renounced the physical life, a great many adventures befell me. Life is strange that way: whatever it is that thou may wish to denounce and reject, that will be what will plague thee all thy livelong days! Having no desire to experience adventures in the human realm of Mud, the Mud splashed upward of its own volition and grimed me as if I had dived in myself with all greediness. I do not bemoan my fate, if that be what thou believest, dear reader; no, I accept all that life

has brought and all that I have approached life with, for I know that it could be no other way -- if 'twould, then why didn't it? The world is as it is, and thou must be accepting of that, or thou mayst find that thy outlook on the world, and thy view of thy Self, will be poisoned and corrupted and in general unhealthy. Be ever vigilant and ever careful of that dark flower in thy heart, as I have been of mine, for it will direct and guide thee, even if that which thou dost not wish to come True does come True, for if thou doth but follow its guidance, then thou shalt end thy life True. Although my level of vigilance did not always reach the standards I set, I was always careful to tend and preserve my dark flower, and now I near death with a lightness of being that few on Earth have ever achieved. In my youth, that flower was almost extinguished, but I was fortunate enough to come to my senses before it was too late, and I was able to revive that flower to its former glory and beyond. It remained with me in the adventures I am shortly to relate, although its glory waxed and waned with circumstance, and if not for it, I am sure I should have perished long ago. As I have stated, to thy Self be True, and then thou shalt find Grace in Death.

After I had fled the castle, I found myself joining a caravan of performers who roamed the countryside and put on shows to dazzle the simple sensibilities of the common folk. There were two jugglers of firebrands; a swallower of swords; a person who was neither man nor woman, but both, that is, who possessed the appropriate organs of both sexes, and therefore could engage in sexual relations with itself, for the amusement and titillation of all; an acrobat who could also contort himself into positions which defy the typical human form, making himself into creatures that, if one were to come across them in the woods, one might kill to relieve them of their misery -- legs sprouting from heads, arms dangling from crotches, heads emerging from feet and hands; and of course, there were the requisite freaks which all travelling caravans must possess -- the dwarves and abominations and hideous creatures from the wombs of diseased cows, which almost resembled humanity, but which were a horrible, atrocious parody of it.

I joined on as a magician, capable of performing feats of illusion such as making things disappear and sawing people in half. Of course, my brand of magic was quite different from the normal illusionist's. My studies endowed me with the ability actually to perform these miracles without the need of pretend. If I wanted to make something disappear from sight, I merely transported it to

some other realm, perhaps a WayStation of Nourishment or an inverted Tower of Discipline. If thou, gentle reader, art familiar with such concepts, perhaps as a member of the Society of Equals, then thou wilt understand the ease with which I could perform such "miracles" and baffle the spectators who wished to divine the mechanism by which I practiced this "illusion." If I wished to cut some person in half, I merely coated the serrated blade of the saw with Elixir of Semintention, and the person's halves would continue to live and operate as if there was another half attached, when in fact there wasn't. It was a simple matter to suture the halves back together, and the person continued life as if he was a whole organism, in fact never knew the difference, when in fact, he was two halves in symbiotic communication with each other, but nevertheless separate. Such tricks were easy enough to manage, and my performance was unilaterally successful.

My reputation, albeit under a new name (I was a wanted man under my previous identity) and with a new face (I changed my appearance so that no person could recognize me as my True Self, even my own mother), grew and grew, and I was several times approached by fellow practitioners of my trade, hoping to apprentice themselves to me and learn my secrets, but I always refused such entreaties, for I did not wish to divulge the fruits of my lifetime's endeavor to discover the Truth of the Universe. So they would turn sadly away, and I prospered in my new identity. It afforded me plenty of opportunity to pursue my true vocation, for the performance was only part of the greater carnival of the caravan, and so I would put on perhaps three or four shows a day, an hour long each, and then have the rest of my time free to dispose with as I pleased. And as I had but little need of sleep, my days were long and fruitful.

After several years of peace and success with the caravan, things came to a dreadful and unceremonious end when we entered a particularly superstitious, religiously oriented community to perform our acts. Several people in the audience of my show were so convinced that what I did was magick, and not mere illusion, that they convened a secret conference of townsfolk in the night, the purpose of which was to discuss the possibility of my being a wizard or a warlock, and especially whether I was in communion, perhaps even league, with Satan. The accusations, of course, were nonsense, but the people of this township took them quite seriously and approached the owner of the caravan with their suspicions and threats. I was a very profitable property for the caravan owner, and

he was quite reluctant to allow these ignorant fellows access to me, but their daggers and pitchforks and shrewdly malignant eyes convinced him, and he handed me over without much argument.

They brought me into their courthouse and put me on trial for crimes against God and Nature. Of course, there was no chance that I would be found other than Guilty, so I did not even present a defense. They tried to torture confessions out of me, as this method had proved quite efficacious in worming confessions from all the other witches and wizards which they had put on trial in similar fashion in the past, but with me it did not work, for I was above their mucky methods. They could cut me with razors and prick my eyeballs with needles; they could crush me with stones and squeeze my skull in their vices; they could pour molten liquids down my throat and insert daggers in my nether regions: I was above the Mud. My body could withstand their meager oppositions, and healed rapidly of all their inflictions. This phenomenon had the effect of frightening and confirming them further in their belief that I was a powerful wizard and so it was deemed that I must be executed by fire immediately. The caravan was outraged, but there was nothing those performers could do but watch as I was led to the scaffold and tied to the beam and sprinkled with holy water; then dry kindling and firewood set about my feet, then set ablaze; and they watched as my shrieking body was burned to cinders and ashes.

Of course, what they watched was not me, but an effigy of me, for the night before my execution was to take place, I traded places with my guard, gave him my appearance and assumed his appearance for myself, and prevented him from speaking or acting as if he was any other but myself. I watched the execution, and it was quite a sight to see that physical body which I associated with myself go up in flames. But I suppose this only goes to prove that the Mud means nothing, it is but clothing and drapery for the true form of one's Self, which remains constant and True no matter what the material circumstances.

TREATING OF THE DARKLAND WOODS AND MYSTERIES THEREIN

The town in which my doppelganger was burned as a wizard was located in a clearing of the Darkland Woods, a mysterious forest

which perhaps was partly responsible for encouraging the superstitious unreason of the inhabitants of that town, for it was haunted by a great many elemental personalities and spontaneously generated demonic presences. My knowledge of these creatures of Mud was always limited because they are so very rare and difficult to get a hold of, that the Society of Equals never really achieved much research into their nature and means of existence. They are more of Mud and Earth even than Woman, for while Woman possesses, in however little quantity, many of the Astral qualities and attributes of Man, these creatures possess none of them. They arise purely from the Mud, and they descend back into it, having achieved nothing in their brief spans of existence but a cheerful, mindless play. They romp about the forests, chattering and chittering, chasing after each other, pursuing carnal oblivion, and clothing themselves in the leaves and sticks of surrounding Nature.

The Darkland Woods was thronged with such elementals, and I began an investigation of them that was to last for several years. I successfully disguised myself as one of their kind and pursued much of the same mindless games as they did, hoping to gain some understanding of how these games related to the Earth from which they came and the Sky under which they were played. I examined the internal structures of these creatures and found them to be grossly aberrant from those of sublimer Man: organs incomplete and distorted from the divine image of their counterparts in Man; hearts black and charred and pumping but weakly, only enough to nourish the body, but too weak to survive for long, hence their shortened lifespans; brains smooth and whole, without the convolutions and folds and the division between Sky and Earth which thou wilt find in the brains of Man, their brains were all Earth. These traits were peculiar, and they gave rise to speculation, some of it quite exciting. I wondered if perhaps, there were counterparts to these elementals of Earth, if there were elementals of Sky, undiscovered as of yet, but whose brains would be wholly devoted to Sky, and whose hearts would be white and pure of Earth's dirt, whose material would be the Cloud and air of Sky rather than the Mud and feces of Earth. I jumped for joy within my heart at the prospect of such creatures, for such a creature, I was certain, would be the ultimate goal and transcendence of Man, that if Man could achieve what such a creature possessed, then Man would have attained perfection. I decided that I would attempt to discover these creatures out, if it would take all of my remaining lifetime to do it in. I knew it would be an arduous task, but little did I know just *how* arduous! and how,

in the disappointing end, futile!

One of the most curious aspects of the elementals of the Darkland Woods was their unceasing fascination with humans. They loved to observe the townsfolk and play at imitating them in their games. They would watch for hours as a woman came to wash her family's laundry at the river. Then, when she had gone, they would crowd down to the very spot where she had been working, and proceed in grotesque parodies of her actions. They could not seem, no matter how hard they tried, to grasp the subtle mechanisms by which humans performed their tasks with the greatest of ease. What for a woman was the routine task of dipping her clothes into the water, wringing them and scrubbing them with lye, and then rinsing them and folding them, etcetera, &c., for the elementals was a difficult, unnatural effort, which required the exercise of muscles they simply did not possess. O gentle reader, would that thou wert there to witness their exertions! They flopped about like marionettes on strings, lifting mattes of leaves, which represented the cloth, and dunking them in the river, then falling in after them, and emerging frustrated and laughing to scrub dirt and rocks into them until the leaves crumbled apart and drifted away to the winds and waters. They just could not manage it.

If they could not master the simple art of scrubbing clothes, then imagine, dear reader, how they must have fared when they donned disguises and trod into the world of humans to attempt to interact with them on an equal basis. Their greatest goal was to enter a house of pleasure and perform with the ladies there just as eloquently and professionally as any Man, or better. Of course, such a thing was far beyond their ken, but nothing would prevent them from trying. The town was accustomed to receiving a certain strange visitor from out of town at random times during the year, who would enter the town and deliver himself straight to the house of pleasure, and afterwards, leave in great and stumbling haste. This visitor was composed of three elementals standing on the shoulders of each other and trying to keep a good balance at such an ungainly stature. They would enter the house and demand the most beautiful whore that there was to be had. They had with them much gold, which they had spirited from the homes of various villagers, and they spread it about liberally. The whores were quite amused by this strange visitor, for he fumbled and troubled so much, that in his visitations, he never did so much as draw out a stiff member before falling flat on his face and cursing and swearing, and making post haste away from that place,

vowing that the next time, he would be the suave and debonair human which he envisioned himself. Then he would break apart, and wrestling and laughing elementals would hop about into the forest, ready to play whatever new games caught their interest.

OF DRAGONS

I left the Darkland Woods after a time, full with knowledge and wisdom of that curious breed, and travelled to distant parts because I was curious about another form of Earth creature, which I had never before encountered personally, but of which I had heard many tales told. This was the Dragon. Dragons did not spring up merely of Mud, but rather that which is *beneath* Mud! Such a phenomenon perplexed me, because I could not conceive of what such material could consist of. Flowing liquid rock?! The concept boggled even my expansive imagination, and I was eager to discover what knowledge I could.

I travelled far, and it took many years for me to find a *volcano*, that is a fissure in the Earth itself, from which such liquid flowing rock flung itself at intervals, to harden in the coolness of the air above the Mud (for in order for rock to become fluid, it must first be subjected to heat and pressures of extreme degree). Dragons are constructed of such hardened material, and thus they are very tough and difficult to kill, hence their prize status as game. The knights of many realms roamed the Earth in search of such dragons to kill, and that is why they are nearly extinct today. Dragons are very long-lived, and they aren't born often, for it takes a peculiar set of circumstances to occur within the heart of the volcano for a dragon to shape itself from the molten rock known as magma. Even today, I am not completely knowledgeable on this subject, for the mechanisms are so subtle as to be invisible. I believe that there may be a connection here to Sky, and there is some evidence in support of this in the fact that dragons are equipped with wings to fly, and that is why it is so difficult to discover them out.

The dragon I found was very ancient, dating in origins back to the times when Man lived in holes and trees. The vast intelligence of this creature astounded me, for it seemed superior even to me in its wisdom, and I sorrowed at the brutality and ignorance of Man, that he should extinguish such antiquity and wisdom from the face of the

Earth, simply for the pleasure of presenting a large, fierce-looking skull to his friends and comrades in the Courts of Royalty and Honour! I spent many years in communion with this Dragon before a ruffian from my very homeland found it and destroyed it. Thou mayst question the veracity of this, for how could such an ancient, tough creature of rock be so easily defeated by a tiny, delicate creature such as a Man? But let it be known, that there is a weak spot in the belly of every Dragon, for just as the navel of Man is the fount of his life, so is the navel of Dragon the fount of its life, and if a sword were to be plunged accurately into this spot, the interaction of metal and rock would be disastrous, and the Dragon would fall. Normally, a Dragon will be extremely covetous and protective of this region, but if a Man could sneak up on it during its period of rest, it would not be a difficult matter. I wept -- one of the few times in my life that I have done so. For I mourned the loss of such wisdom from the face of the Earth forever. It had taken millennia to build, and a second to wreck. I looked inward and spread protective fingers over my dark flower in my heart. I must preserve it well, and I felt that Truth more than ever upon the death of the Dragon.

But what wisdom, thou askest, did I attain in my friendship with this magnificent creature? Well, in its fullest explication, 'twould be far too much to include in this limited scope, but I will give thee some small indication of the wondrousness of the Dragon's mind. Often the Dragon would meditate upon a simple phenomenon, but one which provided no end of frustration and fruitful perambulation of thought -- that between fire and water there was the element which could not exist in corporeal body, which in fact could never manifest itself within the concrete context of our most limited reality, but which howbeit was a necessary consequence of all fire-water interactions. I cannot within this small scope, as I have explained, go into the complex and subtle proofs which are necessary to make this concept understandable to thee, but rest assured, sir, that those proofs do indeed provide for that purely theoretical substance which is not fire nor water, but something of both, and without which there would be no possibility of Dragon. That is, even though the material cannot under any circumstances be brought into physical form, it is the most vital substance necessary to a dragon's living substance. This may seem an insoluble conundrum, but it is the least of the numerous mysteries which that ever-wise Dragon did share with me. Of what sadness am I capable?-- This lost fellow consumes it, with whom I might have spent all these ages finding the secret of spirit. I declare that I did enact vengeance upon the bucket-clad gem-cruled

blackguard who did spoil all my dreams of companionship with Dragon, and it was vengeance most terrible.

TREATING OF A PROPHET

I was far from my home at this time, and thou canst imagine how everything seemed foreign and new. Never had it occurred to me how strange and even exciting the fruits of Earth could be. Mud, I thought, Mud Mud Mud. But Mud can take many forms, and those of the land of Ing are but a small subset of a greater infinity that spans the World and the Universe.

In foreign lands, I came across a Prophet. Here was a strange case, because considering myself to be a superior brand of Man, I had never encountered my equal -- even in the Society of Equals which I had founded. Yet here was a Man who, being a Prophet of God, by all rights, should be even *my* superior. I was curious, therefore, to discover whether this was true. If so, then I would accept that he was a True Prophet. If he be inferior, however, then I know that either he be no Prophet (as I am not), or that if he be a Prophet, then even God should be inferior to me. That second choice not sounding veracious, I would most likely assume the first. So I tested him in a battle of wits, wills, talents, and prowess.

