SWIM

SUBUD WRITERS INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

Issue Number 7 March 2017



Editorial

Welcome to SWIM Issue 7.

Good news items:

One: writers have begun sending me their work without being asked to. Which is very gratifying. This suggests that SWIM is acquiring a life of its own.

Two: there are wonderful pictures done by children in this issue.



Selfie by Marcus Bolt

Three: I'm happy to report that Marcus Bolt has taken over the lay-out job, and that SICA USA has come through with a grant for him.

Please forward the URL for this issue of SWIM to anyone you think might enjoy it.

Swim issue 8 will be published in 3 months or so. We'll be looking in particular for short stories, poetry and art by children and teenagers, and paintings and photographs of people. AND anything – poetry, fiction, articles, art, photography etc. by second generation Subud members.

Emmanuel Williams

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Published quarterly

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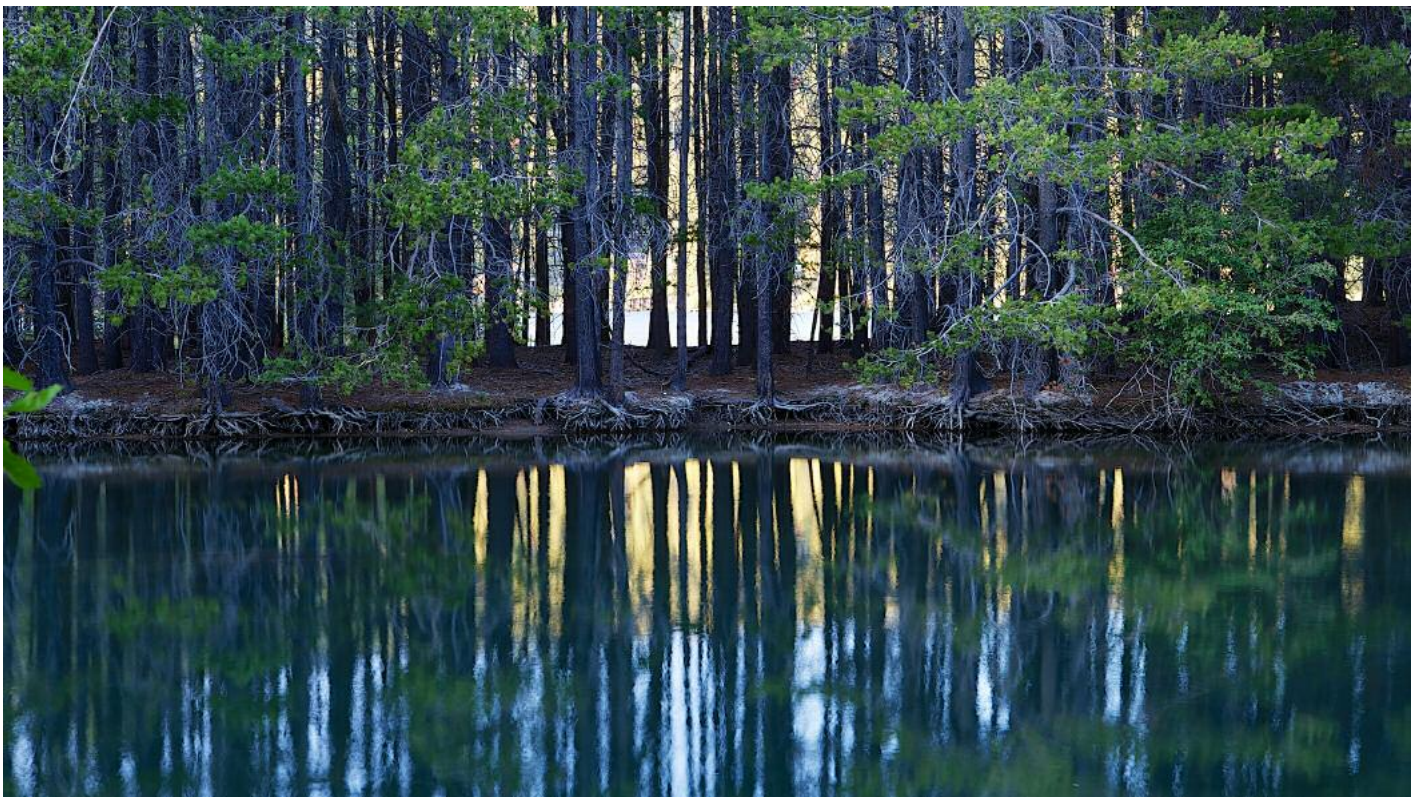
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Photos from Isaac Goff

My 45 years as a entrepreneur and businessman turned left a few years ago and photography became my passion. As I learn the basics and search around for "my thing" in photography, landscapes are what I am drawn to.







