

LETTERS FROM ESALEN

an account of an odyssey into Non-Ordinary Reality

by Bob Edgar

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Introductory Remarks

These letters were written to my wife while I was attending a two week workshop on Advanced Shamanism at Esalen Institute on the Big Sur coast offered by Michael Harner and Sandra Ingerman of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies.

Since my wife had previously attended this workshop, these letter will most likely be intelligible only to someone already experienced in shamanic practices. Please exercise caution when you think about sharing this document with others. I have taken the trouble to transfer these letters to the computer and to print them out primarily for myself and the editing has been minor.

In many ways this workshop was the most remarkable experience of my life. Fortunately, I was unable to speak during the workshop and I believe this stimulated me to write more detailed letters to my wife than is normal for me. As a consequence these letters are an unusually complete record of what happened at the workshop as seen through my eyes.

I wish to thank my wife, Carol, who has encouraged me in this project and allowed me to transcribe these letters to her. I also wish to thank Michael Harner and Sandra Ingerman for facilitating an incredible experience.

Bob Edgar

The Arrival

1/26 7:09 PM

We left home at about 12:30 PM. It was a terrific send off. Carol smudging us and chanting. It was a marvelous chant that I am sure could be heard in Scots Valley and maybe even in Watsonville! We made good time and stopped by the side of the road just north of Big Sur on the bluffs overlooking the sea to eat our sandwiches. John got out his drum and took a trail down the rocks and drummed to the sea a while. There were lots of whales spouting. Some were in so close we could see their backs coming out of the water.

We ate and kept on going to Napenthe. I enjoyed most the wind chimes and gongs there. We made a bit of gong music. I bought a book on hiking in the Big Sur area. We resumed driving and arrived at Esalen a little after 3 PM.

I showed John around the place and then we went down to the Baths for our massages. I told my masseuse, Ellen, that I couldn't speak so she asked if I could read lips. Obviously laryngitis is the thing to say. I really liked the way she massaged. She seemed to care. It was done lovingly. She "oommed" and chanted over me. Her chants sounded a bit like yours. She asked that the spirits heal me, that the drums and rattles heal me, and that I be given back my voice when I had something to say. She made noises into my chest. Some kind of Indian stuff – Chantras? Anyway, it was all very nice and I was touched. You ought to try her when you come down again. The massage was 1 1/2 hours long!

Then we came back to find our rooms. My roommate is Robert and he also is reading the "Gospel according to Jesus" but so far has just said hello. I then ate dinner quickly by myself out on the deck and came back to my room. The first session will start in about an hour! I am in Room 34. It is very nice with a balcony overlooking the ocean. Highly satisfactory.

The First Evening

1/27:12 AM

The evening session was very good. Michael is very amusing and charming. I gave Sandy your note and gift of chocolates and she gave me a kiss. I gave her my little speech to read. After drumming and some chaotic comments from Michael we started going around the circle saying who we are. I was second to speak. I hammed a bit while Sandy read my statement,

My name is Bob Edgar. I was struck dumb on Christmas day. The doctors say I have viral-induced nerve damage that has paralyzed my left vocal cord. They say the paralysis may last from 6 weeks to 6 months. I can still whistle, snore, and play the flute. I can also whisper but I am told I shouldn't.

I have been retired for six months. I was a Professor of Biology at the University of California at Santa Cruz. My specialty was Genetics. I was founding Provost of Kresge College, one of the UCSC colleges. But my excitement is now focused on Shamanism.

My wife, Carol Proudfoot, has been working with the foundation for several years and took this workshop last year. I am now following in her footsteps and doing my best to support her in her work. She does Shamanic Counselling, is offering a workshop for the Foundation, and also gives workshops at Esalen and elsewhere on the Medicine Wheel Way. We formed a drumming group in Santa Cruz and drum and journey every week.

I suppose there is irony and perhaps synchronicity in a professor being struck dumb during transition to a new life. I have been told to treat my muteness as a gift. Since I could not leave it behind, I must share this gift with you.

Michael commented that professors are usually hams. He said nice things about you and referred to my comment about him being a Scientist. He apparently really liked that. We got about half way around the group. It is a big group, about 45.

After we broke, the woman from Sacramento Charlie had mentioned to you, Gail, came up to me and gave me a little carved bear Charlie had carved for me. I then went to the van and had some chocolate and brandy and played my flute. A song came to me that I started playing over and over and then I had a hard time getting to sleep because it kept dancing in my mind. It was clearly given to me to play for the group.

I finally did sleep well and was happy.

The Second Day

When I awoke I couldn't recall the song! I got my flute and a cup of coffee and sat on a rock by the ocean and as soon as I put the flute to my lips out came the song over and over. I then found I could play the inversion of it – meaning upside down.

I then went to the baths and listened to the people chatter. Coming back to the room I saw Michael and told him about the song. He seemed please and said he will have me play it this morning. I am excited about it. So that is it so far. I am out on the balcony finishing my coffee and about to go off to breakfast.

1/28 1:00 PM

So yesterday morning after drumming I played the song and people liked it. We finished going around the circle and Michael talked and cracked jokes. He really becomes possessed. He can't stop joking and when he finally does, he doesn't know where he is. He then had us pick a partner to work with later, mine was Jose, a young guy from Mexico City.

In the afternoon I slept most of the free time. I was tired, I think from the excitement.

The afternoon session started with a trip around the grounds. Michael and Sandy handed out tobacco for spirit offering so I ran back to the van to get the corn meal you gave me for this ritual. When we came back, Michael asked if people had received any songs. A bunch did and Michael had people sing and everyone joined in. We then did our first journey to find what our partner needed to get during the two weeks. My wolf told me Jose needed to get eyes, wings, teeth and claws. Jose was more vague and said in the upper world he saw a tree budding out, then birds singing in it, then a hand with smoke coming from it and fire.

Each of us had previously written down what we wanted to get from the workshop. I said that I wanted to experience my journeys more vividly. Sometime yesterday I started seeing my wolf staring at me intently, watching me through the high grasses in the meadow he usually gets me to go to to talk with him. I set up my night stand on a box of Kleenex with the wolf fetish you gave me peering through the little flower the Esalen staff leave for you in your towels. In front of the flower stands Charlie's Bear. The next morning Sandy said that Charlie's wife, Nancy, is very ill and Michael is going to ask the group to work for her healing this afternoon.

In the evening session we finished the reciprocal journey with the partner (Jose's journey for me) and then shared in the group what we had learned. About a third reported synchronicity between what people asked for and what their partner said they needed. Michael said he likes to do this exercise right off the bat to prove that miracles happen.

We then started the healing work (extraction) by picking a partner to work with. Mine was Marty. We journeyed down the tunnel to the lower world carefully looking for things that aroused distaste. Where they were in the tunnel could suggest roughly where they are in the body. Marty found a lamprey eel (which quite frightened her) near my head (in my throat?) in a cave and lower down some white grubby worms and still further down some slime. I found a daddy-long-legs (not very frightening) near the upper legs and on the way back to the entrance a lot of cockroaches hiding near the top (perhaps her head).

The Third Day

This morning we continued the extraction exercise by shamanically feeling for things in the body. Marty couldn't feel anything. She thought maybe her bracelets might be interfering. I found that my left hand worked best and I felt grainy stuff in her head and a lump in her left groin area. Then we looked shamanically. I enlisted the aid of my Owl to help me see and I looked in the body with the third eye through my left hand. Marty didn't see anything in my body but I saw a large snake in hers. Its body was coiled in her left groin and went down her left leg. Its head was in her foot and it turned and looked at me with bright white eyes and stuck its tongue and fangs out at me.

In her head was another head, the head of a demon, a man with red eyes and red light radiating from him. He looked sort of like the monster in "Night on Bald Mountain" in "Fantasia".

When I told her (I actually wrote it on my Mickey Mouse Magic writing pad) she started crying. She said she had had several soul retrievals and extractions and de-possessions before and that what I was saying she already knew. She had had a traumatic birth and soul loss at that time and possession by a male spirit.

So it looks like I have my work cut out for me. I'll probably need more than my Owl on this one.

It quite surprised me that I could see such things. I didn't think I could do this kind of stuff. You yes, but not me. I don't think of myself as a healer, although nearly everyone else here is in some healing profession or other.

Michael said the 'Spritists' in Brazil have had great success with paranoid schizophrenics. He says they cleared out a whole hospital. Michael says that paranoid schizophrenics are often really suffering from soul loss followed by possession. I just thought of Dennis. I wonder how he is now. Have you visited him recently? Could he still need help?

1/28 7:12 PM

I have a blister on my finger from talking to people at dinner! I'll have to put a band aid on my Mickey Mouse pointer. We saw a fascinating movie before the afternoon session. It was Hungarian and about North European Shamans. I thought if I could get a copy I could make clip art for the foundation using my video equipment.

We then did a visit to our teachers and power animals to get help to Nancy Abildgard. My Wolf and I flew to her house and my Wolf said the bedroom and maybe the whole house needed shamanic cleansing (smudging). I think we should visit them and do it. Also Gail is collecting stuff from others for Nancy. Some of it is suggestions from spirits for things she should do or have done to her. So maybe we should look it over and do a bunch of stuff.

Then Michael performed an extraction. Pretty impressive. I may well get to do one tonight. I talked (wrote) a lot at dinner with Gail and Dave. He may drop by to visit with you on the way back. An awful of nice people. I am off to play my flute before session.

1/29 9:09 AM

I am going to get this letter in the mail before morning session. I am developing a callus on my finger from talking. Well, last night I did extract Marty's monster. It was apparently pretty weak because it didn't fight much. After seeing where and what it was, I whistled for my Eagle and I was delighted to see it fly to me and sit on my shoulder.

I got the snake head out first and the body came away in pieces. The head in her head was the hardest. I got a lot of it with my hands. I finally had to suck the red stuff out with my mouth. Michael warned that doing that is dangerous but my paralyzed vocal cords were like a door blocking it. The Eagle pecked out the last bits in her head. It was really quite exciting. She said she felt more peacefuL I have written her a note saying any time she wants to go fishing for Moray eels she is welcome!! But she clearly did not feel empowered. At least before the extraction. Everyone felt high after the evening of extractions and we danced our power animals and trundled off to bed.

During the round of extractions I did not ask to be extracted. I think others thought I should (for my voice) and I had to try to explain. First, I feel a commitment to Marty. She ought to have the opportunity to have a go at that eel. Second, I am learning from this voicelessness and I am really enjoying the love and concern I am getting. Being voiceless I think is good for me. It is helping me receive and give love. Since I can't speak I give hugs!

The Fourth Day

I gave Dave a nice hug this morning, also Kathleen (to whom I am lending the Lizard drum) and several others. OK, I am off to breakfast and the mailbox (where ever that is).

1/29 1:30 PM

So here I am again, now on my balcony watching the whales, butterflies, and people go by. It is quite busy! I waved hi to a lot of them. I really do have a sore spot on my finger from writing too much. Maybe it is a sign to not be so interactive! I gave Michael a note this morning about leaving space for songs and announcing that I would write down peoples songs. He approved and of course took 1/2 hour reading my note out loud with lots of jokes at my expense. He did approve and I played my second song with more sense of freedom and joy. Another person sang a song and apparently lots of people are getting them. I got one down on paper. Then at lunch talking (writing) with a woman whose name I don't yet know, we got excited about starting a foundation computer Bulletin board on Compuserve . Maybe I am getting too active in OR (Ordinary Reality).

This morning we visited a tree but first, during drumming Michael encouraged us to dance our drum but only four or five at a time and only once around the circle. I did it and it was great. I had lent Kathleen the Lizard drum and she danced over to a woman who earlier had reported losing her daughter and they wailed together. Kathleen later said that she saw the face of an Indian woman who was wailing because she lost her child and that was what Kathleen was responding to. A number of people were crying and reported feelings of ecstasy. I certainly now feel great joy much of the time, wanting to sing and dance. I also feel a bit unhinged. I have a blistered finger, a scrape on the back of my hand that bled a lot last night and just now I chipped my front tooth. I presume it is the filling I had there that came out.