As for wits, well I had him beaten from the start. He could prove not one Theorem of the Universe, indeed, he could not even understand the concept! As for wills, it took mere days to stare him down into the muck. In the category of talents, he proved to be greater equipped than I, producing paintings of wondrous beauty and poetry of character divine -- and as for my talents in that field of writing, thou mayst judge for thyself: not the most lucid or flowing, rather stilted and wooden and jumpy. (I am not unwilling to come to a True account of my Self -- as I advise thee to do in all matters!) As for prowess, he also had me beaten, for he could wrestle a Lion into submission and beat a formless stack of marble into a beauteous statue with his fists. It may seem that we were tied, two against two, but I consider it won by my Self, for consider this: I won in the categories pertaining to Sky, he in those pertaining to Earth; so what achievement his? If he be emissary of divinity, then he should dominate in all categories, for he represents the eternal and the perfect and the infinite.

So I classified this Man as False Prophet, and he became angry, for I dismissed him in front of his followers and reverential minions, and they became doubtful of his Holy Mandate. He attacked me with his fists, and fists that can pound rock can equally pound flesh! Remember, he won readily in contests of Earth, so I retreated with much haste, and also with much aide from those doubters who decided that *I* must be the True Prophet, having defeated their former idol in those areas of True import. They took me to a cave outside their city and left me there, presuming that I would emerge with Words of wisdom to guide them in their lives. Pathetic fools, they, for they could not discover wisdom for themselves, but must look to another to find it for them, and having received it, they do not follow its guidelines anyway! I concocted some Words to satisfy them, proclaiming Visions from Angels, and then went on my way.

OF THE DESERT

My adventures continued into Deserts. The desert is a wondrous place, for it is very close to Sky in its attributes. It is featureless, except for the millions and uncounted particles of sand which blow about in coordinated, roving masses, which appear almost to be organic. In fact, they *are* organic, as I discovered, for these dunes, as they are called, are not merely conglomerates of objects, as they would seem, but are in fact endowed with a glimmering form of consciousness. I grant thee, it is not nearly as advanced as that of Man, or even that of elementals, but nevertheless, it is to some degree intelligent and aware of itself.

At first, I thought perhaps I had discovered the elementals of Sky which I sought, thus far in vain, but soon I realized that these were mere creatures of Mud, and very inferior at that. But still, they possessed some striking qualities. For one, since the constituency of their composition constantly changed and shifted, as particles of sand moved into and out of the roving dune, the essence of Self was evanescent and fleeting. The creatures possessed no memory, could not recall the past beyond a few hours or days, however long it took for the last particle of sand from a particular period of time to leave the dune and find another. Also, of the future, these dunes could not conceive. They merely flitted about the desert, following the winds, and only conscious of a sensation of weightlessness and euphoria.

I entered the world of the dunes for a short while, and it was indeed a wondrous experience, for it felt almost like I imagined Sky to feel -- almost without body, without static form, almost without mass of Mud. But the vacuousness of the existence soon grew weary for me, accustomed as I was, and still am, to the pursuits of intellect and discovery. So I left the dunes and wandered across the desert with the Sun forever above my head. The Sun is a curious object, and this is most noticeable in the desert, for there it is forever naked and unhindered by weather. It is perpetually round, unlike the Moon which endures endless cyclings of shape, and it is perpetually hot. One wonders whence such unfathomable energies could originate. It is one of the great mysteries of Sky. There are those who claim that the Sun will someday run out, that its tremendous output consumes gargantuan amounts of fuel and that when these reserves run out, so will the Sun. I do not agree, for in the desert, I found that the Sun does not draw on fuel reserves to sustain its eternal inferno, but rather draws on the substance of Sky itself, and since Sky is infinite, the Sun's portion cannot be even the size of a flea in the grander scheme of Reality. This is *my* speculation, of course, for I have never achieved ultimate wisdom as I so desired, but I have come closer than any that have come before me, so that should bear *some* magnitude in thy considerations! I tired of the desert after some years, and I moved on.

OF THE TASTE OF FLESH AND OF WOMEN OF SKY

I entered into jungles from the desert. There I met with a curious group of humans who practiced cannibalism. I had never tasted the meat of human flesh before, indeed I had never seriously considered the matter. Here was my opportunity to rectify this situation. Gentle reader, perhaps thou dost not approve of such a practice? Does it revulse thy senses, raise thy gorge? Well, perhaps that is good, for if many of our species went about eating their fellow humans, then we would not long survive upon this Earth. It is sensical enough that there exist innate protective systems to guard against such a possibility. There are those, however, who have learned to bypass these biological safeguards, and they are the cannibals.

I joined their group as they went out to hunt a suitable person for their feast. They do not eat men regularly, understand, but only on annual holidays, and it is considered a holy ritual, not taken lightly,

not in the least. They do this to celebrate the Spirit of Life which inhabits their bodies and allows them to move about and hunt and dance and laugh. They revere this Spirit, and would do nothing to upset it, for if such were to occur, why then they would not be allowed to live in this paradise, Earth. So they hunt down their feasts from neighboring tribes of people, and they prepare them to be eaten by every member of the community. I partook, myself, of a section of thigh, and it was a curious sensation, human muscle and skin rumbling peristaltically down into my stomach. It was sickening and pleasurable all at once. I felt the urge to vomit, and at the same time I felt heady and light, and I wished to dance and sing with all the air in my lungs. For a moment, I felt as if I had partook of Sky itself, as if I had become Sky, and I thought perhaps I had discovered the secret, but then I was back in Earth, and I knew that it was but an illusion of my senses.

What was curious about this tribe, even more so than the cannibalism, was the reversal of Man and Woman. Men were of the Earth, Women of the Sky! I was shocked and bewildered by this phenomenon. How could such an abomination occur? The men perfumed themselves and were pleasure seekers, while the women were the thinkers and the stern lawmakers. I have not resolved the difficulty even now upon my death-bed. In my travels, I have encountered several more tribes like this one, each in isolation from the world, each practicing cannibalism, and it makes me think that perhaps the eating of human flesh causes this reversal, except that when *I* ate of the flesh, I did not experience Earth, as thou might expect, me being man, but instead did become closer to Sky. So that I cannot explain this strangeness, but must leave its mystery to the World and, with utmost regret, never comprehend for myself.

OF THE OCEAN

I have not mentioned the ocean in any great detail, and there is much reason, I assure thee, for I do not know of its mysteries, and I have never even discovered the questions. If Man is Sky and Woman is Earth, then What is Ocean? Ocean defies every attempt of mine to define it, to examine its properties, to understand its contained boundlessness and molasses fluidity. It is not Earth, for it flows like air, but it is not Sky, for it is massive like Earth. Sometimes, I think it must be Earth, for after all, without Ocean, could there be Mud?

But then I think it must be Sky, for without Ocean could there be Cloud? Where does it fit? Sky and Earth are diametric and easily defined from each other. Ocean does not. It belongs to both, yet it also belongs to itself.

The creatures of Ocean are unfathomable. They bear some resemblance to the creatures of Earth, but beyond that superficial relationship, they are quite alien and unnatural. The bulging eyes, the shimmering scales, the quivering gills and slits, the flapping tails, the slithering glidings: these strangenesses defy my wisdom to this day. I am eternally confronted with mine own ignorance, even in my exalted state over all other human beings!

The elementals of Ocean, why they are a sight to see! They are huge, gigantic. They spread across the depthless waters like ephemeral nets of flesh. They curl and quiver and move in graceful arcs and loops and spheres. Thou must needs see them to understand of what I speak! And sharks! Such creatures! They prowl the waves smelling for blood, and no other creature is their equal. They detect even the elementals, and rip through them like the softest tissue, all for pleasure! They are even fiercer than the lions and tigers of the savannas and jungles of woolly Afrique! They hunger for flesh, and they care not what form that flesh doth come in.

Ocean, I simply cannot comprehend thy mysteries! Art thou inferior to Sky, as I do believe? Art thou superior to Earth, as also I do believe? Art thou the medium to connect the two spheres, to bring together the Earth and the Sky and to give birth to the Mud and thence life? Art thou the intermediary between extremes? These are my conjectures, although I offer no proof to stand behind them. I fear that which I do not know, and especially that which defies all my efforts to know. Wisdom, as the years pass, and more of it accumulates, becomes increasingly difficult to separate from folly; the line doth grow dimmer and more vague. It is too easy to follow lines of reason which seem perfectly logical, but which will lead thee into folly soon enough. I have learned to be conservative as my wisdom has become greater, and so I do not stand as authoritatively on many issues as I did when I was younger. I step back and question them a bit, and do not accept easily, and as a result, unless the basic assumptions and postulates of my philosophy are wrong, I do believe that the strength of my wisdom is near invincible, and shall be a terrible loss to the world when I am soon gone from it. For even in all my wisdom do I not know what is to come after; all my effort may prove futile in the end.

FROM MOTHER'S TEATS TO DESPAIR AND WANDERING

I mentioned earlier that in infancy, soon out of the womb, that sucking at the teats of my mother provided me a connection with that dark, worldless womb from which I had been so recently and mercilessly wrenched. While sucking in that warm milk into my body, I would close my eyes, and be lost in Spaces unknown, floating in the worlds of darkness which constitute a much firmer and more resolute reality than this, and it would be almost as if I had never left that dark place I had known since the moment of my conception. But then, my mother would take me away from her teats, and I would cry bitterly to be allowed back into that sublime world, where I possessed not merely a dark flower in my heart, but indeed, a dark infinity of flowers.

I became curious, for a long while, about the possibilities of utilizing the sucking of teats to access that elusive Sky for which I longed so desperately. I found women who had given birth recently, and abducted them so that I might suck on their teats, and drink that milk of paradise, and perhaps even reach the summits of reality. Indeed, I felt the soothing darkness, and the embracing warmth, and the infinite Spaces, and the morphating shapes of a higher reality, and the longer I sucked, the more I became at one with this full emptiness and empty fullness and influxive darkness, but something was missing which it took me a long time to grasp, something that had been there when I was a babe, and which was absent now. I could feel its lack, and it took years for me to discover what it was. Finally, I realized what was missing from my experiments: propriety. These were not *my* mother's teats. In order to come into contact with the peculiar darkness that was *my* embracing womb, I must needs suck at the teats of that womb, and no other. These substitutes worked to some degree to bring me into contact with a universal darkness, but there was a singular darkness that was my own, and I could not access that easily. My dark flower in my heart sprang from this particular darkness, and was nourished by it, and so I must seek it out if I truly wished to rediscover that connection which I had missed for so long.

Of course, my mother was long dead; indeed, I had seen the passing of a hundred and fifty-seven summers by this time, and so several generations had passed on *since* my mother's death. I felt despair at

this, for although I had felt no particular emotion concerning either parent -- indeed, the only entity ever I had cared for other than myself had been my mentor, the Dragon I have spoken of, and his death had been the only occasion at which I had wept -- I wept for the second time in my life at the realization that I could not again suck at my mother's teats. My tears created Mud in the Earth, and this made me laugh with bitterness, for to me, it represented in the physical plane that abject failure which I was making of myself in the intellectual plane. Thus, I realized that I must stand tall and resolve my despair. I must not give up; I must forever march forward and never count my losses, but count my victories, and indeed count my losses among my victories, for every loss was but a paving stone to a greater triumph. And so I set to.

Thou mayst laugh if that be thy wish, dear reader, but I was determined to suck at the teats of my mother, for I was sure that therein lay the path to Sky. The problem that lay before my was monumentous: my mother was long dead, a pile of bones under six feet of Earth. No longer *had* she any teats to suck at! Even if I dug her out the Earth, how would it be possible to restore her teats to function as they did before? Well, gentle reader, I pondered these questions and a great many others for a great long time, and I decided that I would risk anything to try, for if not to try, then how to succeed? After all, I could try, and it could be a failure, but what of that? I had encountered numerous failures along the road of my life; if this be one more to add to my list, then so be it.

So I traveled the great distance to my native land of Ing, and I found the graveyard into which my mother's bones had been interred several months of summers ago. I found the family crypt, and descended its depths to discover my mother's bones, decaying disinterestedly in a pile in some forgotten corner. Carefully, I gathered together every single bone into my arms, and brought them up into the day, and laid them out upon the ground in the precise pattern which they had occupied during life. Where had been my mother's teats, were now mere rotted ribs, and I entertained some doubts as to my plan, but I stowed them away and began the painful process. Now, gentle reader, I will tell thee of my plan: I had my mother's bones; what was needed was her flesh. Well, what does it mean, flesh? Hast thou ever heard the phrase, "flesh of my flesh?" I considered that my flesh was the flesh of my mother's flesh, so perhaps if I restored to these bones mine own flesh, then 'twould be the same as restoring the original. Thus, I flayed the flesh from my

own body and draped it across the bones; and it was agony beyond all measure of suffering; but I endured it for the sake of the possibility, however dim, that I might attain infinite wisdom, finally. I called an elemental to inhabit the flesh and bones I had constructed, so that animation might grace the body, and then I began the suckle.

I cannot describe the horrors that ensued. Suffice it to say that it was a bitter mockery of the womb experience; it was the antithesis of warm, loving darkness; it was corrupted and fetid and dank and cold and without direction upward or downward and full of hate and woe and scorn and dismal destruction and chaos and forgetfulness and beast feelings and malformed humanity and freakish villainy and hints of evil more profound than the religions of the world have yet conceived. I was almost destroyed, and I believe that I sunk to a lower point than in my days of debauchment. After this, I spent years wandering the Earth, without purpose or care, without thought or wisdom, and my dark flower in my heart wilted in the new bed I had constructed of sandy, ashen soil and darkness of a quality which provided no nourishment.

I began to age.

Oh, those long years of wandering the Earth, an aging husk, a mindless, slathering, idiotic parody of humanity! Thou canst not imagine the desolation, the loneliness, the weariness. I was poisoned with the vilest, most putrid, most rancid milk of mother's long dead teats. I had consumed the destroyer of mind and heart, and in tremendous quantity, and it was to heal that I roamed the Earth. I searched for what sustenance I could find, hoping to discover the antidote to the destruction I had brought upon my Self. Remember -- Truth lies in thy Self. In that frenzied moment of reckless hope, I had forgotten this credo, this maxim of Life, and I had betrayed my body to my ambition.

So across the mountains and the oceans and the grasslands and the forests and the deserts and the jungles and the icelands and the islands of the Earth did I wander, searching, searching for what might cure me of my Despair, and I did not know what that might be, but I felt that it was out there somewhere, and meanwhile I wandered, a mindless hulk a hulking mindless hulk a hulk of mindless mindless hulk, a zombie with eyes of coal and granite stone, with heart of sandy, ashen soil from which sprouted the dying, wilted dark flower of my youth and hope and ambition, with dragging, mutilated flesh, with diseased, miasmatic entrails, with

heavy, pain-embedded limbs, with hanging, mangled testes, with smooth, fleshless brow. I searched, and my hope pulled me along and did not allow me to drop into the Earth, my hope soared high, and it was all that I possessed which did not falter, which did not stumble, which did not rot away; it was the center of my dark flower which did not disappear, and it pointed the way to wellness and healing and antidote. Hope kept a grain of my Self within my flesh, so that I, however unconscious and flickering, still looked out through those eyes and still directed the motion of my steps, however faltering and unsure, and Truth still was in me.