Anyhow, we visited a tree. I guess I got the directions wrong because I journeyed to the tree at the tree but found we were supposed to journey to the tree but in our meeting room. The most interesting thing for me was the complexity of getting to the tree. I just interrupted this letter to write a note to Michael asking him to comment on negotiating in NOR (Non-Ordinary Reality). I left my body, flew to Santa Cruz, went down the well and through the tunnel to the lower world. picked up Owl and we flew until we were under Esalen and then flew up through the ocean near the baths and then up to the tree. I came back the same way and was late, the drumming had stopped. The tree was very content and a bit self-satisfied. It was not a native. It advised me that patience was a virtue and that muteness was good for me.

1/30 8:22 AM

I awoke at 6:30 am and went to the baths. There was a spectacular sunrise, red clouds, a new moon, and Venus. I whistled 'O Shoo Wa' because Kathleen had had us sing it (she learnt it from you) last night to summon the spirits during the bone game. We won in about 5 minutes. We lost only once.

I came back from the baths, got my flute and a cup of coffee and sat on my special rock and played. I got very excited because I another song was given to me: the Owl Song. I have been with Owl a lot on my journeys and last night Kathleen told me Owl was the Spirit of the Esalen Indians and that Owl had been coming to her. So I thought of Owl and out popped this song. I hope I get a chance to play it this morning. So where was I.

The afternoon session yesterday. Michael did respond to my note. He joked a bit but did point out that I couldn't speak and others could so it was OK if I wrote him notes. He saw my elaborate journey as amusing; he would simply look for the spirit of the tree in the lower world. I see the point, I think. Michael jokes a lot more than he describes and explains.

We shared our journey to the tree with our neighbor and I was shocked when my neighbor, Dave Lewis, an elderly chiropractor said, "I can't journey". I wrote "You don't journey". Later I wrote him a note and offered suggestions on how to journey and offered to sit with him as you did for me. He was excited and grateful. I spent half an hour with him before last night's session. He chose a new place to go down to the lower world, the waterfall at Esalen. He could climb out of his body, go down to the falls and the first time he tried, into a tunnel, but then he blanked out. I made him retrace his steps back to his body. The second time he got to the waterfall but couldn't find the tunnel. Nevertheless he was excited about his progress and grateful.

During the afternoon session, after talking about the tree journey, Michael talked for a long time about the history of the Ghost Dance; how it was passed around the West in various forms, lost, found again, etc., and how it was used to get from the Ancestors lost ceremonies. We then had a protracted discussion with rounds of voting for what we would do our Dance. We quickly agreed that it should be used to recover an Esalen Indian ceremony. The main proposals were a Grieving ceremony, a Thanksgiving ceremony or a Hunting ceremony. The vegetarians groaned at the latter but the proposer pointed out that a hunting ritual could be used for any form of hunting, hunting for a lost object, hunting for a job, etc. We ended up with Thanksgiving and Hunting as highly favored, so Michael said we would do both and have two simultaneous dances.

At dinner Jenny asked me to sit with her. She had earlier said she wanted to talk with me. She and the person across the table talked small talk. She said we would talk after eating but she dawdled on and on and I began to feel manipulated and so I wrote "at a later time" and left to see Dave Lewis.

In the evening (Wednesday) we were kicked out of our meeting room as is usual on Wednesdays and so we met in the big Yurt. It was quite nice. We played the bone game which was quite a trip. Michael divided us into two teams, about 25 people per team. On my team some wanted Jenny to be the pointer and some wanted me. I shook my head and slunk away. I was afraid some people were seeing me as a "wounded healer" but I know I see very imperfectly and have a big ego that gets in the way. I am beginning to be very glad I can't speak. It keeps me humble although it does bring attention to me that is often nice. I am really enjoying being loved and loving. Somehow I guess people don't find me threatening at all and are attracted to me.

Anyway, Jenny was picked and Norman volunteered as backup. Kathleen came up with 0 Shoo Wa to sing as a chant. She came to me first and asked if it was appropriate. I said trust yourself and so she taught it to our group. We won the toss and we sang the song and I touched Jenny's shoulder as she picked the hand holding the bones. I looked intently at the hands also but saw nothing. However, Owl was sitting on my shoulder and seeing the bones and I felt passing the message through my hand to Jenny. Jenny picked both right three times in a row, then got one right then won both again and then lost. The other team immediately lost, then Norman won both and it was over. Jenny said she did have psychic powers but that she felt the power of the group with her.

Then we sang songs. Michael told us in the dark of winter Eskimos sit in a circle in the Igloo and picture beautiful places and songs come which they share. We did that and songs came, one after the other, in English, Italian, French, and unknown tongues, one after the other, beautiful, amazing songs. The Yurt felt like an Igloo. The sea and the wind whistled through the roof. It was a magical experience.

So now I am going to get some breakfast before session.

1/30 1:19 PM

So then we did the dance. We did it as you probably did, with a dragging step, singing "I circle around", arms swinging up and down, all the while watching the flying kerchiefs and focusing on the mission, to contact the ancestors of this place concerning the Thanksgiving (or Hunting) ceremony. Michael says he thinks the point of the dance is to try to do the impossible and as a consequence split to NOR. After a time people started dropping like flies. Then Michael stopped the dancing, then shortly stopped the singing and I went down and closed my eyes and saw a small group of Indians at the point below the deck where my power spot is. they were honoring the sunrise with a flute invocation followed by a drum or sticks and then chanting. I didn't get the songs.

The Fifth Day

I just had lunch. In our morning session we danced our animals, me the Owl. Then Michael launched into a discussion of the Ghost Dance but I waved my arms until he saw me and apologized and let me play my Owl song, which was terrific. I saw it flying around our room after the Ghost Dance and people went ooh after I played it.

It was not a deep trance for me but others were moaning, wailing, sobbing, singing, whistling, twitching, writhing, quite remarkable. Jenny came up screaming. She had blood on her hands. I thought, my God, the Stigmata! It turned out she had a stab wound in her head from her pen. People did throw themselves about!

We then began to talk about the experience. It turns out a song, the same song, was received by five people, one of them Sandy. A number of images of the ceremony were seen in identical manner by several people. Someone would describe something and someone else would say, I saw that exactly as you described it Michael said these duplicated visions were important aspects not to overlook in reconstructing the ceremony.

I am reminded of an earlier little game played by Michael and Sandy. Someone would for example report seeing a bicycle chain in someone's knee and that person says they injured their knee in a bicycle accident. Michael says, "Amazing, in all my years of doing this work I have never heard anyone report seeing a bicycle chain in someone's knee, have you Sandy?" Sandy says "nope". Michael says "Amazing".

Anyway, we broke for lunch but the first woman who had whistled the Ancestor's tune, Kerrie, came over and said she had to get a flute, so I gave her our phone number so she can call you about Western Visions and Rhythm Fusion, but I also gave her my flute and showed her how to play the song and she went off happy. She had heard the song being played on the flute.

Just before session I lent Kathleen the Owl fetish with the Buffalo bag to hang around her neck. I told her to put it on her bedside table at night.

Which reminds me, I had a vivid dream. Sinsheimer had lost his body and his head was attached directly to his feet. His wife said the doctors were going to fix him up. I also saw Ric Davern and Edouard Kellenberger in the same condition. They could walk around but looked foolish.

Anyway, I am getting finger cramps so I'll quit for now. We are supposed to get another movie in 20 minutes. It's been "Giveaway" time for me and it feels great. I feel freer and lighter. No flute, no Owl!

1/31 7:30 AM

I just came back from the baths. I look forward to watching the sunrise. At the peak moment there was a black fog bank spread above the southern headland and a touch of vivid blue sky and gray overcast above tinged with pink and gold. I

whistled O Shoo Wa to call the spirits and immediately they allowed me to see that the black fog bank was a great bald eagle, its wings outstretched and the blue sky was its head. It was of course rising from the east. Just another one of your everyday miracles.

I am finding more and more that I like not speaking. Much of the talk I hear seems like the chatter of blackbirds or the grooming of apes. Such chatter is pleasant and reassuring but not essential and distracts one from contact with the spirits of nature. While I saw the great eagle of the east in all its glory others in the baths were chattering away, unaware.

Yet, being speechless, I also feel more in touch with people. I feel freer to touch, hug, kiss, and smile. I am learning from this gift of silence, but I am grateful to be able to learn it in such a warm loving and enspiriting place. But I do miss, very very much, being able to sing, laugh, and joke.

The early afternoon matinee yesterday was the Sucking Doctor, starring Essie Parrish and introduced by that great wizard of trickery and humor "Captain Shaman" (alias Michael). The movie was terrific. I realized that without the workshop and experience at extraction I would not have understood, but I did. It was quite clear what she was doing moment to moment, almost. It felt good thinking, "we are doing alright".

We spent the afternoon planning the Ghost Dance ceremony. We finished sharing the journeys and then came the politics. But Michael had a good plan which was basically the rapid delegation of planning responsibility. First we broke into two groups, Thanksgiving and Hunting. Then in the Thanksgiving group, Michael threw up a drum beater and the person the head pointed to was designated leader. Then we were to pick a scribe. We fiddled around until I couldn't stand my irritation and jumped up grabbed a drum beater and tossed it in the air and that was that. We then formed sub-groups on various aspects and out of habit I raised my hand for song but realized, I can't sing and I want to dance. People said "you belonged in Song because we need your flute". Of course they didn't know that Kerrie was chosen by the Ancestors to play the flute.

The dance group was just five and we got our work done well and quickly, three nice dances one of them seen by two people. We did the drum beater drop to chose our leader-representative and we were done.

At dinner Michael sat down with us. When he went off to get cutlery I hid his dinner and mail but I did leave his cap untouched on the table. Of course he knew immediately it was me. The trouble is he can tease me but I can't respond. After session last night as we held hands, he asked if anyone had a song to share. After a long silence, Michael said, "nice song, Bob".

The evening session started with the dismemberment journey. I really liked the double drumming. Sandy and Michael are terrific together – what a pair. Anyway, I went to the upper world. It was snow-covered tundra, bleak and forbidding. After a time I found my Neanderthal Shaman teacher with his tribe gathered around a warm fire in a cave, I stayed a while but I knew I had to go on. It was bitter cold and dark as I trudged across the tundra and then suddenly a Saber Toothed Tiger jumped me. It raked my body with its teeth and claws. It bit through my throat and then tore chunks of flesh away from my body. After a while, hyenas, then jackals and foxes, came and finished gnawing the flesh from my bones. My skeleton lay in that vast wasteland of snow and ice for what seemed an eternity. Finally, the Neanderthals came and gathered my bones and buried them in a shallow pit at the mouth of their cave. The burial was accompanied with dancing but no music or chanting. Then after a time my animal helpers, Owl, Eagle, and Wolf, came and dug out the bones and Wolf licked them until the flesh came back.

Michael said he would keep beating the drum until everyone was up but he played the callback before that happened anyway and some people got stranded including my roommate, Robert. I talked with him after session and he at least wanted to come back and that is sufficient according to Michael. Robert seems OK but still has symptoms (although different ones) this morning.

Anyway, for Michael the dismemberment journey was not enough for an evening's work so we did the Shaman's Walk. I was tired and yearning to sneak out the door but also I didn't want to miss anything. We drummed and walked our journey then dropped down on a pillow to focus on the journey, leaving our drums available to others. It was quite a mob scene, and deafening, everyone walking and drumming and falling down. I first went to the lower world and Wolf told me that to intensify my journeys I should paint pictures with my third eye. I then came back, picked up someone else's drum and journeyed to the upper world where I visited with the Neanderthals' but then the return sounded and I staggered off to bed.

The Sixth Day

I am now going to waddle off to breakfast and the mail box. I don't even know what day of the week it is.

1/31 7:19 PM

I think I told you about the eastern eagle I saw at sunrise. Shortly afterwards I was given an illumination about the Giveaway and realized (was told) to give away my stash of candies and chocolates. I got very excited. (My little speech for the chocolate ceremony is enclosed.) All day I heard people talking about how they were running out of chocolate, how there were going to be chocolate cookies for dinner and to top it off, when I went to Michael to ask if I could do a ceremony at the end of the evening he was eating a chocolate bar and offered me half! I can't laugh but I told him it was funny but I wouldn't tell him why. Anyway, we will see.

This is the Giveaway speech read by Cathy 1/31 10 PM

This morning, in the tubs. I whispered O Shoo Wa to the spirits at sunrise and was gifted with a view of an immense, marvelous eagle rising out of the eastern sky. He was of course composed of fog and sky and clouds and light but he filled me with awe. A bit later, while standing on the cliffs near the swimming pool, staring into the surf and whistling the Sea Bird Song I was given the following illumination.

For years Carol, who is Oglalla Sioux has been trying to teach me about THE GIVEAWAY. However I am a slow learner and of Scottish ancestry. It became clear to me that the Spirits of Esalen are teaching me about the Giveaway. (All this was before our morning's discussion.)

I started by giving away flute songs. And because I couldn't talk, I gave away smiles and hugs and kisses. Then I gave away my Lizard drum, my Owl fetish and finally my flute. All of these things became absolutely necessary to do. Holding on to them became a burden, almost unbearable. Those songs bottled up inside were going around in my head incessantly. Playing them for you freed me of them.

I then realized that I had another giveaway to do tonight. I got so excited I could hardly contain myself all day. I was afraid Michael might not grant my request to do this ceremony. When I asked him he was eating a chocolate bar and offered me half. The significance of this will soon become apparent.

In this bag is my entire stash. If you care for me, all of you, you will take all of it from me. I cannot bare to keep any of it. It is meant for you and if you are reticent, just remember, we have a full week still at Esalen.

I have learned so much here my heart is overflowing with tears of gratitude. I love you all.

Bob

Kerrie brought my flute back and it had a split at the mouthpiece area, probably due to too much spit (OR explanation) or bursting with songs (shamanic explanation). I was more concerned about her distress than about the flute, which still sounded fine. The morning consisted of a lot of talk but interesting talk about practicing shamanism. Charging or not charging for healing work, the importance of clients asking for help, etc. You are highly sensitive to this and much of it I had already picked up from you, but Michael and Sandy dealt with the discussion really well.

I have decided that Michael is probably the funniest man I have ever encountered. When I first heard him at the Basic workshop I thought I would tire of his humor but here he obviously feels free and loved and he is tremendously funny. I love his routines, especially around synchronicity. This afternoon people were reading each others' strengths by looking into their chests shamanically. From this of course came many miracles. Michael says sort of tongue in cheek, "Amazing, how many of you have baby chicks in your refrigerator?" This had been seen by someone about Paul and he happens to keep hawks and feeds them baby roosters which he keeps in his refrigerator.

The morning started with Kerrie playing the Esalen Indian song she was given on my flute. She was sitting beside me and trembling, either from the feeling of the song or from stage fright. I liked the fact that she played before Michael started drumming, while he was spreading his blanket and lighting the candle. We usually drum then share songs, happenings, then get on with the business.

Recently we have started the morning with Sandy leading a healing session at 9:30–10:00 AM, before regular morning session, for those interested. Yesterday we worked for four people. Brenda was being victimized by some nasty people, Claudia had sounds in her head, Kathleen's husband had episodes of suffering of some kind I now forget, and Niva was losing her hair. Sandy had the four of them get in the middle and while she drummed we journeyed to our power animals and asked them to help. On this occasion, I was most touched by Brenda's plight and sent Wolf and Eagle to create a protective shield for her.

After all the talk we did another of Michael's synchronicity demonstrations. We wrote our names on a piece of paper, folded it, put it in the center of the room and Sandy played Vana White and shuffled them. Then we journeyed on behalf of the person whose name we were going to pick. I picked Ray and fortuitously, Ray picked me. (Amazing, etc.) For Ray my Owl had leapt from his perch and went straight for his goal with talons outstretched. Ray was quite excited by this and found it useful. For me, Ray saw an old Indian spread a clay or sand dough tablet and then cut it in half and put the halves on top of one another and then repeat the process so there was a stack of four tablets. Ray said this signified segregating areas of responsibility into four different categories.

After lunch I went to my power spot. It looked stormy. I was given an afternoon song for my flute which I played as Michael laid out his blanket and lit the candles. Some listened others chatted; it felt very nice doing it that way. Kathleen gave me a weird rattle made of a turtle shell with deer horns and hoofs. I was to use it for a time.

Then Michael talked about rain making and we went out on the lawn to do that. He said a storm was approaching and that was a good time to have a rain making ceremony so that one's ego didn't get involved. He talked at length about cause and effect and about the 'Principle of Ambiguity'.

I think it was during this discussion that he talked about predicting the future. Someone reported asking to see the future. This was during the Shaman's Walk. They were shown a war scene with heavy artillery (a lot of heavy drumming was going on at the time). Why that scene? Michael speculated that being given a glimpse of a possible future provides us the opportunity to work toward increasing or decreasing its likelihood. Someone else reported a dream in which her son was killed in a motorcycle accident. Later he did have a near fatal accident. He was thrown clear of his bike which was totaled. She had worked spiritually to diminish the chance of the fatality. I liked this idea of parallel universes, multiple futures or what have you. I have no doubt our activities affect the future but we are usually misguided about causes and effects.

We did call for rain yesterday afternoon and of course it worked. Before we started someone said they really wanted a sunny day on the morrow and Michael got serious and said we had to all be for it or we should not do it, it was a serious business. Anyway, it worked out for everyone because it started raining about 1 AM and stopped about 8 AM and it has been nice and sunny all day. A group in the tubs, I think this morning, called on the rain to stop right where they were and of course it did. But I suspect one should be a bit careful abusing this power. Although it is clear the spirits enjoy humor and obviously enjoy jokes, like bringing me to Michael before lunch while he was eating a chocolate bar.

I used Kathleen's turtle rattle; it seemed the appropriate one to use for making rain. I went to my usual place in the lower world where my guys hang out and then noticed the pond (eastern style, that is. a little lake) that has been there since I started visiting but to which I have paid no attention. This time I noticed a large turtle (same kind as the rattle turtle shell, of course) sitting on a rock at the edge of the pond. He and I greeted each other. I expressed my wish for rain and he slowly looked over the cloud situation and flew off into them. He shortly came back indicating it was all fixed and then slid off his rock into the pond.

I gave the rattle back to Kathleen this morning. It has powerful medicine but is not for me. I was grateful that it had introduced me to a new and powerful animal that I feel confident I can visit again.

We then came in and chose a partner to journey with. We stared into their chest to sense their power (rather than their insects and illnesses as Michael points out is usually done, who goes to a Shaman to see how well they are?). In Kathy I saw first a Wolf's head, then a female wolf rolling and playing with a mate and cubs. Her power was loyalty and tenacity. Then I saw an Owl.

She didn't react to the Owl but did to the Wolf. She said her father had died in September and in a journey she learned that a Wolf had taken him away. Although she realized the Wolf was his power animal she was angry at the Wolf. Yet yesterday evening she bought a Wolf rattle.

The image of the Wolf on her rattle, howling, reminded me of the Wolf fetish I had in the van so after the evening session I gave it to her to use. She did the Wolf during her power dance that evening and she howled,

In looking into my chest she saw my power first at the doorway to the hot tubs. She saw the hot springs and ocean. Just as when filling the hot tubs water rushes from the reservoir, so I also have the power of rushing water. Then she saw a flock of brown sea birds with yellow eyes, then an earthquake, an Hawaiian flower that blooms near lava flows and finally an immense Phoenix that has me under its wing.

I thought of the events of the morning, of seeing the immense eagle at the tubs and the following illumination about the Giveaway, As this ended, I was met by a flock of blackbirds who walked about me as I whistled with them. They then suddenly flew up to the roof of the fire pit, their favorite spot while watching we humans eat. I also thought of the marvelous transformations that are at work in me that I pray the spirits will help me to foster. The Phoenix

For dinner we had red meat (beef) with a wine sauce. I thought later about this being fine preparation for a Power Dance. We also had marvelous chocolate cookies, one per customer. I slipped an extra one in my pocket and tried to steal others at the dinner table knowing all the while that I would unload my stash later in the evening. While Michael prepared his blanket etc, I played Song #2, a dance tune almost like a tarantella. I started slowly. Someone started rattling with me. I went faster. Someone joined in with a slow drum beat. I went faster and faster. Others were chatting, laughing, some listening. Suddenly I stopped. It was a marvelous feeling.

As Michael talked about the Power Dance the room seemed to fill with power.

2/2 5:49 AM

Last night at dinner Dave H. said that he had taken this workshop last year. Someone asked how it compared and he immediately said that the women were more beautiful and the men stronger, the appropriate response. I asked how the repeat experience was for him and he said good but he had a hard time with the sharing. He thought people shouldn't share journeys. It diminished their power. I thought of Michael saying songs given by the spirits should only be sung for

spiritual purposes or they will lose their power. I thought about these letters, are they bad? I do find the chatting about journeys at dinner unsavory.

Yesterday, I think it was in the afternoon, some people expressed unhappiness because they felt their journeys didn't compare with a lot that others shared. Sandy said hers never did either but they got results and that is what matters. I talked about this with my roommate, Robert, who saw the bottom line as the intention of the sharing; it should be for a good reason only. I know that sometimes I share because of ego, "hey gang, look at what I just did!". But there is also the witnessing aspect, "the spirits told me to do so and so", the teaching aspect, although that is diminishing for me. The old 'Sandy & Michael' synchronicity routine is still amusing but no longer necessary, although I may need it again if I lose the faith. But also I do believe the spirits want us to visit and spread the word and one way is to show how marvelous NOR is and can be. Also for me, I am fascinated by NOR for its own sake. It is the scientist and explorer in me, so after a bit of soul searching I will continue these letters with renewed will. So, back to the Power Dance.

While Michael was describing it, Patti started twitching and as soon as the Drummers started she was up and off we went. I had jumped up to be a drummer. Ray yelled at me (joking) that I shouldn't be there because I couldn't sing, but I knew that the spirits could hear me sing. I am sure we did the dance the same way you did.

The community was in the bleachers (pillows along the walls) with rattles and legs tucked in. The only light in the room was two candles. The drummers were like an army platoon; we held tight ranks and drummed crisply, attentive to Michael's beat. We slowly drummed around the circle until someone stood up. In fact, there was very little such drumming because as soon as a dancer was guided back to their place a new person one or two places down the line (counter clockwise) was on their feet ready to go.

After we had gone the rounds with two dancers I decided to sit and let someone else drum. Kathleen, who was sitting next to me, grabbed my drum and jumped in to replace me and then stayed the whole time. When I went to find my drum afterwards the drum beater head was split open, the leather gone and the wool in tatters. I thought, wow, those spirits are powerful. First my flute splits and now the drum beater! I got from Kathleen my backup drum beater and she used her Owl eyes to find the leather cover and thong, which she did in quick order.

After I sat down I thought, "well I can't dance the Power Dance because I can't sing a Power Song". I sort of relaxed then and joined in the rattling. All of a sudden I felt a chill and saw Owl coming and realized that I didn't sing him anyway, I whistled him. I started feeling twitchy and knew that when the drummers got to me I would stand up. I had to wait two turns, then the drummers came and enclosed me in an envelop of sound. I felt like I was inside an egg shell and as I whistled the power

whistle I felt the need to move. The drummers parted and I staggered out. My legs were weak. I lurched and staggered about, rattling to the drum beat and whistling as best I could. My eyes were rolling and my body twitching. I and the drums began to speed up. By the second round Owl and I were one and I flew around the room (literally I was sure) and fell in a heap, exhausted, at my place. It was absolutely fantastic. I now know what it means to fuse with one's power animal.