For somewhere in the world was a Center of Healing, a place where I could go to redeem myself, and somehow I knew this, and somehow I made my feet move, so that I might someday stumble across it. And so a hundred summers passed by, and I dragged my weary feet across the globe, without looking to either side, without seeing aught but the path before me and forgetful of the path I left behind. Through farms and battlefields, through swamps and cities, through lakes and scenic campuses I walked, and those who saw me shuddered and made the sign of the cross or prayed to whatever gods they worshiped, for I was the living, ambulating corpse, and I stank of the grave, and my flesh clung only by strands to my bones. But I walked on. And Despair never defeated me, for one day, I came to an Ocean I had never seen before, nor have ever seen since. I do not believe that any other Man has ever discovered this Ocean; if eyes other than mine have looked upon it, then their number may be counted on the fingers of one hand. And standing on the shores of that serene Ocean, I knew that Hope had led me True. So I walked into the warm, lapping waters, and let them envelop me over my head, and so I entered the Ocean of Healing.

The time I spent in that Ocean of Healing was sublimity and bliss. My body was renewed, although not rejuvenated; the age I had acquired during my wandering remained with me, and doubtless my death-bed would be summers and summers away right now if not for that, but I am not bitter on that account, for indeed, without that aging, much wisdom would be denied me. For remember, even in failure do we learn wisdom, even in folly, but only if we know how. I know how, for my wisdom is great, and this is what I fain would give to the world through these my Confessions: how to learn wisdom from folly, and thus how to keep accessible to the Truth within thy Self.

Perhaps thou doth believe I harp too much upon the subject of Self;

well let it be known that never can enough be preached upon the subject; there is always more to say of Self, and if thou dost grow tired of Self, then thou might as well end thy life right here and now, for thy Self is all that thou doth Truly possess in all the Universe. Everything else, all thy worldly possessions, all thy relationships and knowledge: it is all mere illusion in the end, next to the terra reality that is Self. I almost lost this Self, and it frightens me beyond measure even now to think on it; how close I came to letting my dark flower die; how close I came to letting the spark of my existence be extinguished. Shudder, dear reader! Shudder, if thou dost understand of what I speak! For only if thou doth possess this understanding wilt thou be capable of such a shudder, for it is the very Shudder of Life I speak!

In those Healing Waters did I regain my Self anew, did I cultivate my dark flower in my heart back into health, did I replace that sandy, ashen silt with moist, fecund soil, did I restore into bloom that dark flower so that my hope and ambition might soar ever higher, so that I once more might seek the ecstasy of Sky and Cloud and Man and reject the lowly Earth and Mud and Woman. That Ocean of Healing was not the womb feeling I have perpetually sought, dear reader, so if such thought entered thy mind, then divest thyself of it right away. It was quite a different feeling altogether. Whereas womb immersion was heavy, ocean immersion was light; where womb was dark, water was without experience of colour or darkness; where womb was transcendent and beyond body, water was all body, was body divine. After all, the Ocean of Healing was with the purpose of restoring body and mind, and so it must comprehend body, whereas womb was before body and therefore need not consider it more than as a speck of flesh. From this Ocean of Healing I emerged new and whole and fresh and full of Hope and Life and Self. Although I never returned there, I know it is still where it was, for it is eternal, and if thou doth truly possess the need and the desire and the True Hope, then mayhap thou shalt find it in *thy* wanderings.

TREATING OF DRUIDS

All my life had I heard tell of the ancient order of priests and wizards known as the Druids. Great in Astronomy and Prophecy, famed for their darkened faces and inwardly lit eyes, their robes to

keep away the folly and the light, their monuments to bring to Earth the holy and the dark and the Sky. Always had I dismissed them, as I had dismissed all religion, but now I decided that perhaps some amount of wisdom could be obtained if I would investigate their murky reservoirs of primeval knowledge. So I journeyed back to my home land of Ing and went up into Scotland, and even passed close by the Sheridan Castle, headquarters for the Society of Equals, and soon I came upon the large stone monuments which signified that I had entered a realm of magick and Druid mystery.

So I became a Druid for a time, immersed myself in the secrets and knowledge of their ageless clan, and discovered horrors of the past never before considered. Monsters, beasts, hideous deformed things which existed before the rise of Man; the Druids kept their legacy alive, maintained the primordial freaks and bizarre mutations of an oozing, not yet fully conceived world. Their prize possession was a terrible beast from aeons past, which they kept alive in a small lake in the northern central region of the country. They would feed the beast with human flesh, for that, they believed, was the nourishment upon which future generations of beasts such as this might be founded. They hoped to breed the monster so that someday, the world would return to its original state, and the abominations of the past would rise again out of the Oooooze that came before Mud. As yet, they had met with no success, but they possessed great stores of patience, and they would wait until Doomsday if they had to. They were confident that their efforts would be rewarded, hence their order, ancient as it was, would continue until the present day be considered antiquity, and it would continue even beyond that. Truly, they did not question their Mandate, they merely proceeded according to the rules handed down by Druids past, and Druids future, doubtless, would proceed as well, in this way.

I found little wisdom here; it was reverse wisdom; a doctrine of regression and static anti-Life and anti-Man; of Woman, pure, untouched by Sky, untouched by Ocean even, just utter Woman, utter Oooooozing femininity. There was no hope here, not even in their astronomy, for it was predicated on the notion of obliteration, that is, they deemed it necessary to destroy the corruptive Sky, which threatened their goal of predominating Earth Oooooze, so they studied the stars carefully, with the notion of discovering a means by which they might bring them down and sink them into the Mud. Indeed, I learned little wisdom but folly here, and it was with sorrow that I left them, for they were ultimately backwards, and they

would never realize or admit to it.

TREATING OF SPHERES

My adventures of the Earth continued with my discovery of spheres. I detected these almost purely by accident. Unlike elementals, spheres did not bear any relationship to humans at all. They came of Ocean, Sky, and Earth together, and I do not know if they bear consciousness or not. I am of the opinion that they do, but I may be wrong. Mayhap, thou, gentle reader, canst discover the Truth of the matter.

Spheres arise from bubbles in the Ocean, when Sky dips into water and forms a tiny replica of itself within the depths of Ocean. Usually, the bubbles rise to the surface and disintegrate, the air escaping to the repossession of Sky, the water splashing back into Ocean; but sometimes, a bubble will form near enough to the floor of the ocean so that a speck or two of Earth will be trapped within the Center of the bubble. Slowly, with monumental effort, this bubble will rise to the surface, and when it exits the Ocean, it remains cohesive -- it becomes a sphere. A thing of all three: Ocean, Sky, Earth. Earth, Sky, Ocean. Sky, Ocean Earth. It ambulates about, unnoticed by every living thing, and it seems without purpose in its flight, but who can say? At the Center is that speck of Earth, and I suspect that the sphere is consciousness, for this reason: we, humans, are creatures of the Three -- we are Mud and we are Ocean, and we are Sky -- and we are conscious as a result; the mingling of the Three produces Life, and Life, at some level, must be conscious of itself. Thus, a sphere, however dim and ephemeral and lacking in substance, must contain within it the spark of dark, else why would it continue to be?

I have never seen a sphere burst like the bubble that is its ancestor template. If they die, it is in a way unknown to me, and if thou, dear reader, dost know of such a thing, then perhaps thy wisdom is greater than mine after all. This is not likely, however, and I say it with humour and irony, for I am well aware that no Man has achieved greater wisdom than my Self! And perhaps no man will until long after my bones are dust and my confession ashes of bygone civilization. It is my hope that future generations of Man will ascend to Sky, and perhaps my confession will not be lost forever,

and perhaps it will play some small role in forwarding Man to his ultimate destiny with somewhat greater conviction.

As for spheres: I tried to follow spheres whene'er I discovered them, but they flit and bob so, that I cannot line them easily. One I managed to follow for two years, but I lost it in a Sunless cave. Never once, in those two years, did it cease to bob and flit, nor did it pause to rest (and neither did I as a result -- I was verily *grateful* that I lost it in that cave!), nor did it seem to bear towards any destination. Aimless, without mind, but possessing darkness nonetheless.

And so did my wisdom grow.

OF GENIUSES AND PRODIGIES

In my travels, I sometimes came across Men that seemed to transcend Earth almost completely, to live among the clouds and Sky from birth, Men who seemed never to have lost the darkness within their heart, Men whose dark flowers were in greater cultivation than even mine own. I sought these Men out with great eagerness, for I hoped to learn wondrous wisdom from them. I will tell here of several which I encountered. (Of course, the greatest genius -- that Lunatic who in these present days fills my mind and heart with hate and fear and disgust and wonder -- I will speak of Him later.)

But I will tell of these whom I met in those earlier times. One made great music. It was divinely inspired, it came straight down from the heaven after which he was named. He created music such as the world has never known before nor since. There was a veritable garden of darkness within his fecund heart. The third time I ever wept was the first time I heard this Man's Music. As I listened, I was transported into the Womb, and I felt the Sky as I never had since the day of my birth. I wept openly, and people watched, and they did not understand, for his Music affected them as well, but not in the way that it would have had they possessed the wisdom and knowledge which I did. Dear reader, I bid thee listen to his Music, and if thy wisdom is great enough, then thou wilt be transported as I was, and thou wilt feel the ecstasy of Sky, if only for a brief instant of time. I shall treat of this Man later, in more detail, when I treat of

Music.

Another Man of wisdom, although not as great as the first, came earlier, and he wrote works that surpassed anything written since antiquity and anything written since. His words transcended mere language, in fact, as far as is possible within the scope of a single, unsatisfactory language, his words approached the divinity of Total Language, that language which is all the languages of the Universe in One and which is husked away when thou art but an infant so that thou mayst know the single language of thy country. This man, he somehow kept that Total Language within his heart, and tended it as the darkest flower, and it sprouted most magnificently. I shall treat of him further as well, when I treat of Poetry.

Another genius did I find, and this one never was known to the world. The others I have mentioned achieved fame and success from their genius, but this, this did not. He was a painter, and his paintings were surely inspired from the Clouds and Sky themselves, for never on Earth had such representations come to Life. He was able to create Sky out of Earth by setting brush to canvas, and his genius was unsurpassed; yet he never did show his paintings to any but me, and he did live alone and far from civilization, and every one of his paintings perished in the fire which destroyed his home, his life's work, and his own Life. I have always mourned the loss of those paintings, for I would liked to have collected them and looked upon them every day, for they were straight out of the darkness of that Man's heart. Oh, these Men had the potential for wisdom far surpassing my own, but each of them burned too brightly, and died too soon for the accumulation of their knowledge and wisdom to grant them the immortality they deserved. They died in ignorance, and I mourn, for what wisdom may I have gained by following in their paths of glory? I shall never know.

TREATING OF ALCHYMIE

It was said widely, and with hushed voices of reverence and fear, that the alchemists were discovering the secrets of the Universe, that they possessed systematic methods by which to gain wisdom, that they developed reason and magick together to create and reveal knowledge. Although I had always been disappointed with the efforts of Men in the past, it was still with the greatest excitement

that I sought out these alchemists with the hope that they had discovered the means by which I could rapidly acquire wisdom. I was eternally sanguine and optimistic in matters of wisdom, and this, perhaps, is the reason why I have lived for such a long time, and am only on my death bed now, decades of centuries after the moment of my Conception. So I sought them out, and found them eventually, though they hid themselves well, not wanting the ignorant bulk of humanity to impinge upon their delicate processes.

I discovered that the wisdom these Men sought was not the wisdom that I sought. Like the Druids, and like every other group I had ever encountered, including the one I myself inaugurated, the Society of Equals, these Men shrunk from confronting the true fount of Wisdom, Sky, and instead retreated back to Mother, back to Earth. They searched for the Philosopher's Stone, which they conjectured would convert all baser metals into gold, a substance which, for reasons I could never understand, they coveted and prized above all other materials in the Earth. What they would do with this gold after they had it in the large quantities which, apparently, they desired, I am to this day at a loss to answer.

In any case, they developed all sorts of methods and protocols, and in the process of trying to change metal to gold, they discovered many Earth reactions that today have been classified under the Science of Chemistry, a descendant of that more ancient art, Alchymie. Another thing which the alchemists attempted to produce, and which was much more in line with mine own goals, was the Elixir of Life, which would grant immortality to whomsoever would drink of it. The alchemists in the Western Countries of Europe were not as advanced in this branch of the Art as were the alchemists in the Asian countries, especially in China. The Chinese alchemists were well on their way to achieving immortality, but unfortunately events beyond their control, political and social events, prevented them from achieving it. I was much impressed with them, however, for they were much more Sky-oriented than any other group of Men I had yet come across. I made it my business to study their philosophies, all the way back to the beginnings of their culture, which had its roots in the dimmest ages of prehistory. They were indeed an advanced race, and I devoted enormous tracts of time to studying their wisdom. I would recommend to thee, dear reader, that thou shouldst study them as well, if thou wish to improve thy knowledge by leaps and by bounds. They Truly were on the road to success before they were sidetracked by the invasion of the West.

While the West, which has overwhelmed the globe with its Womanly civilization, dealt in trivialities and irrelevancies, China, truly a Man-Sky culture, searched for wisdom. It is a sad, sad thing indeed, the triumph of the West, and I mourn the loss of their wisdom from the Earth.

OF THE HOLY GRAIL

I had high hopes of the Holy Grail. It was the legacy of a Man who had come directly from the Sky, if legend told correctly, and if one were to drink from this relic, then one would attain not only immortality, but also transcendent wisdom. I was not interested in the immortality so much as I was in the transcendent wisdom. Surely, this wisdom must come of Sky, being of the Cup which contained the blood of He who was born of Sky.

So, I searched for the Grail, as did many knights before me, although none of them had ever found it. Indeed, it took me several decades of summers to pass before I found it -- hidden away in a long-buried altar room in the deserts of the Near East. It was guarded jealously by an Ogre with a single eye, a very advanced elemental form, more advanced, in fact, than any I had ever before encountered. He could almost have been human, except he possessed only one eye naturally, and thus only half-Vision. I found this discovery intriguing and hope-inspiring. If this Chalice be worthy enough to be guarded by such high power, then surely it must be what I seek! Overcoming the Ogre was a simple task. The Holy Grail may be reached only by those who are dark of heart, and I possessed the darkest heart ever to be born onto the Earth. I brushed the Ogre aside with ease, and entered the cave in which resided the Grail. It was a small chamber, and the Cup a simple one, unadorned, chipped from age, and containing a goodly quantity of Blood. Amazingly, that Blood had ne'er decayed nor rotted, but remained fresh through all the millennia, and this gave me even greater hope than I already had. Eagerly, I quaffed a large portion of the contents of the Grail.