Being a part of that dance, even in the bleachers, rattling people on, was a truly awesome experience. Beautiful, beautiful. One after another, people got up – songs, strange words, or not so strange words, came from their mouths and they staggered, danced, ran, or flew around the room. I didn't want it to stop.

When it was over, Michael gave us some advice. It is OK to perform Power Dances but make sure you do them correctly and never advertise them. Just have them as part of some other activity in a workshop. Fantastic.

Then we held hands and I got up and did my little thing, handing out the candies. It felt terrific. I started with Michael and with a full basket started around the room. Some people touched me, kissed me. I just kept going. Second time around I was afraid this was going to be like the loaves and fishes!. But I finally dumped the last of the candies on someone's lap and sat down. By then everyone was really high and Michael had us form a big hugging circle.

The next day people reported being up all night, standing in the rain naked, stopping the rain, etc, etc. It figures. The next day, yesterday, I had to ask someone the day of the week. I just now realized I could have looked at my watch.

The Seventh Day

2/2 7:00 AM

I am back from the Baths. Only Dave H and a stranger were there. The stranger asked me the time and I went over and showed her my watch and that reminded me of my muteness and of the importance of these letters to me. They are of course for you, but I keep thinking of sharing them with this shamanic family. I will journey on it again but my teacher told me to get a color printer and do up these letters nicely and send them out, along with the Song Book. I'll change the names, sell the movie rights for a huge sum and give it all to the Foundation.

The epistles of Bob from Esalen

I was struck dumb, Saul was struck blind, ho hum. Shades of my episode of being Jesus 25 years ago.

Kathy is excited about a Foundation Bulletin Board on Compuserve or some such to support networking between drumming groups. The birth of a new church? tricky . But not to worry. I trust Michael totally. If he told me to jump, I'd jump. He has his feet firmly planted in NOR.

I just got a cup of coffee and took the flute to my power spot and played to the spirits my version of Oh Shoo Wa. When it was through I looked up and the sun was just breaking over the hill. Fantastic. I just can't get used to these miracles. I then played Song # 2 which is my joyful thanksgiving song.

2/2 8:33 AM

So back to the chronology. Yesterday morning I sat with Lane and Patti at breakfast. Both were in rock bands. Lane has taken over the music part of the Song Book project. Lisa is doing the words. He sends his regards. He says he has "worked" on you. It seems like everyone knows you. At the morning drumming Patti led a woman's dance. She had been given specific steps to do, kind of turn and stomp. It felt really grounded to me, lovely. She then gave everyone an amethyst.

We talked about the Power Dance and shared and then Michael talked a bit about journeying and gave us a long journey that we could take on someone's behalf. A number of people volunteered but I felt moved to go to my teacher, Bill, about me. This was because the journey was to be a long one and I rarely go to him and feel shy about it. As Michael says, you don't bother your teacher unless it is important and it rarely feels that important to me.

I asked Bill what I should do when I get back home. He said, not to worry, help those who want help. Offer my services to Michael. Get a color printer and publish for the Esalen participants) these letters and the Song Book. That was it.

I forgot that again we did healing before the morning meeting. One of those we worked for was Robert who had told us his father (who is in his 90' s) was very ill in hospital and might not survive.

I journeyed for him. Robert had told me he had seen a buffalo and bison in a drumming dance and I had given him my buffalo fetish (on loan). Someone in the healing group saw a Buffalo comforting Robert. I told Robert about the meaning of Buffalo in the Sioux Medicine Wheel. In my journey for him my Owl took me to see his grandfather and we saw an Elk waiting nearby. It was his father's power animal waiting to take him. My Owl flew to the Elk and then back to me and we came home and I told Robert. Which reminds me that Robert had taken an Arriens workshop and liked it a lot. She doesn't allow people to share journeys, only the learnings from them.

Earlier, walking back here from playing the flute, Michael asked if my voice was coming back and I replied, "I hope not". I am so full of joy now and I am no longer afraid. I flashed on a party when I was five and got sick (but you brought that part of my soul back), And the ecstasy of the Jesus experience, which was followed by the agony and terror of the crucifixion, but the spirits will protect me. I must work to keep them with me.

Which reminds me of the rest of Bill's advice. Get rid of the altar in my office. Make a little one next to where I sleep. Find a power spot outside and go there every morning. Also, work with clay and make something for our little burial plot for Sherpa and Dennis and journey to them.

I am going to breakfast. to finished a Song I am putting down for Wendy and then off on a hike. Boy wouldn't it be fantastic to be together in this. Maybe Michael will let me into the three-year program and we will be at the Soul Retrieval workshop with Sandy.

This goes in the mail.

2/2 11:28 AM

We are back from the hike. An instructive trip (not a journey), Five or six of us set out for the ridge above Esalen. During the Ghost Dance, several people had seen an Esalen Indian ceremony at the ridge and wanted to honor that. Wendy had been told at the office that a road a bit to the South of Esalen led up to the ridge. We found the road and it was barred with signs saying, "No Trespassing, No Hikers, No Bicycles, etc:". We passed through the gate and I told people we were none of those, we were pilgrims on a sacred mission. Shortly after that a guy came down the road in a pickup and told us we were trespassing and to leave. Talla did tell him that we were going to give thanks to the Esalen Indians but he told us to leave and then went on.

We stayed at that spot and did the ceremony. I looked down and he was down on the highway looking up and waving us off. I nodded and pointed down and he went

on and the ceremony got completed. Walking down I got a better feeling how the Indians must have felt as the white folks came and took the (not their) land. I thought about how we have been hemmed in by new and belligerent neighbors in Santa Cruz. A teaching in this.

Wendy came up and touched my arm and pointed at three hawks flying and circling above us. In that moment I knew that the Spirits were very happy with what we had done. Some of us then went to the stream on the Esalen property. I tried to go up it but there was no path and the ground was wet and treacherous. Wendy did a sprinkling ceremony using a pine branch. She told me she was going to write an apology to the folks on whose land we trespassed. I asked her to add my apologies. We are all parts of the same soul body. I am beginning to feel that, probably for the first time, and as a consequence I become more generous with my love.

Coming back to Esalen from the hike was like entering Non-Ordinary Ordinary Reality after being in Ordinary Reality.

I felt secure and knew I wouldn't get into trouble. At breakfast on the deck this morning eating my oatmeal Richard looked at me intently, warmly then took a card from his pocket, wrote on it and gave it to me. It was a dinner for two, on him, at a restaurant in Vienna. Isn't that far out? He is a big bear of a man. I love hugging him. He is warm, gentle, loving, a mushroom collector. Then I noticed the blackbirds around the table. They have yellow eyes, as Kathy had seen in the Sea Birds. Of course, why am I still surprised at miracles?

Yesterday afternoon Lane played a flute song before drumming and Sandy took over Michael's spot leading the workshop and started discussing Soul Retrieval after we finished sharing about the long morning journey. It was really fine but mind boggling to have her on center stage. She is very different from Michael but very impressive. She has a powerful mind and is more focused, more organized in mode of presentation than is Michael. Her great subtlety of understanding and the dedication to her work was very clear. The simple beauty of her book had not prepared me for her intellectual strength.

I began for the first time to see the shape of the shamanic healing practices and the complications of soul retrieval. She says it is very easy to do because the spirits want us to do it. We will see. I am dubious about my prospects especially after the exercise she gave us. Find a partner (mine was Wendy), then one of us was to journey and hide in NOR, the other was to wait a few seconds and then try to find them. She told us in advance that this was very hard to do and she had recently found out why but that she would tell us afterwards.

I hid first and I stayed in the middle world. I came up to Santa Cruz. I saw you on the phone in your cottage, then I visited Bruce in his lab in San Francisco. I then flew over to New York and hung out with Chris in his apartment. He was listening

to Bach's B Minor Mass. Then I slipped into 1957 and a concert in King's College Chapel in Cambridge, the Monteverdi Vespers.

Wendy followed me up the coast but didn't know I had slipped away to the east coast. In tracing her, my Owl was going like a bat out of hell (i.e., the lower world, of course) in the middle world. We were in places where she had been but didn't catch up with her. She said some places sounded like scenes from her childhood but on this journey she was in the upper world hiding out with her teacher.

When we came back most people reported failure but that the spirits seemed to enjoy the game (my Owl sure did). Sandy said she had learned from an anthropologists in Denmark that we have two souls, the Free Soul which can be in many places in NOR at once and therefore almost impossible to trace, and the Physical Soul which belongs in the body until death but can split during trauma. She pointed out that with practice one can improve at the game of chasing free souls and that drumming groups can have NOR parties and meet at a place only one person knows. She said people who love each other can meet in NOR. We must practice that, what a marvelous thought!.

2/2 1:13 PM

I am back from lunch. Leaving with a cup of black currant tea (terrific stuff pointed out to me by Richard). An OR person commented she had a dress like my shirt, the deer shirt, and ask if I got it in Berkeley. I whispered I had laryngitis, everyone at her table giggled. Embarrassment, I suppose, but it reminded me of the world I was going to have to face soon. I told her that you got it for me and I didn't know where. This morning I told Robert about your buying 47any kind of shirt with Power Animals on them, that our drawers are overflowing with them. But I am beginning to appreciate them in a new light. As Michael said, a shaman has to have a costume. This deer shirt is my Hunting Shirt I wear it when I am facing the unexpected, like the first day here at Esalen and today which we have off.

The black australian aborigine soul journey T-shirt under the Black Bear shirt together with the little bear fetish carved by the blind healer you gave me, in its pouch around my neck – these three elements together are absolute dynamite. I was wearing these the night of the power dance. I guess it is sort of like baseball pitchers always wearing some particular item of apparel. You want to have everything going for you when you are doing something important. My roommate Robert is on his way home. His father took a turn for the worst. He told me that he talked with Sandy and it is OK to journey for him. He is a sweet, sweet man, gentle and wise. I will miss him. And he will be tried. Like me, he is an only child. But he has the spirits with him. When he left he said thanks for the buffalo.

2/2 11:00 PM

He came back to the room one more time to journey before setting off and then got a message that his father had died. I went over and told Sandy. We will do something tomorrow. I then got out the paints for the first time. I painted the Eagle at Sunrise

and the Wolf watching me through the grass. The results are "for our eyes only" and maybe Mary, but the process pleased me enormously and the result does effectively for me evoke again the images that I saw. As I work on the painting more with Mary I will stick with shamanic images. It is the way to go, obviously.

Prior to the afternoon session I took my flute to my power spot and again a song came, a nice one. Later I had trouble recovering it to put on paper but I played it before session as Sandy laid out her rug and lit the candle and people settled in and chatted with their neighbors. Nice and sort of family. Then Sharon came up to me and gave me a quartz crystal and a bag.

Sandy talked more about the intricacies of soul retrieval. I became more in awe of her knowledge, the complexity of the business, the amazing stories she was telling in her very pragmatic, down to earth sort of way. I became more convinced I would not be able to do this. It was serious stuff and I couldn't mess around. I still have a residue of lack of faith. It usually takes the form that I am making it up although after the fact I don't think that has happened. Anyway, Sandy had us journey to our power animals to find out whose is going to help with this work and what tools to use. The answer for me was clear; Owl and Wolf will be there and I should catch the souls in the quartz crystal I had just been given by Sharon (so what else is new?). I should hold it in my hand but wear it around my neck.

Now that Robert is gone I have a single room but I miss him. I'd rather have a roommate. Me, preferring a roommate? Something weird is happening to me. But I am beginning to want my voice back. A lot of strangers have flooded in (it's Sunday evening) asking questions and shying away from this weird guy who whispers. Everyone in the shamanic group treats me as normal family member, at least, but not them OR folks. They think I must be some kind of weirdo and they smile and disappear real fast. I think I'll ask Sandy to do something for me.

The evening session was again run by Sandy. Michael doesn't come when Sandy is on. She was talking about soul retrieval and soul theft. I lost my pen and frantically looked for a while and then said what the hell, don't be intimidated, just listen and read her book again. The trouble is it seems such a powerful topic. It seems so important I dare not miss anything. Then she did a demonstration on Talla and we got to do one on each other. My partner was Kathy. She asked me to do it for her.

2/3 7:32 AM

I woke up at 5 am cold and uncomfortable. I didn't recover my dreams but I started thinking about Lois. After 18 years I still feel bitterness, guilt, remorse and love all mingled and confused. Someone stole someone's soul in that one I suspect. I guess I'll ask Kathy to work on that for me this morning. No doubt it was triggered by Kathleen telling me last night about getting back Maria Victoria's soul from her husband who had died. I think Jenny was trying to steal my soul at the dinner table the other day and that is why I left. Yesterday she was sort of caressing me as

though I was one of her cats, but I did not feel much affected. Maybe I was inside a blue shell.

I put on clothes and went back to bed but couldn't get warm. So I got up and went to the baths, 5: 15 AM and still dark. I called Owl and he came and sat on the railing above the sea and looked at me. I told him I wanted my voice back. He said to get serious and stop whispering and just play the flute. Treat it like Lent. Nothing would change unless I made a commitment to change.

Later I was thinking about the Eagle I had seen in the east and thought because it was clear, no clouds or fog, I would not see him, I looked eastward and hot damn – he was there! He had light blue wings illuminated from below by the coming sun and his head was composed of stars. It was a fantastic sight. I really felt gifted. Tears fill my eyes just now as I recall the moment. A prayer then came to me.

*Oh great Eagle in the eastern sky,
wings of blue,
head full of stars
Transform this day, Phoenix-like
and let the spirits guide my every step
with purpose and resoluteness.*

I came back and tried to paint this image but it wasn't right although it is a reminder. I couldn't get the stars at all and the blue of the sky was away off.

I just put the piece of chipped front tooth in my pouch, a reminder of the struggle to be in OR. I really love that little pouch you lent me. I hope the loan can be long term. The Bear I think of as yours and because of that I take comfort in holding it next to my heart I also am keeping my crystal in there, at least for now. It did work and I want to keep it safe.

I am so fortunate. Being retired, I don't have to work. I have you and modest but adequate resources to live. I can do anything I want. Because of that it seems especially important that I follow the spirit path.

So back to last night. Before we did the soul retrieval we did a journey to our Power animals to ask about how to get a stolen soul back from someone who doesn't want to give it up. Owl told me we will negotiate and if that doesn't work offer gifts. We were also to ask if it made a difference if the thief were alive or dead. Owl said not to worry now about such matters. I asked about how to clean the crystal between soul retrievals. Owl said to smudge it.

The soul retrieval journey for Kathy was quite a trip. I whistled to the guys (Owl and Wolf) and they came quickly then off we went – it was obvious they enjoyed the hunt and I did too. I was wearing my hunting shirt with the deer on it Maybe that is my soul retrieval shirt. Wolf was running full out with Owl flying just above his

head. I was flying behind just trying to keep up. I could see nothing. It was like flying through a void, very exhilarating.

Sudden I realized I had not noticed Kathy's jewelry by which I was going to track her. I opened my eyes briefly and saw that she was wearing a red head band. I then quickly dropped back into the hunt. After a time we suddenly came upon a kitchen with white doors on the cabinets. Inside a broom closet was a little 3 year old girl with a red head band. We coaxed her out of the closet and asked her if she would like to go home to Kathy. She was frightened and confused but seemed relieved to be found. I popped her in the crystal which I had been fiddling with in my left hand, the hand I used in extractions. Then off we went again.

After a time we came upon a skinny 7 year old with a red headband and a sullen look. She was stubborn, mistrustful, sad. She would not budge with any of our coaxing, even from the 3 year old. I was beginning to worry and was at a loss what to do when I remembered it was not up to me but up to the power animals. I turned to wolf and he said she needed a power animal. We called for one and a white horse appeared. The 7 year old got very excited and got on the horse and agreed to come with us. I popped them both in the crystal and off we went again.

We came upon a 14 year old sitting in an empty classroom in the back row. She seemed sad and lonely. I asked if something bad had happened here and she said no she just didn't want to go home. She agreed to come with us and I popped her in the crystal and we came back.

I blew them out of the crystal into Kathy's heart and then again into her head. I made sure to visualize each of them leaving and entering and filling her body. They appeared to be in her OK. I rattled to seal her up and Sandy played the Tibetan bowl to allow integration and acceptance.

Lhana started uncontrollable giggling that would spread around the room and subside. Then Walter would start it, then Lianna. Kathy and I were both caught in it. All the while the Tibetan Bowl was ringing. Fantastic.

So that is it for now. I am going to try to keep mum all day so no phone call even though it is Monday and you suggested I call you.

The Eighth Day

2/3 12:40 PM

After mailing the letter to you I went to breakfast and had oatmeal and yogurt and felt a bit guilty because Owl has said I should take only liquids for a day of fasting. I went to our 9:30AM helping session and said (wrote) that I wanted my voice back so I went in the middle circle. I felt for Robert and for Brenda who was in the circle again this time with a father dying of cancer. I sent Owl to Robert's Mother – her power animal which I saw was a big cat. Then to Brenda to give some sort of support. But I was pretty choked up with my need. Several people had Eagles or Hawks work on my throat, someone else said it would be a while because I had more to learn. Someone else was surprised to be told it was upper world teacher's business (seems so to me). Sandy said I was to drink honey tea in ritual fashion. I have started to do that. I had no lunch today. Maybe I'll have no dinner. I wrote to the group that I was told to do that. Pru said she will join me in being silent today. I was touched by this act. These are the things I was told and remember.

Kathy – I woke up thinking about my first wife Lois. We separated in 1976. She didn't want to split I did. It was very difficult - I still feel a confusion of bitterness, guilt, love. She lives in Boulder, Colorado. I haven't seen her for more than 10 years. We have two boys now 32 and 30 (16 and 14 at the time of the split).

I think there was soul stealing – maybe her, maybe me. Will you ask your power folks to look into it for me?. If they say not now, then just poke around for any pieces that would be useful.

Thanks, Bob

I was sort of choked up and tearful we then went to our regular session and after drumming we had some songs, a marvelous long one from Walter which I didn't expect. Then Sandy talked again and as usual wowed me. You two are way out of my league but I am trying and learning. Then I had my Soul Retrieval done. I don't feel a whole lot different yet. As they were blown into me I felt little flashes of electricity and heat and I felt fuller and more peaceful but not a whole lot.

A sob did well up during the Tibetan Bowl playing which Sandy used at the end. I suddenly was in Lhasa again, hearing the bowl in the temples, experiencing the vivid colors. Those memories are now with me. –the monks in their orange gowns learning those rituals that we stumbled on at one of the monasteries, the incredible smell of rancid Yak butter.

Kathy's description of what she brought back for me was surprising and of course right on. Two dimensional cut-out chains of soul parts dancing around an atomic plant cooling tower didn't make sense at first but she then said they were college-grad-school age doing a monotonous dance. She thought of the sacrifice of going to graduate school. I immediately thought of my last year in college and deciding finally

(during the summer at a government lab) to go to grad school in Genetics and give up the dream of writing poetry. I guess I must have left a piece of my poetic soul back there then. Well I guess that part of me is back now. I know I'll take care of it.

Next was a woman with brown hair in leotards dancing about with a soul part of me hanging from each hand. Lois, perhaps. I did give Kathy the go ahead for that if it was appropriate. She said she didn't make than an issue to visit Lois but there was a thief with two bits of me. She gave them up apparently without a battle. Sounds like Lois. Kathy said that these parts were young middle age.

The last part she brought back was a big surprise. A jovial me from recently and on Safari. That part she said came easily. I immediately thought of the earthquake. Being back from Africa less than an hour before the earthquake struck, my head was still in Africa of course The earthquake was a big trauma. I recall the fright. You were at the store, maybe never to return. Sherpa ran off, the house was trashed. the after-quakes, which you didn't know were after-quakes until after. No wonder I split.

This is one that now we would probably do something about; a traumatic event. Would I sense soul loss? Apparently people from Shamanic cultures do. Sandy told the story of the Woman in Bali, I think, who senses it and immediately looked for a Shaman. The story is recorded on page 100 of some travel book. I didn't take notes but I remember some of what Sandy said. The other thing she said that struck me was that cremation causes souls to suffer greatly if done before they leave the body and this is thought to take 3 days. I immediately thought of Mother, Father and Dennis. I must journey on that. Sandy also had this waiting period put into her living will. I must remember to get a copy of her living will. It is from this sensitivity that perhaps arises my horror about organ transplants, an abomination, akin to cannibalism, unless done knowingly and who can do that?

At session break Richard came up to me and said shave. I pondered that a bit and then shaved. The not shaving while purifying myself was a kind of reflexive act; I don't think Owl told me to do that. It seems like the old sack-cloth and ashes routine. I want to be purposeful and resolute.

I suddenly started remembering scenes from the wedding time with Lois. That is probably the puppet master. Her Grandfather the Baptist missionary asking if I believed in God and me hoping and trembling that he couldn't penetrate my disguise. My feelings of panic that I was doing the wrong thing but trapped by the family, the ceremonies, and her wishes. She didn't take those pieces of my soul. I gave them to her.

I just realized I missed a thing on drumming the I Ching presented by Mo. I was going to go but I think I am too much in process.

2/3 6:34 PM.

I'm back from afternoon session. Last night I skipped dinner and had my cup of hot water and honey out by my favorite rock. The sun had set but the red was still there. Wendy came by me and sang the Sun song, "Heal my pain". I appreciated that. Then I came up here to the room and discovered why I was cold. The lower window was wide open and the heat turned off. I fix that quick. Everyone is coughing and hacking just as you predicted. Sandy ended her session today with a dance of appreciation for the work of our power animals. People then cheered her, rattled, and held Sandy over their head and whisked her around the room. I didn't participate, not because I don't think she is fabulous. She is extraordinarily gifted in many many ways. But I am feeling subdued and inward, possible due to the soul retrieval, the dedication to real silence, the onset of the flu, or all three.

At the end of session, Pru came to me wanting to do some physical work on me. She says she has cured voice loss. I told her I would journey on it. I took a pocketful of those little valentine heart candies (in the can) to session this afternoon and passed them impulsively to people if I felt the urge. Sandy got one that said lover boy. Talla got one that said kiss me which she promptly did. I'll have to fill my pockets up again for tonight.

The afternoon session was very interesting. Sandy shared more of her experiences doing soul retrievals, then we journeyed to our power animal or teacher to set up a meeting of the just returned soul parts and ask them the following: 1) why did they split, 2) what are they bringing back, and 3) what do they need to keep them here at home.

The college cutouts and the two puppets were still faceless and speechless. Sandy says one should normally wait at least 24 hours to do this work. However, the recent jovial me was very clear! About my teachers answers, 1)fear, 2)adventurousness, and, 3)greater psychic and spiritual awareness in the moment Makes sense, seems right.

Kathy's three girls all spoke up and it worked out really well for her. Later she told me that she had visited with her horse as well.

The second exercises was to go to the appropriate spirit helper and find out the following; 1) had I stolen any souls, and 2) a ritual to get them back. It was Wolf who was running this show. Yes I had stolen souls it seemed, from Lois, Ilga, and maybe a few others. The ritual I was given was to go to the middle world, to the time it first happened. Catch the soul I was stealing in the crystal and send it back by a smudging ceremony out of doors. It will have to wait till I get back or get some energy back at least. I am pretty tired.

2/4 6:59 PM

I am lying in bed. Birds are singing and I am feeling a bit better because I think I know what is going on.

An aside, the alarm clock went off at 6 AM. I got it after a bit of fumbling although I wondered if it was tough on my soul, so I went back to the dream I was having, a weird procession in Austria. The star of the procession was a woman with a false nose, she could lift up and down. Jenny! She sat next to me last night and actually commented about stealing my soul. I kept giving her valentine heart candies on the principle of feeding the hungry tigers.

So I think I survived the alarm clock, but I am not so sure about the soul extraction.