Instantly, I regretted it. This was no Sky potion. This was pure Earth. In incorporating Himself into the figure of a human, this Sky creature had apparently been corrupted by the fleshliness of Woman Earth. He was all Love and Mud, none of the Intellect and Clouds. He was all light, no dark. The liquid in that Cup nearly drowned my poor

dark flower in my heart. I had to fight and fight and struggle mightily in order to preserve my Self from the onslaught of that light and Earth. Oh, what an illusion that Grail was! No wisdom there -- only anti-wisdom, anti-Man, anti-dark, anti-Sky. I do believe that the legends are inaccurate surrounding this figure: he did not come from the Sky, but directly from the bowels of the Earth. He was no Sky-Man, he was Woman-Man. The single fact that he was born solely of Woman, through Virgin Birth (so-called "immaculate" conception; immaculate indeed! spotless clean of all vestige of manly wisdom!) should signal that his origin was not from Sky, but from Earth. Indeed, his influence has been mighty in history, and it is a sad thing, for he has misled Western Civilization into the path of the Woman, and it continues to follow that path to its Doom. I only hope that people might realize the folly soon, that Men might come into greater wisdom and reject the doctrine of that ancient Man.

OF POETRY

Poets were said to possess wisdom. Theirs was a wisdom, purportedly, of which they could not themselves be consciously aware. Theirs was said to come from some secret source, which they could not locate exactly, but which provided them with a direct connection to the divine; this connection being called the Muse. I searched for the Muse, for I wondered if not this Muse was of the Sky; as indeed it seemed to be from all accounts I heard of it.

So I found poets, and they taught me of their Art, and indeed, they were wise in many respects, although a great many of them tended to fall prematurely back to Earth, just as they were about to scale the heights. One poet, however soared high always, and he was Truly of the Sky, and his heart was Truly Dark, and I admired him almost as much as ever I admired any man, almost as much, even, as I admired the Dragon from my youth. I have spoken of this man before, when I treated on geniuses and prodigies. He was such a great man, that if he had known of the wisdom, perhaps he could have grown greater and faster than even I, and there are few in all of History to whom I would attribute greater capacity for wisdom than my Self. His words were words of the Total Language, the language of pre-Birth, which includes all the languages of the World combined and all the languages that were never created as well. It is the language of Creation, and this Man knew the Total Language, had not lost it

when he learned to speak English, the tongue of his native land, but instead discovered how to infuse the Total Language into the limited vocabulary of English. I would not have thought it possible, but this Man managed it, and I stand forever in awe of him for it. Mine own command of the Total Language is almost nil, as indeed, my command of mere English is almost nil!

As I have mentioned, the Muse was the supposed direct channel to Sky, through which one could access the universal wisdom of Sky which I sought. So I listened for this Muse, and I witnessed the creations of this Muse through the artistry of the poets I communed with, but I never was able to communicate with it. No matter how hard I tried, it just would not happen, I listened and listened, but the Muse remained to me mute. It seems that the Muse will speak only to those who were born to hear it, and all else are on their own when it comes to creating from language. I suspect that the Poet I admire was not a product of the Muse, for his creations were more transcendent than anything I ever saw come through the Muse. I suspect that this Man was tapped into some power greater even than the Muse, and I suspect that this power was none other than the overwhelming darkness of his Self. To thy Self be True!

OF MUSIC

Music, as well as poetry, was supposedly subject to a power similar to that of the Muse. This Muse, however was different in several important respects from that of the Poetry. For one thing, it was more pure; that is, it did not need to be filtered through the medium of language; it came directly from the dark flower of the heart, and only needed a physical instrument on Earth to find voice. Thus, when Music was made, it struck deep into the dark heart of whomever was listening to it.

As I have mentioned, the third time in my life that I wept was when I heard the music of He of the heavens. I spoke of him in my treatment of geniuses and prodigies. His music touched directly the dark flower of my heart, and indeed made it bloom into transcendent Sky for just a brief span. I was transported into the womb of my Conception again, and felt close to me the wisdom for which I longed and searched all my life. Then, the Music stopped, and I was back in the world of mundanity and illusory light. Music was almost

entirely a product of Sky. It was transmitted through the air; it was a product of intellect and mind; it made Beauty an abstract form, which is the ultimate goal of Beauty -- to be shapeless and physically indistinguishable, to be a product purely of mind and Sky. Indeed, Music provided such Beauty in abundance, and I was enamoured of it for quite a great while. I spent years and years learning how to produce the sounds, and how to compose them together so that they became a whole greater than the sum of its parts, and which sounds were the ones to touch which notes within the human brain, so that the mind might be transported as I had been transported when listening to that sublime Man's Creation, and I attempted to create such Music, but the craft was beyond my powers. I endeavored extensively, for I sensed that in Music lay potential for wisdom untapped even by that greatest master of them all, but apparently that potential would remain untapped, by me at least, for much like Poetry, there seemed to be those who possessed the gift, and those who did not, and those who did not could try and try until their faces turned blue, but they would ne'er produce the divine Music which they sought so desperately. I fear that in present times, the Art of Music has been lost, I hope not forever, but only temporarily; but nowadays the Art consists of loudness and simplicity, not the divine sort of simplicity, but the simple-minded sort, the unimaginative sort. The great master certainly has not yet been matched; no one has come anywhere near close to doing such a thing. Perhaps thou, gentle reader, shalt be the one to surpass that Man's genius.

Perhaps not.

TREATING OF SEED

My adventures on the Earth continued, and I saw no end to them in sight. Hundreds of summers had I witnessed, and still the wisdom eluded me. I remembered back to that fateful day when I had drunk of my dead mother's milk, and I was struck with another thought: what about the seed of Men? Surely, if anything should deliver wisdom, it should be the very essence of Man himself! His seed! Eagerly, I produced seed and fed it to my Self, and waited for the results, but surprisingly, little wisdom flowed forth. 'Twas a mere trickle, really, not gushing and abundant like the product of the womb's teats. Perhaps, I thought, it is the amount; I need to drink in

much larger quantities, and so I embarked to procure large quantities of that item.

Thou must marvel at the effort required in such an endeavor. I travelled the world over, drinking the seed from as many Men as I could find; I had never abducted Men for my studies before, Women and Children, yes, but never Men. It was a different experience with them. They resisted much more aggressively and fiercely than the Women or Children had. The Women and Children had almost accepted their plight as simply another obstacle on the path of life, but the Men, they could not accept anything. They bucked and screamed to no end, so that it was much more difficult to collect the seed than it had been to collect the milk all those centuries ago. I managed it, though, with my great reserves of patience and optimism, as well as time, and I derived some interesting and unique wisdom from my consumption of the Seed of Man. I discovered that this seed was really nothing more than Earth, mixed with a little bit of Sky. The Sky it was that provided the possibility of fertilization, but it was Earth which drew the seed to the feminine, which like a magnet attracted the seed into the womb of Woman where it could mingle with her Earth eggs and produce her Earth babies. Within the seed, there was a perpetual battle between the opposing forces of Sky and Earth. They were equally matched, and it was even odds which one would triumph. If Sky was victorious, then the Child produced of that particular seed would be a Man; if Earth, then a Woman. In some rare cases, neither Earth nor Sky were victorious, and peculiar in-betweens were produced, or else combinations of both. These abominations were safely ignored, though, for they were rare enough that they might as well be nonexistent. In general, the battle between Sky and Earth raged on.

What was most interesting about the seed was that it tasted of the Sea. In its form, it was some hybrid of Ocean, but I could never discover exactly by what mechanism it was produced, nor why it was produced in such a peculiar manner. These understandings I leave to thee, dear gentle reader, to undertake after I am gone.

TREATING OF PAIN

I joined a group of penitents who claimed that only through worldly pain and suffering could transcendence be reached. I thought this

promising because if thou mightst pain thy Earthly body enough, perhaps thou wouldst pay more attention to nonEarthly things, just to avoid the pain. So I acquired a long board with a nail hammered through the end of it, and smacked myself with it all over my body, leaving hundreds of agonizing gushing wounds. I took a razor blade and sliced my skin so that every inch of my surface was coated with shiny copper blood. I took white-hot pins and plunged them into my eyeballs. I stood on my head at the tip of a sword for weeks on end. I introduced angry red ants into my fundament and let them crawl about my intestines devouring as they swarmed through. I stuck bone-pins through my cheeks and through various other muscles throughout my body. I peeled the skin from my face and poured acid on the bare muscle that was thus exposed. I set fire to my fingertips and toes. I performed every action imaginable which might cause me intensest pain and suffering.

For years I proceeded thus, each year experiencing greater and more profound pain than the previous year, and indeed, often I was sent into states of consciousness which I never before had explored, for my Earthly body, when it discovered a pain it was not equipped to deal with, would eject my consciousness into alien stratospheres where the concept of Self became extremely malleable and almost untenable. I felt my mind stretch, and my intellect quiver, and images would race past, inchoate, unformed images that nevertheless would produce a deep, yet passionless, reaction in me. There would be shapes, strange floating geometries which did not follow any formal laws of shape as had been formulated on Earth in ancient times. There would be bouncing triangles and rotating circles and green squares and fuzzy rhombuses and irregular shapes of all kinds and they would all be whizzing about and buzzing and tootling and choking and coughing and chortling, etcetera, &c. This chaos belonged entirely to Sky, yet there was some quality to it that did not fit in, that implied some other existence, some alien energy that, rather than being helpful to my wisdom, was instead detrimental. I still am not sure from what source came those chaotic forms, but I suspect that it defies rational analysis, at least any that could be constructed within the framework of this reality. The pain, I decided, sent me to realms that I did not desire to explore, that indeed frightened me uncomfortably, and so I rejected it in the end. Extremes -- pain, pleasure; they did not produce desirable results. Neutrality, it seemed, was the key to unlocking the mysteries of Sky -- nonemotion, nonfear, nondesire. I attempted to achieve these attributes, and if thou doth think them easy to acquire, then I

challenge thee to do it for thyself, and then perhaps thou wilt discover just how difficult it can be!

OF RELIGION

Most of humanity seemed to be involved in some religion or another, and many religions promised Heaven, which was another way of referring to Sky. I always investigated a religion whenever I discovered it, but usually, it would turn out to be a secret worshiper of the Mud and the Earth, and not Heaven, as it proclaimed, not Sky, not Cloud.

The Christian Church, especially, was a complete illusion in this respect. It spoke continually of Heaven, of that which comes after death, after life, it proclaimed that Sky would come, but only *after*. Meanwhile, one must worship the Earth, one must satisfy oneself with the Mud, indeed, one must wallow in the Mud, and although it was not pleasure nor pain that one sought, it was something worse -- abnegation of Self. This, of course, is the exact opposite of everything that I know to be True. My wisdom is quite firm in its foundation of Self as the most important concept in the Universe: Truth is the fundamental solipsism of Life. What I sought was Sky, *during* life, not *after*, and so Christianity, I knew almost from the beginning of my life, was not the way to wisdom.

The purpose of religion, I divined over a long period of time, is to deflect the questions of Sky because its proprietors cannot find satisfactory answers within a short period of time; and people want to know, they want the wisdom within their lifetime, they want it handed to them on a silver platter; they believe that the ancients possessed the wisdom, and all they have to do is to listen to the ancients and they, too, will be endued with that wisdom. People require assurance that their lives are not meaningless, that the things they do on this Earth will not fade to nothing after they are gone from the Earth. People require to hear that they are immortal, that this Earthly existence which they enjoy so much is only the beginning of a long cycle of Life, which will continue beyond material death. They do not want to have to exert effort within their lifetimes, to have to find wisdom for themselves; they want to believe that the wisdom will be delivered to them, as soon as they have hurdled the mystery of death. People are basically lazy; they do

not tend to their dark flower in their hearts, and they let it wilt in favor of light, which flows from religion. They learn to associate light with sky, rather than its True affiliate, darkness.

I, being wiser than any man who ever trod the Earth, can assure thee that if thou art religious, then thou hast been swindled, and that if thou doth Truly desire to gain wisdom, then thou must search thy heart for some shred of darkness, and if thou canst find it, then thou must needs tend to it carefully, to preserve it, and let it bloom into a dark flower like mine. Then wilt thou develop an independent Self, one that does not rely on false religion to validate its existence, one that verily answers only to thee, one that will guide thee True in times of crisis and of peace, in times of joy and of sorrow, in times of company and of solitude. Seek Truth within thy Self, and thou wilt prosper, and perhaps even discover some goodly amount of wisdom.

TREATING OF ASTROLOGY

I had a great and voracious interest in Astrology, for this was the science which dealt with the positions and influences of the Stars themselves. Much wisdom did I discover within tomes of astrology. According to the astrologers, Men were governed by the alignments and positions of the Stars, their Earthly emotions and behaviours determined by the interactions of heavenly bodies and crystal spheres.

I roamed the globe, and where'er I discovered indications of astrological investigations, I would stop and, with much enthusiasm, inquire into the local methodologies and protocols, to see if they had found out anything about the Stars which astrologers the world over had not yet noticed. I found that the Chinese astrologers, as with the alchemists, were far more advanced and superior in their thinking to their Western counterparts. Their imaginations were not confined to the petit worldly arguments and aspirations to which the Western astrologers devoted so much of their time and energies. These Chinese, they were interested in the Sky for the sake of the Sky itself. Of course, they were equally interested in Earth for the sake of Earth herself, and that did not sit well with my philosophy -- as thou canst imagine, dear reader! I did pay special heed to their Sky teachings, however, and learned much wisdom from them in that

respect.

Although, to be fair, there were several aspects of their philosophies which I found to be inferior with respect to the Western mode: they waxed much on the uses of astrology in divining the future, whilst the Western astrologers utilized the stars to investigate the properties of Man and his personality: a much superior application. For the future of the world is but an inconsequential and insignificant thing to know, for indeed, we know that *something* will happen, and what matter the particulars? But the study of mankind, that is noble and purposeful, and truly of benefit, for Man is universal and perpetual, and always a mystery ripe for explication. I found that I could derive the greatest benefit by approaching the stars from the Chinese viewpoint, but then apprehending their meanings in the Western way.

Thus, I learned much wisdom from the stars, for they directed my explorations into unexpected paths and byways, and provided insight into questions which I had heretofore considered unanswerable, and also into questions which I thought I had answered, but discovered to be more complex and subtle in their manifestations than I had previously understood. Thou might find much wisdom in the stars, dear reader, but I advise thee to be careful, for they can mislead as well, if thou dost not interpret their strange ambiguities correctly. If thou canst keep thy head and not let thyself wander afield into obscurity and arcana, then thou wilt be successful in astrological dealings, but remember -- the influences of the stars are complex and subtle, so be sure to check thy calculations several times, or the wisdom thou wilt collect will be false and misdirecting.

TREATING OF PHILOSOPHY

I, of course, am not the only person in history to attempt to define and describe the Universe. Many people feel the irresistible urge (and let me assure thee, irresistible it be!) to expand their minds into the cosmos and see if they can encompass it all within the scope of their intellects and powers of consciousness. I have succeeded in this beyond the wildest dreams of all the philosophers of history, and indeed, their efforts have only rarely, if ever, proved insightful and worthy of my attention. More often, their theories and speculations have been worthy of naught else but a good laugh.

For example, and this be but an extreme case, one man declared that the human babe, upon entering into the world from the land of womb, is absolutely devoid of knowledge, that the babe is, as he called it, "a blank slate" upon which may be writ all the experience of the world which that babe doth encounter throughout its lifetime, the slate accruing in information only that by which it could be inscribed with its five Earthbound, material senses! So far from the Truth is this, that it is indeed the exact opposite! As I have already described, we are conceived with all the wisdom and knowledge that there is to be had, within the darkness of the womb, and it is only upon entry into the world that the great bulk of this wisdom is lost to the elements of Dame Earth. Childhood is the process of losing information about the Sky in order to gain information about the Earth. In order to reacquire as much of this Sky wisdom as can be discovered in his lifetime, the babe must learn to seek knowledge beyond that which he can receive with his five Earthly senses. The analogy of the slate is more appropriate as follows: the babe is born into the world with a slate filled with dark Sky wisdom, which is then erased by the light of Sun and Moon and replaced with Earth knowledge.

There was another philosopher, this one of an ancient breed (and I sometimes wonder if not he himself was the Lunatic, of whom thou shalt soon hear much, for his ideas are uncannily close to what did shriek forth from the sharpened, moveless lips of that Monster in the Moon -- but no, he cannot be, for his design is too contrived and ignores, or at least does not account for, the essence of Quiddity... but I jump ahead of myself! First things first!). This philosopher conceived that in the universe there is *matter* and there is *form*: matter the undifferentiated stuff which precedes its naturally unfolding form. Matter lies uphill from form, for it rolls downward, englobing and molding into something recognizable, something to which we men can assign with our senses the *name* -- that is, the thing which ultimately confines this unconfined stuff that is matter. Of course, there are varying levels of matter and form. One thing's matter is another's form. The beaten pulp of the bark is the *matter* of the *form* known as "paper," which is the page on which thou readest these words, but concurrent and simultaneous with this condition, it is also the *form* of the bark itself. This sort of linear, causal perpetuity obtains in all relationships between objects which beget each other -- and since every *formed* object in the Universe is the daughter of some less developed *matter*, it follows that all things must ultimately beget from an original *matter*, a matter that is

infinitely formless (this is roughly analagous to the Lunatic's Haecietas, of which, if thou art patient, thou wilt soon know much). In any case, according to this ancient man's reasoning, I am the higher, more complexly organized *form* of the simple, protoplasmic *matter* which was my embryonic self, the womb-encased infant of the pre-Birth. Now I know that in fact, the exact opposite is True -- that in my before-Birth condition, I was possessed of *greater* wisdom and *greater* complexity than I am in the Today which blinds my Truth-vision. The refutation of this ancient guru, to whom all the philosophers of the world seem to flock like children to the flashing colour of a twaddling, bright-painted clown, is thus simple, and I shudder to contemplate the influence he has exerted on a mediocre, undiscerning humanity.

But I do not wish to analyze and destroy *every* piddling philosopher, for there is not the space if I wish soon to get to the True Meat of my life, which is the main purpose in my having these memoirs writ and copied for the world at its leisure to engorge (or disgorge if that be its desire, and who can say but that that be the fate I foresee most probable, judging from my past experience of Man's obduracy and His groaning inertia against Truth). So I will simply assure thee that all philosophers the world has known are but children before my True knowledge, and I may dispose of them now with a single breath. For I wish to move on to a particular breed of philosopher which annoys me to no end: the Scientist. The scientists are a most peculiar bunch, whom I can fathom in no respect. They seek knowledge in backward fashion, and turn to the exact wrong source, and thus are one of the most dangerously ignorant groups in the world. First, they believe, and I have never been able to understand the convoluted logic which motivates this strange conception, that in order to attain wisdom, thou must observe the *effects*, and from them, deduce the *causes*! What addlebrained reasoning is this?! From *effects*, thou mayst deduce any system thou doth wish to deduce, for any of a great number of various causes may be responsible; it is simply a matter of choosing which cause is the most convenient and comfortable for thee to contemplate. If thou dost wish to know the *causes* of phenomena that thou dost observe, then thou must go directly to the source itself, not dance and skirt about its edges like shy, uncertain schoolchildren at a picnic festivity!

The other folly of Science, as thou mightst have guessed by now, is that it venerates the Earth as the source of wisdom, which is totally

backwards and the exact opposite of Truth. The Sky is the fount of all True wisdom, and Men are misled and guided away from wisdom by the wiles of feminine Earth. Scientists devote every bit of their attention to material phenomena, and ignore all knowledge which comes their way of Sky or darkness. They believe that light is the medium by which wisdom is gained, and thus they subject everything to light in order to elucidate meaning (and succeed, of course, in *eliminating* it). A thing must be examined in light rather than understood in dark, and of the caprice of light they know nothing. They do not realize that light is subject to shadow, and therefore trickery and illusion, and they draw conclusions from the events they observe in light, which are dangerously inaccurate. For example, they discover the minutest forms of organic organization, and decide, quite arbitrarily, that these forms are the architectural design for life, and they start to monkey with these forms, hoping to alter the nature of life itself, and eventually to apply these principles to Man, and to improve Him through "enlightened" manipulation of Nature. Of course, what they fool with could easily destroy them, and all of mankind as well, but they heed this possibility not.

Whereas the philosophers are content to observe and speculate, the scientists burn with the wish to *change* the world. They do not attempt to understand. They have barely understood a principle before they are already mucking around with it, smearing it with Mud, and hoping that this will "improve" upon it. What do they think is going to become of the world if they exert so many changes upon it? Earth, even if inferior to Sky, is nonetheless stable. It plays host to Man's body, but if Man introduces instability into the system, then he is, as they say, "playing with fire," for Earth may decide to reject Man in order to regain its former balance with itself. The Scientists, with their clumsy, backwards logic and foolish disregard for the consequences of their methods, are indeed a dangerous breed, and it would behoove us all if they should disappear from the Universe forever. I am all in favor of their expurgation.

Although the materialists and the scientists did direct their imaginations in misguided fashions, there were a few men who did speak of some Truth. These were the men who pondered on the nature of Man, and the purpose of Man, and the wisdom of Man. Throughout the ages, there have been lone voices such as these, and recently, their words have been gaining notice and attraction on the Earth, so that I am glad to see that not all is doomed to Mud and degeneration. These voices speak of the wonder of Self, the magick

that must not be suppressed, the far reaching possibilities of transcendence, the *a priori* nature of manly wisdom, the infinite range of wisdom which is contained in the human spirit and which may be perceived if only one dares peer inward. These men took to their bosoms that which I have spoken of throughout these confessions: if nowhere else, at least see that Truth lies at the foundation and core of thy Self! If thou dost perpetrate falsity upon thine own Self, then thou art on a sure path to annihilation. This conception was grasped by these thinkers of whom I speak, and they played with them and manipulated them in the worldly way which men seem hard put to avoid (for the wiles of Woman Earth are many and splendoured and near impossible to flee -- even I, who am so aware of Her dangers, have spent most of my existence entranced with Her products and Her Mud, as thou, dear gentle reader, hast seen clearly, and wilt see yet further, in these, my last confessions!), and in the end, they produced some remarkable ideas, remarkable in that they were the wildest departure from Woman Earth yet seen in human history.

These men proclaimed that Man is the triumphant creature of Self, that no other creature can boast of such awareness and consciousness of Self as He, and that therefore, He is capable of transcendence beyond the mere Mud and dirt of Earth. This of course, I was happy to hear; finally, were my fellow Men learning to separate themselves from degeneration and ignominy among the Women and Mud of Earth, to raise themselves up to the level of Sky, to dream of higher existence and more profound reality. Of course, their newfound wisdom was not all free of folly; for still, they persisted in associating transcendence with light, when truly it is associated with dark, and they did not look into their hearts to find their wisdom, but into their brains. Instead of tending the dark gardens of their hearts, they sprinkled the dewy lawns of their moralities; and they failed to see the most transcendent bit of wisdom of them all, even though its harbinger slept in their very beds: Woman, sensual pleasure, Mud, all the products of the Earth; these are the blocks in the roads to Sky and Self. It is ironic, whene'er I think on it: that the philosophers were half-right when they looked to Self for wisdom; the religions half-right when they looked to Sky for wisdom. Yet no Man but me ever found the Truth, which is that Self and Sky must be combined if thou wilt discover the True path to wisdom: that is, thou must discover the True Sky which overarches thine own dark garden -- the Aurora Spectralis (which glimmers most mirthfully and mischievously plays its photoglobular rain-pellets upon the leaves of

thy flourishing flowers, countersetting their inherent darkness with its piercing antithesis, and thus sparking into preternatural clarity the simultaneous noon and twilight of True reality) will not be replicated in the Sky of any man's heart but thine own, and to seek the Spectral Lights in another is to destroy the uniqueness and Truthfulness of thine own, thus preventing thee from any further attainment to wisdom than the pale yellow, reflective, unpleasing, dull-metal shadows of thy mentor's regurgitations and excrescences: that is to say, for the literal-minded, thou wilt continually sip the juice of his rejected, half-swallowed gristle and lick the diseased sap of his oozing bunions, eventually wasting away into a space-inhabited husk, fragile and dusty with eyes that stare endlessly into darkened Skies. I tell thee this in preface to the horror which shortly is to come in Part the Second. Here, encapsulated, is the exegesis of my message to thee, the *raison d'etre* of these my Confessions; I give thee this proviso, which may protect thee from the philosophical desolation within which thou -- if thou be sensitive -- most certainly wilt soon find thyself:

Seek thy wisdom within, for thou wilt find it nowhere else.

PART TWO

DELVING FINALLY INTO THE MEAT OF THESE CONFESSIONS

Perhaps thou hast thought me wandering the Earth, dear reader, without base or direction, with only my limited wisdom and knowledge to guide me. Well, thou art correct. This is exactly the condition I existed in for most of the years of my life. I have described some of the progressions and meanderings of my thoughts during these years of wandering, so that I might prepare thee for the True Meat of these confessions.

What?! thou dost ask! The True Meat? Here we are so far into this tome, and it was all merely a preliminary to the *True Meat*? I assure thee, if thou art not already convinced by the thinness of the volume which thou must hold in thy hands, that this True Meat, although forever long in life, will prove brief in these, my confessions. I shall not elaborate too fully, but only enough to convey the heart and soul of the Confessions, enough to achieve my Purpose in writing these memoirs of my life, and no more than that. I wish the world to understand, to some degree, the condition of my life. If perhaps, some small wisdom may be imparted from me to the rest of mankind, then my Purpose will be vindicated and I will rest content. I beg thee, gentle reader, that when thou dost come to parts of my story that do make thee laugh with incredulity, or scoff with scorn that I would try to swindle thee of thy good faith, please do hold back thy most immediate reaction, and do reserve thy harsh judgment; for I declare, with every reservoir of integrity, honesty, and candor in my rich, abundant, dark soul, that every thing which I say is Truth, and nothing less nor more, but simple Truth.

Hear me, oh World! I tell thee Truth: do not shrink from it! I bear thee Wisdom: do not close thy head to it! I bring thee the Fruit of ageless wandering and endless toil: do not let it rot! For the course thou art currently embarked upon will end inevitably in Doom, and thou wilt be much clearer in this knowledge after I have imparted the True Meat of my Confessions; after I have related to thee the substance of the Hundred Year Dream, which I fell into for reasons soon to be elucidated. I die; and the choices of Man *now* will have

much impact and importance in the *future*. Therefore, it is good to take stock of thy wisdom, and to discard that folly which has been so dangerously accumulating over centuries and millennia of history. But let me tell thee of the Hundred Year Dream That Was No Dream.

OF THE HUNDRED YEAR SLUMBER AND THE DREAM THAT WAS NO DREAM

Ages had I wandered the Earth, gathering wisdom and knowledge of the world, and there came a time when I began to feel that I was nearing the point of exhaustion -- not mine own, but rather of the resources of the world. I was nearing the limits of Earthly wisdom, and I began to wonder what lay beyond, or if I would ever be privy to such a thing. It was at this time that I descended into that Sleep which was to last for a hundred years, and which would reveal to me, in the form of a Dream, many secrets of the Universe which it would be impossible to gather on this Earth. I would also learn of Other things, as thou wilt soon discover.

At first, I was frightened of the drowsiness which began to depress, urgent and incumbent, upon my senses: always had I been a master of mine own body, except in those rare and extreme cases where control was lost, and to be subject to a force such as this, alien and invasive, was the greatest affront to my sensibilities and understandings. It could not be helped, however, and I soon succumbed. I awoke within a Dream, and I knew it was a Dream, and yet, *this was no Dream*; and so it was a Dream, and simultaneously it was not a Dream, and within its own context, this seeming dichotomy remained perfectly logical and reasonable, and there was no conflict betwixt the two realities.

Within this Dream, I arose from deep Slumber and found myself upon a path which led into dense fog and swirling mist. The world around me I could not discern, for there was me and there was the path, and all about these two items eddied and whorled the restless, whitely turbid, impenetrable vapors. I trod many steps along this path, and it never bent nor diverged from its course nor forked into decision: straight and true to its purpose did it remain, the efficient and unwasteful connection of two points in space. Finally, I came to a great staircase, which ascended beyond the scope of my vision,

disappearing amongst thick, billowing clouds. Standing before this staircase was a little man with golden buttons on his trousers and silver buttons upon his hat. He greeted me with stern disregard and presented me with the terms of gaining access to the staircase. I was to solve the riddle which he would recite, and then I would be deemed worthy to ascend and allowed to pass. If I answered incorrectly, then I would be turned back, and must make my way upon the Earth once more, until my wisdom proved great enough that I might return and try again. Here is the riddle he spoke:

*It is dark, yet light;
It shines at night--
Yet beyond sight,
When light is might.*

Hast thou solved this riddle, gentle reader? Indeed, thou hast, for it be absurdly simple, like those of my childhood youth. I inquired from the guardian of the staircase why this might be, but he merely repeated the riddle and awaited my answer. Promptly, I replied (and correctly, too): *The Moon*.