Yesterday I felt terrible; low energy, tired, sleepy, depressed, vulnerable etc. etc. It wasn't my voice. I was not catching the flu that's going around. I maintained my silence, my fast, my honey water. But I could barely wait for bed time. The evening session was Michael again. He seemed more muted, he sort of sounded like I felt.

It was a rattle night. Journeying by rattling and singing. We were supposed to pick a partner and do reciprocal healing with a song and a pattern brought back from a teacher. This was a South American Indian method of healing. Michael demonstrated on Kerrie and fixed her back-ache. We did a brief journey to our teacher with rattle and chant. It worked for me; a simple chant just popped right up.

Cat turned to me and asked if I'd be her partner. I wrote, no I can't sing. A bit later I wrote that I could sing silently. But she wanted to hear the song and turned me down. It fit right in with my mood. I sat on my pillow all alone while everyone did their thing. No one noticed. No one cared. Fair weather friends all! Poor little Bobbie, no one loves him, no one cares. So I packed up my toys, my rattle, my drum, my Mickey Mouse magic slate, but not my flute. I had given it to Kerrie to keep because I "couldn't bare to have it when I couldn't play". I was still very cold. I turned the heat on high, shut all the windows, got an extra blanket and curled up in bed with Mitchell's "The Gospel According to Jesus".

The Ninth Day

When I woke up I realized something had gone wrong with the soul retrieval. Brief journeys to Bill and Owl indicate that the cutouts and or the puppets aren't complete and either don't belong or need power animal retrieval or extractions. I immediately felt better, although I now have a headache. I resolve to get Kathy to work on it. Its her responsibility and teaching. I am out to get instructions.

2/4 8:24 PM

I'm back all bundled up for warmth and protection. I headed out hoping no one would see me. The first guy I see is wearing shorts. amazing! I am so cold. My power spot is vacant. I face the sun, not yet over the hill and clutching your healing Bear in my left hand, I silently sing my morning prayer several times and feel good about the coming day. I call Owl and he comes flying and since my eyes are closed, I can see him sitting on a nearby bush.

We chat. Sandy says she bickers with her power animal. Owl says I am doing fine, one step at a time. Keep up the silence and the honey tea. Don't eat until hungry. It sounds good.

I wrote a note to give to Kathy and that is it, except I do feel uneasy about not calling you. I will get John to call with me. I do check the phone board. Watching the people in the baths down below evoked again that being left out as a kid theme. It looked like fun, but I have to be purposeful and resolute and silent and drink tea!

Thinking of the socializing in the baths recalled the chatter in our meetings. Paul always has his hand up and asks many, many questions. Sandy finally started telling him to journey on it. Then someone else interjected, "Journey on it", before Sandy could respond and everyone laughed. Then people started laughing the moment Paul put up his hand. Paul didn't seem to notice, but I thought it was childish and cruel. This is exactly what it was.

Note:

Kathy, I believe your work with me is not yet done, so I am returning the cats eye – you may need to use it. I felt progressively worse throughout yesterday. I left the evening session prematurely. It was not the flu, not my voice. It is the soul retrieval. Brief journeys to my teacher and owl suggest that something is wrong with the cutouts and or the puppets.

Possibilities: (1) they are intruders and don't belong (2) They need power animal retrievals (3) we need an extraction.

I think back to the process. Did your power animal check them out? It seems you said they popped right into your bag on their own. You could journey on what to do and/or talk to Sandy or Michael.

I am eager & available. You could do an extraction, maybe at 2 today. Love Bob

Do you know what two cars colliding feels like? An auto-body experiencing. Get it? A joke, courtesy of M. Harner Ph.D.

2/4 1:01 PM

I am still not hungry. I have had no food since yesterday, and no coffee. (I did have a coffee headache, but no matter). I have just had honey water.

It sure simplifies life. I do my ritual. I go to my special rock, I honor the spirits, now with honey water rather than the flute. I gave Kathy my note about my difficulty and my thoughts. She journeyed on it during the morning healing and was told a ritual to perform to flesh out the cutouts.

Before session, Pru did a voice healing and had me vocalizing a bit from the abdomen and gave me a song to sing which I have forgotten, but which was supposed to be sung from the chest, something about "be thankful for the silence". I'll get it from her again.

I began feeling better this morning even though my head hurt, my shoulder ached, and I felt depressed. It was very comforting being with the others, knowing that they care. I give out little valentine heart candies when I am moved. Often it is from a friendly touch, or just remembering something nice about someone. It saves saying thanks.

I didn't really feel up for the healing circle this morning but one issue really excited me. Mo has a friend just starting the last round of chemotherapy for cancer from fetal tissue from a tubal pregnancy. Sandy said she was going to travel to the soul of the fetus to persuade it to leave but didn't know if it could be done. It is an age old question, "when does soul enter body?" Maybe I'll become a right-to-lifer!

So Owl took me to visit her in a Palo Alto hospital. I saw spots of light throughout her body I took to be the fragmented pieces of the fetus soul or element of soul stuff (*soulons*) not yet formed into a soul. Anyway Owl sang a song to the *soulons* and softly waved his wing over her body. The song was, "Come Home", and I saw many of them leaving. I wrote Mo about what I did. I'd be curious to know how Sandy made out.

Michael was back in form again as "Captain Shaman" introducing fun and games in the middle world. We formed teams. One person went out to a spot on the property nearby (in OR) and stayed there while the partner visualized where they were and drew it. We then went to the spot together and shared. Then the game was played in reverse. My partner and I both struck out, but more than half the pairs got it the first time.

When I did the visualizing I saw a scene with a person in it. My partner looked at a scene from my eyes. A show of hands indicate lots of both approaches. The first go around, a lot of people found their partners, less the second time. Michael says that is what usually happens. I definitely saw someone standing at a particular place

but maybe not my partner, or not at this time (parallel universe, timelessness, etc). Next time, I'll try the jewelry tracking trick.

We spent the rest of the morning session preparing for the Ceremony for the Ancestors. I think it is going to be terrific, great songs and wild dances. I will wear my Dream Journey plus Bear shirt combination and throw my tooth fragment over the cliffs as an offering. I have been carrying it in my pouch, but I didn't know why. That is the way it is with the Spirits.

The ceremony rehearsal was a bit struggle and irritating at times, but what do you expect from OR? I am going to play the Owl song and speak, yes speak, an invocation first. It no doubt will be an Owl-like screech but maybe that is what the Spirits have been preparing me for.

I did have an insight this morning that is good to share. It has to do with my understandings about Spirit work. I did see a person by those bushes standing on the stair. I could take you to the spot, but I was wrong about my partners location. Lesson. If I see it, I didn't make it up. It was shown to me. It may be the right answer for the wrong question, but I should honor it. I think I am beginning to get the hang of this Spirit stuff. Also, I am beginning to be able to take quick journeys to Owl and Bill and get an answer without dealing with the tunnel or drumming. At least I can outdoors by the sea. I have had to because I didn't bring a tape recorder or drumming tape.

2/4 2:57 PM

My pen was running out. I'm back from the ceremony with Kathy to help my soul retrieval. She took me to her power spot which was where I did my major Medicine Wheel pouch work during our Medicine Wheel Workshop. It is above Rolf, where we worked. Following her instructions, I brought my rug, a canteen with water, and a two sided bowl (like a gravy ladle). The latter I couldn't get, so I just brought a red lacquer Japanese bowl.

She rattled and prepared the water in the bowl, adding stones and some sticks, and then poured water around me. She told me that the paper cutouts had become one already and that the ceremony caused rapid growth, or inflation of this soul part. It was now a young man, joyous in character, but she was told he would not speak for some time (but then neither can I!).

She had been shown this ceremony on a journey. It is for rapid growth. One first rattles, then puts water in the bowl, then earth, then some twigs, all in a special way. The bowl is in front of her and the water is poured from the other side of the bowl, etc. When it was shown to her in her journey, tulips sprung up wherever the woman poured the water.

On her morning's journey about me she was told that the two dimensional souls would become 3 dimensional if treated by this ritual. Apparently from what she saw it worked. She first asked me where the soul parts were. I indicated my lower

abdomen. She said she saw that there was now only one; they had fused. After the ritual it had swelled to become a young man. I am feeling better.

That was spooky listening to you on the phone and not being able to talk. It must have been awful for you. I won't do it again. Visual cues are very important, especially without vocal ones. These letters have become very important to me. It is almost like you are here and I am explaining what happened to me while we were apart. I do think a lot about what you would think of this. Mostly I think about how we can now do this stuff together. You know, hide in our garden, meet in the upper world. I of course miss our touch, our snuggles. I have to go. It is just as well.

2/4 6:05 PM

I stuck my nose in the dining room and decided against eating dinner. It would probably have been OK but I think I could have handled only soup. I'll start eating tomorrow. A two day fast is probably enough.

I found the ceremony beautiful and touching. We drummed and I screeched for Owl and played his song on the flute. Then we went out to the fire pit and got live coals in an abalone shell to take to our new site. The ceremony actually combined the two Ghost Dance results, and nicely I thought. Then we went to the cliffs while Kerrie played the Esalen Indian song on the flute.

Jenny led us in the Song for their God, and then the song by Neva and we threw something over the cliffs as a sacrifice. This was a ceremony of loss and leave-taking. I threw the chip from my front tooth I had been carrying in my pouch and immediately I heard myself say "I am leaving a part of myself here with you, Ancestors."

We then moved down to the stream and up to the pool below the little waterfall (up under the highway bridge) and again we heard that flute song haunting, melancholy. I hear it now.

Kerrie had slipped ahead and was sitting on the bridge playing. Wendy who was the main organizer, our leader really, was trying to do both smudging and ritual washing with a wet bought, so I took over the smudging. It was loose sage in an abalone shell and I couldn't keep the damn stuff lit. I tried blowing on it, lighting little bond fires with matches and twigs, all the while people filed by to bathe in the smoke.

Then we went to the lawn by the big house for our main ceremony of thanksgiving. It involved various ceremonial things, washing each other with wet sand (on the hands and face), partaking of the bounty of mother earth, (a basket of flowers and leaves), all of this around a fire (actually candles we had carried down from above). Then there were several dances.

The one that excited me the most was a wave dance where we lined up in two rows. The row with rattles was the cliffs, the other row the waves. While the cliffs rattled

the waves rushed up to the cliffs but did not touch them. They receded, the cliffs rattled and the wave rushed back again. Back and forth, six times. It was a very pretty and exciting dance. Then we had a ceremonial ending and the sun was just going down behind the sea.

I went down to the Medicine Wheel by the cliffs to watch the sun set and Wendy came down her face wet with tears and sang the Sun song, "Heal my pain". She finished just as the last of the sun sank into the sea. We walked back together and threw the remaining sage from the ceremony into the sea over the cliffs where the other sacrifices had been made. It was a very moving Ceremony. I really felt the presence of the Esalen Indians in the ceremony, especially in the song and dances. I thought of them enjoying this place and respecting the land until the Spaniards came and killed them all.

2/5 8:00 AM

I woke up very weak. I'll have breakfast this morning for sure. If I can get down there. I had a dream that I was saying goodbye to people and really speaking. I tried my voice and it feels better and sounds better, but I'll maintain silence until it feels that I can really speak. I had no dinner last night.

The evening started with much giggling and Michael and others cracking jokes. Guess what they called the small spiritualist who just got out of jail? A short medium at large. Lordy.

But we finally got down to business although there were five happy looking teddy bears sitting around the candle in the center of the room that people insisted stay there.

Michael didn't say much to start us off. Just visit the upper world and ask to be shown the Destiny of Souls. That is all. I found it hard. I saw Bill at level one and Mother at level two but couldn't get further. I went back down to the lower world and Owl came and I got to level three where father is. Then I saw a difference, that as you move up there is more light. The light only starts at level three (or four), I wasn't sure which. The light was love and I was to help mother go up and be with father in the light. I saw that love aggregates the souls. That was it, very incomplete but a very exciting start. I have work to do up there!