And thus did I gain access to that Stairway which leads to the Moon. The guardian of the Stairway informed me that it consisted of a million and one steps, and so my journey up would be a long and arduous one. Also, as I ascended, the steps would disappear behind me, so that there would be no way back down; I could never rest, either, or the step upon which I stopped would disappear, plummeting me back down to Earth and likely breaking my body into splinters and fleshly strips. Nevertheless, I mounted the stairs with eagerness and anticipation, for I perceived that here, finally, I would come into True Wisdom, of a kind I never before had encountered. The steps were wide enough to admit my feet, but not much wider than that, and there were no walls on either side, nor railings, nor support of any sort. There was void, empty, infinite abyss, and if I should lose my balance or trip, I should not have much margin within which to rectify my clumsiness. Despite this, I remained ebullient and joyful, and I trod extremely careful to avoid accident, and I counted each step, and was forever subtracting this increasing number from the total number of a million and one, and forever taking the percentage of my progress up the stairway, and always energetic and sanguine and full sure of the inevitability of Full Wisdom, which I felt was to come almost immediately upon my attainment of the million and first step. I envisioned a parade of grandeur awaiting me at the summit, headed by a mighty celestial

being, who upon my arrival, would produce a Crown of Knowledge and place it upon my head, and pronounce me into the pantheon of immortal gods. I would sit upon my Eternal Throne, and all would be darkness; not one errant ray of Sunlight nor one stray beam of Moonlight would e'er besmirch my perfect world, and I would bask in the bliss of eternity.... As thou canst see clearly, I had constructed quite a great number of fantasies for myself! These, of course, were to be ultimately disappointed; for they were the dreams of an imperfect being, and as such, were imperfect in themselves, and therefore, they were not representative of True Wisdom, but rather of a misguided and unworthy perception. I did stumble but once during my climb, and that was on the five hundred and seventy-two thousandth step; a fall from such an exalted height would have taken many minutes to terminate, and thou canst imagine the seething oils and acids within my bowels after that incident! In any case, eventually I reached the top of that illustrious stairway, and did gaze out upon the alien vista of the Moon, and it was like no Earthly landscape I had e'er before seen.

'Twas dark and eerie on the Moon, and the horizon seemed distant and desolate, with infinite blackness rising from the rim of the world. The stars did not twinkle in the Sky; instead, they sat stony and silent in their celestial niches, watching sullenly from above, devoid of all the personality they did pour down upon the surface of the Earth. I did wonder something marvelous about this; for, why should the stars change character from one world to another? Perhaps when they did look upon the Earth, they did sparkle with merriment, yet when they turned their eyes Moonward, they did lose their amusement and did suddenly feel serious.

The ground was barren and of greenish tinge, dusty, spongy and still. I walked across this ground, and I felt almost floating and quite giddy, for the Moon does pull thee to its center with much less insistence than does the Earth. Silence shrouded this place, and gloom, and loneliness. Even in the deepest, darkest caves of Earth, thou wilt feel the presence of something -- some immense, formless personality which permeates the atmosphere and even the rock; the collective, feminine soul. Here, on the Moon, all was solitude and silence, and if ever thou wouldst feel truly alone, it would be here. I felt an instant kinship and attachment to this place, for this isolation from all ego and all alien consciousness, this seclusion from all company but Self, this dark void and expansive abyss; this was what I had sought on Earth for centuries and centuries of years, and never

had found, except within the dark womb of my mother before she did spit me out into the light.

I walked upon this lonely surface and pondered deeply concerning my purpose here, the meaning of this unique environment, the wisdom to be found in such barren landscape. After all, here was something close to darkness, and close to featureless, and close to unpopulated; and yet I did not feel comfortable here. I felt a growing sense of uneasiness, as if something important was wrong, something fundamental was out of alignment with the way it should be, and I could not discern what it was, no matter how urgently I directed my perception. And then I understood: this place lay outside all Spheres of Nature. There was no Earth (of which I rejoiced), and yet there was no Sky, either. There was no Ocean, for that matter. Somehow, this Moon existed without any of these: the ground on which I walked was not Earth; the black dome in which the stars glowered was not Sky; and the thick fog through which I had ascended was left behind, now not a trace of moisture. There was no air to breathe, no life to commune with, no sense of the Unity of the Universe. This was the landscape of the Moon, and it did chill my soul from the inside to the out.

OF THE TRIUMVIRATE OF TOWERS

Since the stairway to this place had disappeared with every step upward, there was no way to descend back to Earth, and so I was trapped here forever, or until I could devise a way out. So I wandered for ninety-nine years, and did cross the desolation that was the Moon over much of its surface. Sometimes, I did fancy that I heard sounds, but I could not be sure, and besides, how could there be sounds when there was no atmosphere in which they could be transmitted to my ears? The sounds I learned the reason for at a later time, and will tell thee of them in due course.

I did become paranoid and just a bit mad during this time because the darkness of this place did confuse me mightily. I had always thought of dark as the exaltation of Self, but this dark was of a different mode, that is, it represented the annihilation of Self. I could feel it constantly, working on me, eating away at the edges of my sanity, nibbling tirelessly and with perpetual hunger at my very identity; worming into my brain, parting its matter like cheese and

squeezing it of its vital juice. I felt desperate indeed, for I feared for the safety, not merely of my wisdom and knowledge, but of my soul. I will not tell thee of the torment I suffered, nor of the gnawing anguish, nor the searing agonies in my eyes and in my guts, nor the continual thirsting of my dark flower in my heart for the nourishment of Self which was instead being drawn steadily away by that invasive anti-dark that was the Moon. Thou canst imagine such things for thyself, and simply let it be known that this was not a happy time for me, and indeed it was a time of serious questioning as to the desirability of wisdom if its pursuit would lead me into such dire circumstances as these. (And indeed, I did curse and furie, trying to awaken from this Dream That Was No Dream, but being impotent to do so -- I knew, somehow, that the only way to wake up was to return to Earth and revisit my body.)

In any case, after ninety-nine long years of wandering across the Moon, I did finally come upon an immense structure: a triumvirate of towers. I would have been shocked at the sight if not I had been so apathetic due to that erosion of my soul and Self by the oppressive anti-dark of the Moon. Nowhere in this entire world was there any evidence of intelligence or habitation (except for the sounds I sometimes imagined I heard), yet here I was looking upon the massive, magnificent belier of all I had seen or conjectured. I stood for a long time considering these towers (the processes of mind were slow in this thought-nullifying, entropic Moon), and finally, I decided to investigate.

Each tower was exactly the same as its companions in its outward appearance, there being no distinguishable difference either in volume, mass, height, or ornamentation. Each stood tall and mighty, and was the size of an Earth mountain, except that these were clearly of artificial design -- no random Nature here. Utterly featureless and smooth their walls were, without decoration or embellishment of any kind. The triumvirate formed an equilateral triangle, with the vertices being approximately twenty miles apart from each other. Set at the base of each tower there was a door, and to the nearest one I strode, and tried the handle. It turned with ease and admitted me into the interior with not one groan of displeasure or insolence emitting from its hinges.

I will attempt to describe what I found in there, but Truly, such defies the mechanical abilities and finite understandings of mere speech: not even the painted whores of Babylon could comprehend the cacophony and frenzied tumult I discovered therein. Whirling

chaos; flashing, glimmering, harsh, garish, soft, sweeping, varicoloured light light light; screams of pain, screams of delight, high-pitched screams that shattered the ear-drums, low, pitiful moans that split the heart; laughter, shrill and discordant, sweet and melodic, unrestrained, pitiless, relentless, implacable; cries of pain and suffering, screechings beyond despair; perverted and unholy ululations from the deepest founts of bloody lungs; sweet, cloying, sickening smells and scents, perfumes and sweats, fecund and rotting flower petals; sounds of weeping and distress, sounds of exaltation and pleasure beyond reckoning; slurping sounds, snortings, groanings, wallowings, swarmings, buzzings, chortlings, sizzlings; swooping winged bats, birds with heads of men, men with heads of insects, insects with heads of women, women with heads of black flowers; copulating, fornicating, unions between beast and woman, man and babe, beast and babe, couplings of every imaginable permutation and position; above all the shrieking madness, the anarchy, the confusion, clamor, uproar, bedlam, pandemonium, tempest, muscled winds, whirling, swirling, swimming, curling, snapping, clapping, slamming, cramming, breath-stealing, forced kneeling, breast revealing, without ceiling; infinity up and infinity down, no end in sight, no end in mind, eternal corruption, eternal delight, eternal Mud, eternal Earth, eternal disgust, eternal damnation, eternal swill, eternal nectar, Eternity and Horror.

I cannot describe this Tower; its sensations were too varied, too profound, too much of *wordless* and too little of *word*. Let it be known simply that this Tower was the Tower of Earth, and its treasures (if that what they be called) were of the kind to make my gorge rise to my throat and sunder my head in twain in effort to splatter upon the ground of this harlot Babylon; this purified, undiluted, most potent extract of Earth; this odious prototypical paradigm of light, Woman, Mud. I cried out in anguish and desolation, for here was the stuff of all my nightmares, condensed and refined into wretched, wicked, apocalyptic insanity.

The door which had closed behind me of its own volition would not let me out again. I was trapped in this nightmare, this vivid unreality which was in fact the concentration of everything that *is* reality, the accumulation together of that which normally would exist far apart and unrelated. Whores commingled with priests, oxen with fairies, straw with wheat, corpulence with want, piety with demonism, long with short, single with many: opposites and natural born enemies

were here cheerful companions; for explicit, known to all, and therefore acceptable, was the knowledge that they every one was sprung from the same source, that their individual corporeal manifestations were but window dressing, superficial and unimportant surface distinctions, and that really they all were Mud Mud Mud, Earth Earth Earth; and they all therefore were perfectly happy, indeed grateful, for their adversaries and their allies, alike. The whirlwinds of chaos and depredation swirled blithe and unabated, secure in the knowledge of their safety and uninterrupted frolicsome amusements and pleasures here in the bowels of the Tower of Earth.

A woman with heavy applications of kohl about her dark eyes and powdered rouge upon her cheeks approached me and leered seductively and did brandish her teats at me, and not in a mammary fashion, but rather in a degenerate Earthly fashion; and all my disgust and all my horror at the cosmopolitan corruption and wickedness in which I found myself immersed came surging up within me like the gorge I had so recently dispelled upon the sandy floor of this Tower; and I drew back my hand and swiped it with all musterable force across her gaping, sneering maw and broke in twain the delicate bones of her cheeks and spilt, to mingle with my gorge on the floor, much blood from her head. Suddenly, the swirling chaos halted and abrupt silence echoed through the Tower, perhaps the first such instance since the moment of its inception. Every depraved Earthly thing in that Tower did look upon the profanity I had perpetrated within those sacred walls of this Tower of Earth. And for the first time in my life did I know True Fear, for the preternatural silence of these creatures of Mud and Earth, who normally were so boisterous and without pause for thought or feeling other than that of pleasure or pain or whatever took hold for the passing moment; this purpose-filled silence did more than unnerve me, for it derived absolutely against the grain of their existence and consciousness: even *they* held something sacred, and that one thing I had ground beneath my contemptuous heel. That moment of silence seemed to me to stretch out for ever and for ever, and it seemed to me that I saw into the eyes of every creature that did inhabit that enormity of space that was the interior of the Tower of Earth, and it seemed to me that I saw in those eyes the purest, vilest hatred. And then, the silence ended, and they all descended upon me at once; and they had *teeth*.

OF THE LUNATIC

If this had not been a Dream, surely I would have perished here, for all the concentrated fury of Earth was being poured upon me without mercy or relent; but instead, it was a Dream, and so I suffered the torments thus inflicted without the relief of Death or loss of consciousness (for thou knowst that one cannot Truly sleep within a Dream, and that I had not once paused for sleep nor rest in all my Moonly wanderings these past ninety-nine years); and I moaned and pleaded and disregarded every shred of my dignity, for it seemed to me that never, in all the future history of the Universe, would this sharp-toothed agony desist nor diminish in intensity, and that indeed, the tortures would only grow worse and more horrible with the passing of Time upon this barren, lifeless Moon. And for what seemed an eternity, I did writhe and spasm under the weight of Earth which did press despicably and with razor malice down and up and from the sides and all around me.

And then I was no longer in the Tower of Earth, but rather in a dark, dark chamber, which was hollow and echoed silence so that it reverberated in my eardrums and did make them ring with continuous, piercing tones. The demons of Earth were nowhere to be seen nor heard, and I felt raptures to match the pains which now were eliminated. There was, sitting on a throne in this room, a large man; not a man, but something else; not an elemental, not an Angel, not a man nor woman; but I will call him man, for that was what he resembled most. I will describe him in great detail, for thou wilt never (and *hope* that this be, dear reader! *hope!*) meet this man, and this will be a blessing for thee.

He was large, magnificent in bearing and in stature. His shoulders hulked and bulged beneath the cloak which ornamented his frame. His chest heaved massive, his arms flexed like bands of toughest rubber, and he did sit upon his throne with erectest posture. His head appeared of a Skull, but not the skull of a man, but rather that of an Eagle, and sprouting broad and awesome from his head were antlers, the likes of which I had never before seen, nor since. These antlers were like those of the male deer, which do branch and diverge and mingle with each other like the limbs of the tree, yet they were more mighty, and more solid, and more deadly than any ten deer combined. The man's head was white and smooth and burnished, as that of the Eagle Skull, and above his curved, regal beak, within those dark, hollow sockets, there gleamed pinpoints of a darkness so terrible and terrifying: they were like unto the densest singularity of

a dark and collapsed star, from which no light nor dark may e'er escape once entrapped within its subtle and expansive fields of influence. I found that I could not look into these eyes for more than the briefest instance, or I would be drawn into their infinite oblivions myself, and never again to know the individuality of Self, and never again to know the freedom of dark nor the oppressive regime of light, both of which I had encountered within my lifetime. Looking into this man's eyes, I saw the ultimate and the quintessence and the perfection of Moon; for within them lay the eternal forges of nullity and annihilation. The man's beak did open, and he did speak. Here was the Lunatic.

FROM THE LUNATIC

"Thy wisdom is folly. Know that from the beginning. Thou art a sniveling dog from Earth, and thou dost bear many pretensions to greatness in the Universe, but still thou art a wretched example of consciousness. Know this, that there are incredible vistas of knowledge and experience which thou hast ne'er even considered, and doubtless ne'er will. Know this, that thine ideas and conceptions of Nature are wrong and foolish, all of them. Thou hast rejected part of thy world, embraced another of which thou dost know little, and nearly ignored yet another, which thou doth not comprehend, and therefore doth not consider. I tell thee, that thou must know minutely of all aspects of Nature, and thou must not hold one above the other, merely because it does suit thy fancy to do so.

"Also, thou art a hypocrite, for thou hast professed thy yearning and desire for wisdom of the Sky, and yet thou hast spent thine innumerable years upon the Earth investigating of *its* mysteries, while simultaneously degrading and despising them; and yet, thou didst persist in pursuing their wisdoms. If the Earth and the light do so terrify thee, then why dost thou bask thy Self and immerse thy Self within their influences? And why do they terrify thee so, in the first place? Art thou so afraid for thine innate darkness, is thy darkness so fragile and delicate, that thou canst not allow even a little light to shine upon it without running for fear that it will fade away? If thou wert strong, thou wouldst know that thy darkness will sustain any amount of light which might shine down upon it, that it is within its very nature to absorb unlimited amounts of light, and indeed to prosper thus. Only if thou dost protect and coddle it so,

and make it weak from lack of nourishment in the world; only then wilt thy darkness find itself in danger of fading away from existence and wilting like the flower which thou dost imagine it to be within thy heart. Thou dost fertilize thine own soil with thine own thoughts and desires, and thou dost reap what thou sowest. If thy thoughts are poison, then poison it will be that is scattered upon the fields of thy heart; and if thy desires are covetous and overshadowing, then no flower will grow under their canopies, for the flower needs the light if it is to grow; and by light, I mean the sun that is the source of thy consciousness, which does shine down upon the fields of thy heart and does nourish that dark flower, which thou dost so revere. Thou dost scurry and scamper thus upon the Earth, to and fro, without direction for thy investigations, nor insight into thy motivations, nor understanding of the larger scope of the matters into which thou dost enquire. Thou dost devote immense energies and efforts to individual pursuits, then leavest them off when it seems to thee that the wisdom accrued does not equal the value of the time spent accruing it, or more likely if thine interest in the project wanes. My contempt for thee knows no bounds nor limits. It makes me wretched that thou art in my presence. It demeans my sensibility that I must look upon thy form and know the wastrel and scoundrel which thou art. Know this verily: thou art no seeker of wisdom; thou art a dabbler.

"Still, thou art here, and that does indicate that thou hast reached a level of wisdom adequate to permit thee access of realms, to which few in the history of Man have been allowed entry. So, although I am sickened by thee, and do retch at the thought of thine access to this darkest place, I must allow thee the opportunity which awaits all those who find their way to this place. For I am not, even in my great exaltedness, empowered to deny the edicts of the greater exaltedness, from which did this Creation spring. Therefore, I will indoctrinate thee into the wisdom of the Moon, and prepare thee with all that it is required that thou must know, and then thou wilt possess all that thou wilt need to supplant me from my Throne, and replace me upon it. All those few who have succeeded in discovering this Countrie out, have failed in this final, supreme effort, and I do not believe that thou wilt succeed where they did fail; for Truthfully, thou art quite inferior to each and all of thy predecessors, and I do wonder at the future of thy race, if thou art the breed which nowadays does ascend to this majestic state.

"And heed, for I will give thee a chance to return to thy corporeal

body back down on thy native Earth, and not have to hear the True wisdom which I am about to impart thee. Before thou dost answer in most negatory haste, know this: the wisdom I shall reveal to thee is not what thou dost think it is. It is something far more terrible and infinite and outside that which thou dost deem sanity. The True wisdom of the Universe will not satisfy thee in thy hopes: thou shalt wear no crown of laurel, but a mantle of horns, as do I; thou shalt inhabit no blissful, womblike darkness, but stare out at the world with the unblinking infinities of endlessly sucking sucking madness which are the eyes of the Lunatic. For know, that if thou wilt replace me on this Throne, then thou wilt brandish my antlers, and thou wilt feel their weight heavy on thy head for all of eternity, and thou wilt feel undying torment and agony, for thou wilt truly know, Truly *know* what it is that composes the Universe, and what it is that *means* the Universe. These are not matters to be taken lightly, as I know thou hast done for all of thy piddling, mewling, pathetic existence on thy home the Earth. These are matters of the greatest import, indeed nothing in the Universe is greater than the Universe itself.

"Thus, if I were thee, I would consider long and hard before I gave my answer. Dost thou Truly Truly *Truly* desire the ultimate wisdom of the Universe? In thy heart of hearts, in the deepest, most Truthful recesses of thy darkest soul: what is it that cries out; what is it that demands either wisdom or ignorance? For remember, it is an aphorism among the men of thy language that ignorance is bliss, and I assure thee that this is far greater and more important wisdom than that which thou wilt discover from me. So think on it, and then tell me thy choice: Wisdom or Ignorance?"

OF MY DECISION

Dear reader, bear with me, but I feel it incumbent upon me to make most clear the nature of the True Meat of these, my Confessions. Where before I gave thee a quite superficial overview of my life, so merely to give thee some idea of what my experiences were; and what their *character* took precedence to what their *substance*. Here, however, substance matters, so I must tell thee every little detail.

The Lunatic did fall silent and awaited my reply, and of course, I would tell him that I preferred wisdom, for who would choose folly

over wisdom? I could not fathom it, and therefore I did not try. But I did not give my answer right away, for I desired time to prepare myself mentally for what was to come. So I asked the Lunatic of the other Towers; if they, as I suspected, represented the concentration of Sky and Ocean, as the Tower of Earth did. He confirmed my conjectures, and suggested that if I did wish it, I might visit these Towers before I made my decision concerning my acquisition of True wisdom. I leaped at the opportunity; for now I would finally see with clarity and vision the things which I could not see on Earth; it would all be before me, in a wondrous pageant of wisdom, and I would learn from these revelations as if reading them from a book. The Lunatic merely told me that when I wished to return to his dark chamber, that I need only think of it, and it would be so.

Then, I was transported to the center of the triangle which the triumvirate did form, and I walked to the Tower which represented Sky. I opened the door and walked in, and there was nothing there! It was all empty. The Tower was hollow and echoed silence, and not a Cloud did float, nor a star twinkle, nor an elemental frolic. Gasping in that airless place, I did stumble out the door in pure horror and sat for a long time upon the peculiar, spongy ground, contemplating. Then, I did stand and walked to the Tower which would represent Ocean. This, too, was empty and devoid. Shrieking my frustration, I returned to the Lunatic's chamber and demanded an explanation for these abominations, and he did answer slowly, and I think, with most malicious delight. He told me that my wisdom knew much of Earthly things, and so I was able to observe some small fraction of the things within the walls of that Tower; but because I knew almost nothing of the Sky nor of the Ocean, I could but discern almost nothing within that Tower. It was simple, really. I inquired if *he* was privy to the secrets of these Towers, and he replied that yes, indeed, he knew every single mystery of the Towers, for was he not all wise and knowing?

This decided me. I declared loudly and with no reservation whatsoever, that I must be told of the True Wisdom. He nodded, and said that he had thought as much. Then he began to speak. (And keep in mind, dear reader, that I paraphrase and greatly abridge from memory, and that his True oratorical and rhetorical styles were much greater and more convincing than mine, and that the substance of his words were much more intricate and fat with detail than the crude, broad-sweeping ones which I present here, and that much of what he did communicate was conveyed to me through the mechanism of

Thought-Weave, which I have described in earlier chapters.)

THE LUNATIC SPEAKS: OF QUIDDITY AND HAECCITY

"*In the beginning, there was Quiddity; then came Haecceity.* If thou wouldst condense the entire history of the Universe into one single statement, then this would be it. Quiddity is the unity which is defined from *within*; Haecceity is the disparity which is defined from *without*. It seems a subtle distinction -- within and without -- but it is all the difference between the whole and the parts. For there still remains, even through all the ages of Time which have passed between the beginning of Haecceity and the present, within each member of the Triumvirate of elements, the pure and sublime initiatory state of Quiddity; for while the outward individuation of features distinguishes the Triumvirate, the inward, most essential element of reality and substance remains the same from which they all three sprang. Nevertheless, it is True that the Triumvirate are distinct and most unique from each other. How did this come about? Why and how did there exist unified Quiddity, and why and how did this Quiddity become corrupted, and eventually disrupted into the Triumvirate of Haecceity? These are the essential questions of wisdom, and it is in order to answer these that I will speak. All things relate back to these questions, for they are the springboards for all philosophy.

"First, I shall describe the conditions of Quiddity, so that thou mayst understand from whence thine origins derive. In the Quiddity, all is one. The concept of consciousness does not exist as such, for indeed, all flows together and neither differentiates nor fragments into individual clusters of thought. Instead, there is contentedness. For, if thou wert to define consciousness in terms of the capacity to produce thought, from whence does thought discover impetus but from the seeds of discontent? Thought and reason follow from dissatisfaction with a set of conditions, or from a desire for improved or degraded circumstances; never from contentedness. For when one is content, one is without *need* for thought; one is serene and at peace with all aspects of self and surroundings; one is devoid of need or expectation, for all need and expectation have been met; one simply *is*, and there is no question of that *is*, there is no need to defy or condemn that *is*, for it belongs to a realm of peace and non-thought. Since there is no environment, the Quiddity questions not its

contentedness in that respect, and since there is no consciousness of self, at least not as thou dost understand it, the Quiddity questions not its contentedness in that respect, either. Therefore, there is contentedness, and not consciousness.

"All Quiddity is one, as I have mentioned. Its substance is uniform and fills neither space nor time. Its substance is not solid, as the term is defined in present times, but it is not etheric either; it is different, and there is no parallel in modern reality, yet I will attempt to make thee understand what it was, for it does still exist, even today, just as Quiddity does still exist, for it is still the basis of all reality, even if that basis is hidden from view or sense. The substance of Quiddity is such that if thou wert to fold it upon itself, it would not change shape, nor would its surfaces meet as thou hadst hoped to make happen; instead, it would change the perspective of *thine own hands*, to make them perceive that they indeed had achieved their objective, for they would move in all the manners required for the project, and thine eyes would perceive the folding as if it had occurred, but what *really* would have happened was that thy retinas themselves would have been warped such that they perceived what thou didst desire them to perceive. Thus, the substance of Quiddity is such that it does not change, but rather that the observer or actor, if such could exist in Quiddity (which it could not), should change; for it is, after all, the observer which does wish for change to take place, and why should that change occur anywhere but in the mind of the observer? After all, the desire does not originate elsewhere! It exists solely within the mind of this observer. Thus, the observer perceives what he wants to perceive, and for all intents and purposes, what he perceives is the reality, but the *true* reality is the changeless formless foundation that is Quiddity. As I have said, Quiddity is still the most essential nature of the Universe, but it is different now, for Haecceity is also involved, and that, as shall be shown, is the introduction of an all-encompassing observer, one that, for all intents and purposes, is infinite to the infinite degree -- that is, as infinite as infinite can be; the infinity which contains all other infinities, with room for infinity more of them -- and as a result, there can be no valid argument that the event perceived is *not* the event occurred. In due course shalt thou understand this seeming paradox.

"I have stated that in Quiddity, there is contentedness and not consciousness (at least, as we of Haecceity understand the term). This is not to say that there is not *awareness*, for indeed there is; awareness more profound than can be understood in the Haecceity.

Thou mayst object that there is but little distinction between consciousness and awareness, but let it be known that the difference between the two is not merely subtle, but it is mighty. For consciousness derives from discontent, whereas awareness derives from contentedness. Yet, at the same time, it may be said that *consciousness is an awareness of environment, whilst awareness is a consciousness of self*. Perhaps this seems enigmatic, as indeed it should, for the Universe deals in paired enigmas at every opportunity: it is a rule of existence that all opposites are paired so that, if viewed in light of Truth and Quiddity, it can be seen that the opposites are indeed the same. So how is this enigma resolved? Here: consciousness derives from discontent, and discontent derives from knowledge of environment and dissatisfaction with that knowledge; whence consciousness, content with itself (else it cannot be, for no thing can exist unless it sanctions its own existence!), must be content with that discontent, and therefore content with that environment from which it derives, and therefore *aware* of it! Perhaps this seems but specious foolery to thee, but it is Truth. The second half of the paradox, explained: awareness derives from contentedness, and contentedness derives from oblivion from all matters of environment or self; and since Quiddity exists, it must possess self; and therefore, there arises the spectre of discontent between oblivion of self and existence of self, and since from discontent springs consciousness, it is a simple matter of syllogism to relate this consciousness to the original awareness of the equation. Thus, while they be opposites, they remain dependent on each other for definition, like a great circle of reality, which never can collapse unless is torn the very fabric of reality itself.

"Quiddity, aware yet not conscious, was all that there was; and all was as one, and one was as all, and there could be no distinction between singular and plural. Similarly, there could be no difference between animate and inanimate, alive and dead, joy and misery. Instead, there was the great neutrality of nonDimension, the simultaneous exaltation and abnegation of Space and Time; for, if it were possible for thee to unravel the time-line of Haecceity, and trace the threads back to the beginning of Time and the Quiddity, thou wouldst never find what thou sought, for in observing, in possessing perception, in possessing *consciousness*, thou wouldst create Haecceity from all Quiddity that thou didst come upon. It would be impossible not to, for this is inherent in the nature of Haecceity and its relationship to Quiddity. As a creature of Dimension and Perception, thou canst not exist in a continuum of

nonDimension and nonPerception. This is simple to understand, no? So, the question to which thou must be burning to discover the answer is this: how, if Quiddity denies consciousness, and therefore the possibility of Haecceity, did this Haecceity come about in the first place? Well, this remains one of the mysteries of the Universe. To a certain degree, it can be explained, but there is a hard kernel shell at the core of this explanation, which cannot be cracked, and within which resides the darkest wisdom ever to be woven into the fabric of existence, a wisdom more profound even than that of Quiddity. I know this wisdom and guard it, but no other in the Universe does know it. I will tell thee of the perplexity, and then pose the riddle.

"Quiddity persisted for eternity as I have described, and one day, something came to disrupt it forever. I have told of how it is required, if one wishes to create Haecceity out of Quiddity, thou must needs introduce an observer or an actor into the system, such that expectations are aroused, thoughts produced, and consciousness initiated. From some Place beyond Quiddity came an observer; not just a finite observer, for if it had been finite, then it would have sparked for an infinitesimal of time, and then it would have been snuffed by Quiddity, for Quiddity is too powerful to tolerate consciousness within itself. No, this observer was infinite, and not just infinite, but the *most* infinite; for there are hierarchies of infinity, as thy wisdom may tell thee, and infinity is not necessarily all-inclusive. It is quite possible for something to be infinite, and another thing to be infinite, and for neither infinity to share a single element; take, for example, the circle: it is infinite, for the points of its circumference can infinitely be measured and the difference divided to reveal yet further points between them; and yet, even outside this infinity, there is the infinity of the space within the circle, and the infinity of the space without the circle, and neither infinity shares points either with the circle or with each other. The infinity of which I speak, which was introduced from a mysterious beyond Place, was not merely such as the circle, but rather the infinity which contains all possible infinities. This is the great Haecceitas. There is not one principle or thought which is not contained within this infinity. The Haecceitas is the ultimate consciousness, for it is every thought and probability and potentiality, all brought together, and therefore, there can be no greater observer than it.

"When confronted with this strange visitor from beyond, Quiddity

could not sustain itself as a nonconscious, dimensionless void, and it collapsed instantly into Haecceity. The Haecceitas could manipulate Quiddity, and form physical things with it, things of matter and energy, things with solidity and volume and substance, but of course, in the most profound sense, none of these things were aught but illusions, for as I have told, if an observer attempts to govern and measure Quiddity, he will be confronted with the illusion satisfactory to fool his senses into believing that they perceive what they wish to perceive. This is the True nature of things, but since we, physical objects, exist within the framework of this infinite observer -- this Haecceitas -- we are real, so do not fool thyself on that score. If thou wert to look at reality from the angle of Quiddity, nothing is real, even now in Haecceity, for Haecceity is constructed from Quiddity; yet, thou canst do not *but* look at reality from the angle of Haecceity, for that is what thou art -- Haecceitas incarnate. Things for thee are individuated, made separate from each other, disUnified, fragmented, mutually alien. Bodies and spheres are for thee (and for me) things apart, and things which affect each other in an arena of Space and Time, and which interact with each other as individuated Selves. Some things gravitate toward each other, others impel themselves apart; some things shine brightly, whilst others wax dark; some things float serene, whilst others struggle in turbulence. The Universe under Haecceity is wide and varied, and indeed infinite in permutation. The reason for this is that every infinite possibility of that infinite observer's mind is played out within the Haecceity. Humanity is but another of these infinite possibilities.