Michael then had people report what they saw at level 1 then 2, then 3, 4, 5 and higher. Kathleen burst into tears because she had seen and talked with her father and grandparents. My view of 1 and 2 sort of fits with that of some other people but there was a lot of variety. Many saw levels with different types of souls. They sounded a bit like Dante.

To end that session we played a game (I guess). The lights were put out, fans turned off, candle out, for about 5 minutes. We were to remain alert. I did, but experienced nothing. Others reported various things, a large snake in the room, whirling lights.

Some wanted to know what Michael did but he said he would lose it if he told. Neat. The Ambiguity Principle strikes again.

I think Talla will join our drumming group. I am eager to see it grow and provide even more support than it has and I feel more confidence about taking initiative. Thinking about how I was, tentative uncertain, fearful even, that I wasn't doing it right, as if I were in church. It makes me realize a lot has happened here regarding "my spiritual growth."

At the beginning of last night Michael said there would be a recording session for Songs. I immediately felt uncomfortable and knew I didn't want to go. Last night after session I was clearer about it and wrote up a statement.

(Note: Katheen, please read for me and give back)

(Because I initiated the Music project and want to produce the Song book, I want you to know that I will not participate in the recording session.

I have taken Michael's admonition that sacred songs lose their potency if sung for non-sacred purposes seriously.

I do not want to play the Owl Song at a recording session nor do I want my playing of it reproduced so it can be used as background music while driving on the freeway.

To me the printing of the music and distributing it to workshop participants is another matter. My intention was that we would have access to information that would allow us to recreate our songs might otherwise be lost to us. Even this may be sacrilege but it feels OK to me. The recording, as of now, does not. Nevertheless Essie shared her dance on tape with everyone and for any purpose for all time.

One of the most amazing, miserable, things about silence is that it dis-allows real discourse. As a result this position is taken without the benefit of your thoughts and feelings, but in the absence of discussion, that is where I am.

And I loath committee meetings probably more than any of you, because I am sure I have been in more than any of you. It might be worthwhile finding out how many would attend the recording session.

Bob

This morning a brief journey to Owl affirmed my position. He appeared very large and beautiful. After session we had a birthday party for Darla. She got a big cake. She was radiant. I went over and kissed her while she cut the cake and then I slipped away. I was tired and cake was not what I wanted to break my fast. Every once in a while memories are coming to me of my college days, of father in the hospital, and the almost unbearable experiences of mother and I deciding on shock therapy, of my wanting, waiting, yearning to be somewhere else, to run and hide. That is what the cutout kids are about, I think. That part of me I will have to journey to soon. I certainly have some homework to do, unfinished business: the

cutout kids, the puppets, the stolen souls, getting mother with father. This ain't just all fun and games.

Well I am going to get up, say hi to that morning eagle and face the day.

2/5 1:27 PM

I am back on the balcony after lunch and running out of paper, stamps, envelopes and fortunately also time is running out and I'll be home soon. I am beginning to think of that. I broke fast this morning. I had oatmeal and yogurt and really, really, gave thanks to Mother Earth for this food. Maria Victoria startled me out of my prayer with the request that I translate her poem, a marvelous sounding poem in Italian. Flustered, I whispered "later" and went back to my prayer. But I wrote a note to her that I would feel privileged if I could do it after workshop and put it in the song book. An interesting challenge that will probably require journeying.

I sat next to Kathleen. We drummed and Michael did his dance but I suddenly realized it was a new dance, the dance of his teacher most likely. Before this, he had danced his power animal which was very clear to me. I saw him as it several times, but what it is I will not say.

Then we had discussion. Kathleen read my note and Michael just commented that it had merit and was thoughtful but other positions were also tenable. Then he asked a show of hands about the recording session. It was something like 17 against the recording, 9 for, so the recording session was scrubbed. A while later Mo, who obviously was pro recording, said she thought everything was sacred and she sang sacred songs in the Supermarket. Michael says yes, but some songs are special and should be reserved for special purposes. I then realized that some of my flute songs were in one category, some in another. This is a complex issue. We would require considerable preparation to do recordings and do right by the songs, the Spirits and ourselves.

Then someone asked Michael about Indians resenting intrusion of white folks into their spiritual affairs. That sent him off on a marvelous diatribe about they can't have it both ways and besides it is not their thing to keep, it is the Spirits. That I would like have a recording of.

Then we journeyed to our own death. In Michael's inimitable style;

"OK GANG ITS DYING TIME".

It is now getting dark and the clouds are ominous. It is going to rain. After lunch I went to my power spot. The sea was gray and oily. Usually that interface between sea and land is so busy, birds, whales, butterflies, whizzing back and forth. But it was still. A bird north, long pause, bird south, pause, butterfly. I was gifted with my first otter swimming and playing on the oily sea. Every moment is magical when the Spirits are with you.

So we went on this journey to see our soul's fate after death, but not the OR death itself. Michael made us swear an oath to return. He said it is best to have available in advance knowledge of what would bring someone back (a chocolate fudge sundae works for him) and always have a sitter. We all came back, but some came reluctantly. Some seemed pretty spaced out, even after lunch. It was an experience.

As I floated up I felt tremendous release, a letting go. I floated in a void for long time. Then I began to see relatives, mother, father, Dode, grandmother, grandfather. We slowly joined together but it took time and effort, but as we did, it grew lighter and I realized that the light was love and we were joining into larger and larger networks. webs of families and loved ones joined through time, back to the beginning, up and up, lighter and lighter until all individuality was lost.

During this process souls dropped out to reincarnate and come back again, or to go to lower levels as teachers, for a time. That I did. Then I saw this whole thing as a giant torus (a kind of spherical donut) flowing up toward the top, and the light then down the middle to the bottom and the dark, and then flowing up the outside again. I suppose the top was the upper world, the bottom the lower world, and the middle world at the equator, but I didn't know, because I was too far away to see. I had sort of moved into space and looked from outside after I lost my individuality.

I shared with Kathleen as best I could writing on my Mickey Mouse Magic pad. She had a similar experience, then some people shared with everyone at large. People saw incredibly beautiful things happening to them. There were some common themes but also rich variety. Marti's vision touched me deeply although don't remember much except that souls come down as Spirits to help the children.

On my journey the most moving moment was when Chris and Bruce joined the web and helped push us toward the light. I realized the need for future generations to help us and I was very grateful for the help of my children coming behind me. I can see why Michael sees this psychopomp work as serious business and very important. We keep the whole soul system moving and flowing with love. Love is the energy that drives the soul system. Without love? Death and darkness.

We must have a Gestalt group here now. There is yelling and screaming all around me. Esalen is pretty weird!

I was reminded in my journey of that marvelous creature. the slime mold, that starts out life as a single celled amoeba crawling around the forest floor eating and reproducing. Suddenly, one of them sends out a signal (actually the chemical, cyclic AMP, the stuff that in us caffeine activates to wake us up) and all the amoebae that can smell it congregate together creating a giant slug that crawls a while, then rises up into a mushroom like structure. The amoebae have become parts of a larger creature. Some become stalk cells, others cap cells, and others spores. The spores are dispersed by the winds and germinate into amoebae and the cycle starts again.

2/5 6:57 PM

People are beginning to get organized for going home, overload looks imminent, but Michael has been very good at creating workshop design features to fit participant needs. A second verse of an early song came to me. The rain has started. This afternoon Michael had us do the Soul's Destiny journey again. This is obviously a lead into psychopomp work which I am so far only guessing is about assisting the movement of souls toward the light. It sounds like awesome work.

This time I journeyed over the same ground. The soul's journey looked overall the same. I got more detail that all make it seem very scientific. I guess that is what the Spirits figure I can understand.

The major new features were:

Since souls are connected through love associations and ancestry, it is actually an N-dimensional connectivity matrix. Get it? This Love~Joy-N-dimensional matrix of souls gets denser toward the apex of the torus and this intensity finally turns the love-joy light energy into ecstasy as the souls all fuse and then disintegrate into tiny elementary pieces of soul (I call soulons).

These soulons flow down the center of the torus devoid of love or light, but since everything is connected they are pulled down the center by the movement of the souls toward the light on the outside of the torus. These connections draw the soulons into the lower world, and as they move up on the outside, they coalesce into rocks, trees, animals, and the cycle starts again.

Then I tried to see the connectivity between the soul network and the ordinary material world, but the best I could make of it was that OR was like a shell around this torus, and the torus, composed of this soul network, had bumps that somehow molded and were molded through interaction with the material world.

All of this sound ridiculous to write down. The mad scientist over the edge! But I did see this. I do think the Spirits give us things to see that we can understand. It is sort of depressing that this is only as far as I have gone from my scientific background.

2/5 9:00 PM

You know, for a guy whose wife had to come to the rescue and write from scratch his only letter of 1991, the now famous Edgar Christmas letter, I am doing pretty good don't you think? Not only have I written this book-length letter to you, but I have many notes and memos as well. Unfortunately the quality of my writing is deteriorating and I am sure no one can read my writing, and of course my spelling never was worth a damn. Fortunately, the end is drawing near. One more full day then goodbye to Esalen. I am about ready.

Tonight's session was short and sweet. We were in the yurt. Michael had us pair and look shamanically (in the dark) at each other's beauty and then sing them a song. Before it started Cat, who had also lost her voice squeaked "what should peopl

41e without voices do"? Michael said, partner with Bob, and I immediately ran to her because the people on either side of me were turning away from me, and besides, Cat was my obvious destiny in this because she had turned away from me earlier because I couldn't sing.

We danced and then whistled to each other. It was very sweet and satisfying. I saw a real gutsy girl with lots of heart. I felt compassion and a desire to encourage joy and spontaneity in her.

Then we shared some of our songs at large and the most incredible one was from Matthew to Jenny. It went on and on. It was one of those growing songs, adding descriptions of Jenny as a bunny, her long black ears, her very long whiskers, her neat feet, her cute tail, etc., and finally, her three eyes (she wears a headband with a third eye). Everyone was in hysterics. Someone said it was the craziest song he had heard and Michael said it certainly was hare-brained. Typical Michael.

We left the Yurt and trudged home in the rain. Some went to the baths which had been reserved for us and were treated with herbs and candles and stuff. Michael suggested my flute might be nice there, but the day had been quite enough for me. Two journeys to see God (who I discovered is a torus of soulons) and crazy dancing and singing. Regarding the journey to see the Soul's Destiny, he remarked that people spend lifetimes in monasteries and nunneries hunting for a glimpse of God when all they have to do is pick up a drum and close their eyes. Ain't it the truth.

I am getting homesick and stir crazy. Two weeks spent constantly going in and out of NOR is quite a bit. But I feel I have learned a lot and changed a lot. My third eye has been opened and my values strengthened, deepened and expanded. I see the importance of love in a way I never really did. I see my connectedness to others and that allows me to love them more easily. I have greater faith in my abilities to contact the spirits and trust them to lead me. I think I'll read the Jesus Gospel and then sleep.

The Tenth Day

2/6 7:38 AM

I awoke about 4:30 AM and it was very nice dreaming, waking, thinking, sleeping. imagining, sleeping. dozing, etc. All the while the rain is coming down. I finally just now opened the blind and looked out on a scene from Japan. Wind and rain in the pine trees. Black earth and wet plants in the garden, and people with umbrellas walking back and forth, and behind, the steely sea merging with the white sky, and all the while, the soft rain splattering on the skylight.

I was thinking back to the way I was before I came on this Odyssey (with Captain Shaman and his first mate, Sandy) to the NOR. I was in pretty bad shape really. Just hanging on. It must have been hard for you to see me that way. I feel very

much at peace now, slowed down, grounded (with both feet fully planted in NOR?) yet full of energy and eager to do things. Will I be able to stay here and not slip back into the pit of despond? I know what to do. I just have to do it that's all.

Last night walking back from the Yurt, Talla offered me tobacco to sprinkle as a thanks offering to the rain. I refused, and she asked if I was OK. I realized that I did not want to use it that way because of my experiences with it. I am going to use cocoa as offering to the spirits. I bet they will like it and it will be better for them than tobacco.