"There is some peculiar wisdom in the construction of Haecceity. When Quiddity collapsed into Haecceity, it did so in the following manner: where Quiddity was an infinite Unity of Self, Haecceity interpreted it into infinite individuated Selves. That is, it created infinite tiny packages of consciousness which could combine in infinite ways to produce infinite thoughts. These tiny packages, which in thy vocabulary might be referred to as "quanta," are the fundamental building blocks of reality under the aegis of Haecceity. When thou dost construct an original thought in thy brain, what thou art doing is organizing infinitudes of these quanta into patterns heretofore unseen in the Haecceity. The complex interaction of these quanta of consciousness is the intrinsic operation in the formulation of all Haecceitic reality. These quanta are the tiniest containers of consciousness possible within the Haecceity, as they are infinitely small -- the equivalents of points on the circumference of the circle. These quanta are not particles, if that be what thou doth suspect, for

they are not entities of physicality or material, nor do they fill Space, but rather, they are the stuff of Space itself, the *raison d'etre* for Space; it is their interaction which creates Space and Time and the Triumvirate as a secondary product, as a result of the thoughts which these packages of consciousness enact and embody. They are the True components of Haecceity, the purest forms, the sublimest moulds.

"Now, the eternal mystery of the Haecceity is this: from whence did the Haecceitas come? I have said that it came from beyond the Quiddity, but the paradox lies in the fact that there *is* no other than Quiddity. Now, thou mayst smile to thyself and say, Well, obviously there *must* be else than Quiddity, for the proof is in the pudding, to make use of an Earthly aphorism. Smile not, for I assure thee that there can be naught else but Quiddity; if there was, then there could not *be* Quiddity -- in that case, there would be Haecceity. For remember the definitions I gave thee before: Quiddity is defined from *within*, Haecceity from *without*. Quiddity is Unity, Haecceity is Disparity. If there had been another than Quiddity, then it would have been Haecceity from the beginning; for to say there is two is to individuate. I think thou canst see *that* clearly enough. It does not take the most encompassing wisdom to understand this. So I put it to thee again -- from whence did this thing, this Haecceitas, come? I know this wisdom well enough, but if thou art to depose me from my throne, then thou must display even greater wisdom than mine. Then, thou wilt possess the greatest wisdom in the Universe, and thou wilt be charged with guarding this knowledge for Eternity, or until another such as thyself proves of mettle extraordinary enough to depose *thee*.

"I will not tell thee how I came to be here, how I came to possess this wisdom, how I came to crack that kernel which contains the darkest heart of wisdom imaginable in either Quiddity or Haecceity. These are things which thou mayst guess at by peering into mine eyes, and perceiving the darkness there: that darkness is of the ultimate wisdom, and I can see that thou dost not find this darkness to thy taste. Thou art fond of the superficial, blissful embryo state within Mother's womb, which provides thee with sustenance of spirit which thou hast not earned, but rather have leeches and sucked from another. I see thy piddling attempts to return to that former state of being, and thou canst not find the appropriate wisdom to do so. I assure thee, thou hast been pursuing the wrong ends. The Sky will not provide thee with what you seek. Thou hast been ignoring the

most obvious and most direct route to the state which thou seekest, and if thou wilt think on it, perhaps thou canst discover this for thyself, without having to grovel to a superior wisdom to hand it to thee. Now, as for thy precious Triumvirate of elements -- the Earth, the Sky, and the Ocean -- these are but one of a myriad of infinite permutations of Haecceity; and they all three spring from the same source, Quiddity. Thy world is one of many, and thy humanity is but one of many. The Universe is the sum of all things possible, and thou art but a minuscule speck in that greatness, and so is thy Sky, for which thou dost so yearn, and so is thine Earth, which thou dost so disdain, and so is thine Ocean, which thou dost not even consider within thy philosophies. The Triumvirate is but a localized function of Haecceity -- there be others, indeed, infinitudes of them. And as for thy truly amusing and perverse distinctions between the feminine and the masculine, remember what I said earlier: all things opposite are in fact the same.

"But I will lecture thee no longer, for this bores and tires me. If thou dost deem thyself worthy, then tell me: from whence came the infinite observer? *From whence the Haecceitas?*"

OF MY ANSWER TO THE LUNATIC'S RIDDLE

Know this, dear reader, that the Lunatic did speak for many days, utilizing both the Total Language and Thought-Weave in his explications, and that what I have relayed to thee is but the barest bones of his argument, the most fragile and spindly gist of his wisdom. He spoke in much detail concerning innumerable matters. I could never, in a lifetime of dictating, write everything he said, especially in a Confession such as this, which would not be served by such detail; for it is *my* life and *my* sins and *my* mistakes which I relate, not the Lunatic's.

In any event, finally he stopped with that last question -- *From whence the Haecceitas?* -- and the silence which descended upon the chamber was striking, for only the sound of the Lunatic's depthless voice had hitherto been known for days and nights on end. He stared at me from out those hollow pits of infinity that were his eyes, and I was forced to turn my face, lest I be dragged helplessly into them like the insect into the vortex. I pondered the riddle for a long time, and plumbed the depths of my wisdom, seeking in vain for an

answer. I suddenly felt very weary. I knew that my wisdom was no match for this riddle, that it required a subtlety of logic and an understanding of Quiddity and Haecceity which, even with all the Lunatic's patient instruction, I simply did not possess. I understood that these Truths were powerful and awesome, but my wisdom still revolved about such trifling notions as Earth and Sky and Ocean and Male and Female, etcetera, &c.. The Lunatic did not pester me for an immediate answer; he was prepared to wait for as long as it took for me to formulate the solution.

Thou canst sympathize to the quandary I was in. For the first time in my life, I was faced with mine own *smallness*. Even in the period after the drinking of my dead mother's teat, I had not felt this particular sensation. It was as if I was less than a speck in the *eye* -- the dark inescapable infinity that was the Lunatic's *eye*. I felt without foundation, without philosophical basis for any thought or justification for any action. I felt alone, alien, pariah from mine own heart and the dark flower within. Gradually, and then faster and faster, I felt myself churning and whirling within, shrinking and folding in on myself, becoming a dark singularity like the eyes of the Lunatic. I realized what was happening to me, and I admit it -- I panicked. I grasped for the last shreds of my sanity and clung with every ounce of strength that my weakening Self could provide. I pulled myself out of that diminishing vortex, reclaimed my wisdom, the hard-wrought sensibilities of a lifetime. I can not explain why I did what I did, gentle reader. All my life, I sought greater wisdom, yearned for ultimate knowledge; and then, on the brink of the seemingly real possibility for such knowledge, I pulled back and I refused it. For that was what had been happening: I had been accelerating towards the answer to the riddle, towards the very source of whatever infinity contained the origination of the Haecceitas. In a burst of cleansing narcissism, which brought me instantaneously back to myself and delivered me from the consuming madness of the Lunatic's peculiar brand of wisdom, I leapt to the only answer which I could give, which could make of all the years I spent in vain search of the true nature of reality -- the thing I had irretrievably lost all those aeons ago between the darkness of pre-Birth and the profane illuminescence of after-Birth -- that is to say, which could make of these years something valid and true, something worthy of time spent, something in opposition to the Lunatic's dangerous wisdom. For if in the guise of a test the Lunatic asked this question, I could discern what he truly was after -- my very soul. I could succumb to the vortex of his twisted schema,

allow myself to attain to the madness of his Lunar infinity, and in the process become a thing empty, a void in which there was no darkness nor light, but only vast, undisclosed Quiddity; amorphous, homogeneous matter unsheathed of form, left only a piteous antlered Avian skull to divide between my Self -- if that be what thou call such a soul-dismasted monstrosity -- and the multi-differentiated Universe beyond. Thus, my choice was either to proclaim my own unswervable righteousness and deny all that the Lunatic had told me, or to lose myself irrevocably to the depthless depravity of Quiddity. Dear reader, knowing me through these, my memoirs, I am sure that thou hast already arrived at a sure knowledge of my triumphant answer, which I gave most proudly and with greatest dignity to that Lunatic:

From whence Haecceitas? From HERE! And I pointed at my heart.

OF THE LUNATIC'S LAUGHTER

Needless to say, however True this answer may have been for *me*, it was not the particular (to me, unTrue) Truth which the Lunatic required. Insane laughter greeted my declaration. Endless, debilitating laughter. The Lunatic's Eagle skull did not betray emotion, for it was solid bone and without flux or flow, but from the eyes, those impenetrable depths of voidness and nullity, there emanated overpowering, suffocating waves of derision and hatred more profound than is conceivable within any man's conglobed, encased brain. I have spoken of certain sounds, which I heard periodically as I wandered the barren surface of the Moon, the airless waste of darkness and decay and spongy, dusty ground; and I had never discovered a causation or source for these sounds, these titterings and chatterings and distant snortings, like swine rooting in scraps with rippling, chortling snouts. Now, these sounds became evident in overabundance. The room became utterly dark, and I could see neither walls nor floor nor Eagle scowl, but I felt the presence of eyes, eyes which could see in this dark, eyes which did not need the reflections and illusionary distortions of light and colour to discern the targets of their demented scrutinies, eyes which watched me now, eyes which derided every surface of my being, eyes which dissected every minute tissue and organ of mine Earthly form. And I heard the gibbering, the mad rantings, the gasping, choking sighs, the chortling chortling chortling, the snortling

snortling snortling, the squizzling squizzling squizzling: and the laughter, it grew in proportion to my own madness, it grew and grew, and became hysterical and frantic and high-pitched. At times, it sounded like the gurgling joy of an infant child, and at times it sounded like the giddy, single-minded hilarity of a depraved and deviant debaucher, and at times it seemed like the low, sonorous ridicule of a sarcastic, mean-spirited father, and at times it sounded like the shrill, mindless, rolling cachinnations of a hyena, and at all times it sounded like the unholy Lunatic, antlers shimmering with energy, eyes glittering with infinity, Eagle beak slicing the air with incomprehensible solidity. The laughter, and the snortings of pigs, these things drove into my consciousness until my mind was almost distracted from itself. These sounds; they were driving my Self away from me, replacing it with their ludicrous inanity, their all-consuming insanity. And I glimpsed pale faces, emerging from the darkness, then slipping silently and seamlessly back into its voidness, faces of swine with beady, greedy eyes, and of fish with staring, scaly, lidless glassiness, and of sniffing, hatred-happy rats, and of shrieking monkeys with curling, quivering lips. These faces they swam through the darkness, and my glimpses of them were unsatisfactory; each glimpse impressed me with terror and immeasurable power, but I could not discern with clarity; I could only shrivel and wither within my shrinking sanity, and feel these beasts and squealing demons press closer and closer in on me until there was no where for me to go but to squeeze out of existence like a bubble of air. And then, from some inward reserve of Self, which I never had been aware of, but from what little life remained in my dark flower in my heart, I snarled and bit and screamed and frothed and cursed and howled; and I *flew up* out of the grasp of these greedy, reaching swine, and through the ceiling, and into the dark, indefinite sky.

OF MY RETURN TO EARTH

Upwards, through the ceiling and into the sky, falling falling falling, for ever and for ever, all the long distance back to Earth. It took days, and I do not exaggerate, dear gentle reader! When I finally hit the Earth, I awoke from my Hundred Year Sleep.

When I had fallen into the endless slumber, my physical appearance had been that of an attractive man in the middle years of his life. In

the time of my slumber, I had aged considerably; so considerably, in fact, that for each year of my slumber, my body had aged a year. I had now the appearance of one who is a hundred years *beyond* the robust, healthy period of his life! Thou canst imagine my disturbance at this apprehension, for I knew then that I had not long to live, for the human body is a fragile thing, and once it has decayed past a certain point, there is no hope of rejuvenation. So, depressed about my impending death, but at the same time, overjoyed beyond any joy that I had ever before experienced, I made my way into the world. The wisdom of the Lunatic had refuted utterly every conception I had ever held concerning the nature of the world and its underlying reality, and for some little time I was in a quandary as to how to proceed: accept this new wisdom, or reject it? I had rejected it in pure self-defense in the Lunatic's stronghold, for to accept it would have meant self-annihilation, but now in the serenity of my bounteous home, I could ponder the Lunatic's words once more and try to come to some firm conception of their Truth or Folly.

Where all my life I had seen Self as part of the world and subordinate to it, where I had forever beheld wisdom in its exteriority to my own being, where I had perceived in wisdom an altar at which to supplicate one's Self; where all this time had I denied the trueness of my dark flower -- no matter how much utterance I gave to my tenderness with regard to that darkness, and no matter how superior in this matter I may have been to all others who in history have attempted similarly to attain to apotheosis -- if the Lunatic was to be believed, then all my life, I had been wrong. Quiddity was pure perception. Ultimate malleability, wherein matter possessed no definition and Sky and Earth were trivia. All things extant were every one constituted of some uniformly textured sameness, and consciousness was an illusion in the infinite eye of some Haecceitas.

Now, reader, I leave it to thee to judge for thyself whether thou dost believe the wisdom of the Lunatic. For myself, I will tell thee that unrepentant in my philosophy am I, and that I have package and parcel rejected that madman's creed. Perception is not the end of it! There must be something perceived, or there can be no wisdom in the world! And I *know* there is wisdom in the world, for I remember having once possessed it, and all my life have I sought to regain it! But alas, I chose wrongful paths, and I wasted my years in the world in pathetic Earthly pursuits which led me nowhere but into this premature grave, which encroaches fast upon me even as I dictate

these final words.

Thus have I embarked upon setting down for posterity the story of my Life, so that what little wisdom I *have* gained might not be lost to the ages. Mayhap, some One who reads of my experience might be diverted from similarly unwise pathways as I have travelled. Do not wallow in the Mud of Earth as I have done, all unknowingly, for the greatest part of my Life. Do not search in vain outside for Sky or Womb; for by looking without for such things, did I ignore the Truth which lay in my heart. Look within for Self, and thou wilt find all things which thou dost desire: I guarantee this. Care for thy dark flower in thy heart, as I have not, and mayhap thou wilt surpass even me in thy wisdom and understanding of the Universe. This is unlikely, however, for none before have ever done so, and it is not a good wager that thou wilt heed the sage advice I leave thee. Nevertheless, I leave it, and if but One doth take it to His bosom, then these confessions will not have been writ in vain. For hear my Last Confession, World!--

I have not been True to my Self.