I better go now. I was just writing down a pretty little lullaby that came to me earlier, perhaps from thinking of Marti's souls helping the children, or the love net in the (ugh) torus.

P.S.

The last butterflies I sent you were victims of car tires. They came from under the butterfly trees. But this one, more appropriate to the way I am feeling just now, was found on the lawn by the cliffs. I am sure it died from a surfeit of love.

2/6 12:59 PM

The morning session ended on a very squirmy note for me. After a very profound experience, Michael launched into this theory that he is uncertain whether or not he should end his book with. He wanted peoples opinions. It seemed a rather ordinary idea, not really a theory, that evolution has provided us with a taste of the ecstasy of eternity as a reward for reproducing, namely orgasm.

It seems sort of obvious and old hat to me. As he sort of admitted, it has the odor of the academy too. Maybe I missed something. Everyone seemed so excited and Michael thought it might offend OR people, and so on. Hands shooting up everywhere, I guess wanting a good old OR yak-fest. I could hardly restrain myself. I should have just got up and left. I think my irritation was the shock of change of tone. We had been in a deep, caring, loving, place, sharing songs and tears after a very intense experience with the Healing Drum. Also I hate to see us lose our precious moments away from OR, so I left and went down to my power spot and, joy oh joy, there was a red-tailed Hawk sitting in the bough of a fir tree at eye level no more than 10 feet away. I saw every feather. We looked at each other for an eternity it seemed and then he turned, dived down the cliff face and soared out to sea. What a gift. What a magical place this is for me.

This morning before meeting I went there. The storm had subsided but the sea was high. On its surface, as if anchored, were sea birds unperturbed by the roiling swell and wind. Sensing something in the deep, how I do not know, they dived and then surfaced to resume their attentive work.

I wondered if they hunt and fish like Shamans, using a third eye. It is amusing to think of my biologist friends struggling to understand the migration of butterflies and birds. These monarchs, clustered in the trees above us, came from mountains in

Mexico 5000 miles away and only their ancestors have been here before (I think I am right on this).

After drumming, Michael said there was a lot of power in the room and that we were going to do the Healing Drum. He got out a special drum to use and then went around the room sounding his regular drum to find two drum holders. They were Sharon and Kerrie. Then three drummers to join Michael volunteered. I was one. He warned that the beat was fast and would be tough to sustain. Shortly after starting he took off his shirt and was bare chested. The drums arranged as a tight phalanx behind Michael, focused their drumming on the face of the Drum as the two Drum holders let the Drum move where it would.

My body started trembling, while holding the drum and beating it, and I knew I would not be able to continue. I ran over to John who had initially stood up to drum, and he immediately got up and took my place. Pretty soon he was also trembling with the "Spirit power" surging through his drum. Then the Drum started moving, and moved to different people, focusing its power on them. After a time, it came to me and I felt this flow, it felt like a radiance. It pour into me. At first I was sitting forward, but it pushed me back, and flowed over me into my mouth and throat. After it left, it felt like the calm and peace after orgasm.

Kerrie just stopped by to tell me her experience while holding the drum over me. She said the Spirits were sending me thanks for the Giveaway I did. They were grateful to me.

We had a long period of silence after we were done with the Healing Drum. People were deeply moved, everyone, I think. Afterwards some people shared their experiences. Some sang songs, some said poems, I played my lullaby which had obviously been give to me at 5 AM just for this moment, and then came Michael's theory.

The morning started with a bit of anguish as well. I came at 9:30 for the healing circle as I always do. I wouldn't miss it This morning Sandy was away but Sharon organized it very well, even though it was complex. Several people needed soul retrievals from the Soul Destiny journey of yesterday. It is dangerous out there for some I guess. You just don't want to come back and end up leaving pieces behind. I didn't participate in this, but I did in the healing circle that followed.

We needed a drummer for the healing circle and Patti asked if she could use my drum and I said yes but did not turn around. When the drumming started the drum was as flat as a pancake, thud, thud, oh my God, my drum! I hadn't check it even though it was raining because Tom White Eagle said his Elk drums never go flat. I felt ashamed, but pulled myself together and did journey to do some healing in spite of the thud, thud, thud, behind me. When I turned around, to my relief Patti was holding another drum! She had Gail's buffalo hide drum also made by Tom White

Eagle. Buffalo drums do go flat. When Gail came in I told her how Tom had taught us to tighten it with heat on the back not the front.

2/6 6:26 PM

I gulped down dinner (garlic chicken) to be with you a while. We have a slide show on China Lake I don't want to miss. As I recall, from the fossil record, it is the site of oldest habitation in California.

Sandy did this afternoon. I asked her if she would talk about psychopomp work if we were not going to do any. I really like the way she describes things. She is clear, logical, grounded, experiential. Different from Michael and refreshing because of it.

Her description sounded exciting, and I immediately decided I want to take one of the Death and Dying workshops. Then she had us find a place outside and ask the question, how to use our power after we leave here. I went straight to my power spot, my special rock surrounded by ocean on two sides, south and west, and asked the question.

At first everything said what I had already learned. Then Owl showed up and sat in the tree behind me (in NOR) then I saw (in OR) an egret, I think, anyway a large white bird in the water below me. I realized immediately this was the sign. It then flew west, out to sea and landed on a patch of kelp. This egret was me. I was to go west toward the dream lodge and the place of death. Then a second egret came from the East, you, and the two flew together north to the place of Giveaway until they were lost from sight.

I could not believe it. All this was happening in OR. I am to follow my own path in Shamanism but we will be partners working side by side. Marvelous. Then we all met and repeated this experience in NOR. For me it was pretty much a repeat, except the egrets flew up on the railing as did the hawk from before session. The hawk said I had power and should use it. The egrets said I was not to be just your office boy but to do my own thing in this work and it would make us a powerful team. Then people shared, but I was too filled up with the awe from what the egrets did in OR and also the hawk earlier that I had a hard time listening. I guess this is the way Sandy does her nature workshops. It is a lot like our Medicine Wheel Workshops except now we have spent two weeks calling the Spirits and they are all around. No wonder the Esalen staff feel spooked by Michael and this workshop.

Then, I guess for fun, Sandy had us journey to become water. She gave the instructions about how to return carefully because of all the people who had left pieces of themselves out there on the Soul's Destiny journey. Apparently there were a lot more soul retrievals done than the ones I watched this morning and this was the reason, I think, that we didn't get to do psychopomp work.

Sandy, in her sweet way attributed it to poor technique, in leaving NOR and coming back. Always say goodbye, thank the Spirits, or whoever, gather all your parts, retrace your steps, and climb carefully back into your body. I really like that

last part. I enjoy looking down at myself and then climbing in. It is sort of like going to bed after a good day. Michael is sloppy about such matters. He just assumes since we have had the Basic Workshop that that stuff is old hat, yet at least two people in the workshop couldn't even journey.

The discussion of the outdoor journey raised some interesting issues. Sandy said that animal and plant spirits were the essential Spirits of that species and human teachers were the souls of dead people. She said it as though it was fact, not just theory, at least I heard it that way. I am not sure it is that simple. I have a teacher, Bill, who is still alive. Also, I strongly feel that the Spirits present to us that which will help us learn and understand. Dave gave me a paper his wife Stephanie wrote to Michael on this subject back in '85. It had a psychological bent but a similar thrust. To me I suppose Owl is a mask that God is wearing for me at that time.

Anyway I'm out of here to see the slide show and antsy to be home again with you, hopefully about twenty hours from now.

2/6 10:45 PM

So now I know what you do in the three year program. Absolutely disgraceful. Performing miracles. I am peeved and annoyed because I can no longer hold to that scientific, materialistic view I so cherished, only a few months ago. Me, the distinguished university professor etc., etc., describing miracles seen with my own three eyes, tut tut.

At the end of the evening commenting on the failure of the levitation experiment, Lane said, "we just didn't understand the gravity of the situation", to which Michael replied, "yes it is a heavy matter".

Both experiments were performed the same way. The focus people or persons were in the center with a ring of drummers around them and the rest of the participants forming a third outer ring. To honor Michael's Principle of Ambiguity, the lights were away down and the candle out so that one could only see shadowy figures.

The first experiment was levitation. Michael told us this is quite common. Several saints did it, one kept floating to the ceiling during Mass so they had to keep him in his cell. Although these events were common knowledge at the time, they are now attributed to mass hysteria. I am now beginning to see mass hysteria in a new light since I am now one of the afflicted.

Four volunteers sat in the middle and we asked our power animals and teachers to raise them off the ground. It didn't work. Two people in the middle felt a pull on the top of their heads but that was it

Next, Sandy sat in the middle, and we were supposed to do the same with her, but Michael said something unexpected might happen, or nothing at all. As the drummer beat the journey beat, I stared at Sandy, but as Michael recommended,

just briefly, then I closed my eyes for a time then opened them for twenty seconds, and so on.

Shortly her shape changed. She looked lumpy not at all the way she had. A little later, I saw blobs of light I attributed to lights from outside, somehow shining through the blinds, but then I clearly saw shimmering bands of light moving across her body. I closed my eyes. I moved closer. The lights were still there. I felt very uncomfortable. This should be not happening. The drumming stopped. Michael asked what people had seen. The drummers all reported seeing her change shape. Some had seen her disappear, and radiate various forms of light. Then Sandy reported that her teacher had come to her and they had fused together and flown to a foreign country. She had difficulty coming back and that her teacher was still with her.

Michael went to her, sat with her and held her hands. Blobs of light and sheets of light shimmered in their arms and moved up Michael's forearms. He then spoke to Sandy's teacher. The teacher, who was in Sandy, replied in Sandy's voice, but softly so Michael repeated what she said louder. He asked her what she wanted, and she said she wanted to touch us. She had not touched flesh for a long time. We eagerly touched Sandy's hands. They were very cold and a weird sensation entered my arms, but it was not something in the unambiguous category, as the light and shape change had been. But other people did experience other things. Patti's arm kept making involuntary movement,s for example.

Michael talked with Sandy's teacher for a time. I guess it was before the touching, and she said a number of things to us one would expect a holy person to say, but I remember none of it. I think I was too dumbfounded. After she left and Sandy came back. We had some quiet time.

Then we talked about it a while and went home.

I don't like it one bit, this mixing of the worlds. At least when they mix it should be ambiguous, not full blown miracles like this. And Michael says, toward the end of the workshop we do like to wind things down a bit!

2/7 6:20 AM

Good old doubting Thomas, I know you well. But the morning after, it is still there, the shape changes, the light, the feel of the hands, the words. In some ways it is more real as a memory, uncluttered by the surging emotions. It really is time to come home. I feel for those who will have a major change going back into OR, corporate jobs, unsympathetic spouses, and the like. I have you, who give me unconditional love, and who introduced me to this work and the birds and animals and plants and rocks of our land, to talk with. Furthermore, I can squirrel away for long periods of time. I am free to do what I choose.

Ego is the key, I think. My enforced silence has diminished my ego, and has also let me see it clearly, what it is up to. The Quakers had a lot of it right. Only speak

when the Spirit moves you and bear witness to those things. A lot of the discussion after experiential work was ego stuff and made me squirm. Thank God I don't have to willingly do much of that again. And it is the ego that stands between me and the Spirits. All the Quakers were lacking were drums.

2/7 8:08 AM

I went to the Baths, but it seemed like the spirits are already leaving. I went down to the cliffs and threw handfuls of those little candy kisses into the sea for the Spirits. That candy can was like the loaves and fishes. I stopped after about five throws and the can was still full. I didn't want to litter.

Everything but my working tools, flute, drum, drum stick, rattle, rug, notebook, and this note pad, are in the car. My plan is to go to my power spot and play all my songs. At the end of our final session, while holding hands, I would like to play the Owl song one last time and then encourage Kerrie to play the Ancestor song by whispering "Play it again Sam" in her ear.