The Cows

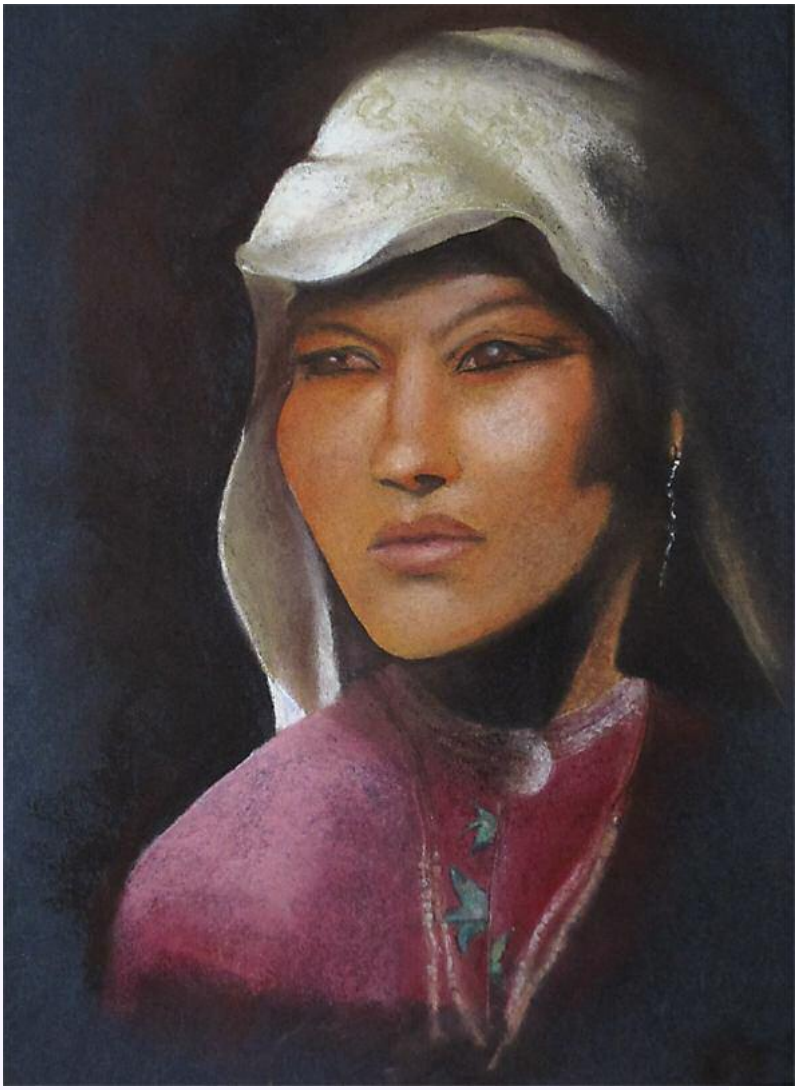
All along the straight strong backstrut
over the bigbelly over the
hairstalks and the thick hide wrinkled
at the neck twitching like a shockvolt
heat bakes in
sunwaves simmer on the skull
and quick flies siphon eyejuice
rise as lobes flap
sizzle as the whiptail lashes
as the broad head swings
and bumps a flank

Gregarious and slow as clouds
ruminants in August
when thistles pop their purple tufts
sunsmells sizzle in the grass
flapjack cowsquirts crust like blood.
Neck-thews bow
great heads slowly lower
tongues slither out and tug
and flat teeth grind the sweet green fibre
pack the big hinged mouthtraps
pulp the mulch
whose tastes run sweet as juices in a kiss.
Down along the gut pipes
French horn coils
roar and gurgle
boom and afterboom
slurry slithering through anaconda tunnels
melting into blood and milk
and trampled splash.

Emmanuel Williams



Cats by Myriam Murray



Woman of the Steppes by Myriam Murray



The Rice Harvest by Myriam Murray

Waterboy

Our youngest believes that a running bath
sounds out an open invitation.
No matter where he is in the house he strips,
leaving behind a vanished boy heap
beside a line of dinky cars.
He fires an army of figures to his dad –
Storm troopers, Lego horses, plastic ducks.
"By the power of Grey Skull" he chants
and joins him in the deep.
Horses graze on dad's grizzled belly,
yellow ducks swim under leg-arches.
The enamel bath, an amplifying drum,
clash bash of galactic battles,
skin rubs, turning bodies
wake water sloshing on the floor boards,
boom squabbles and laughter reels
flood the landing and stairwell,
as I carry up warm tumbled towels
and my little Selkie boy's bundle of clothes.

Donna Coogan

A Giants Player by
Tristan Weissinger Deason





The Little Horse of Fairy Land by Annamária Dudás



The Lake of Silver Drop (which is the name of the angel) by Annamária Dudás



Mom and I by Annamária Dudás



Dog
by Marcia Lynes

Painting by
Marcia Lynes





Sunflowers by Marcia Lynes

The Theatre Garden



By July, their sandaled feet
are tanned with zebra stripes.
They build a tiger's den from old sheets
pegged down with sticks and broken blocks.
Out there, any picnic is a feast,
apple chips, satsumas, raisin pellets, hula hoops,
tumblers of water laced with Ribena.
charge round for hours, roar
into monster battles, lunge daggers,
mud belly crawls through the undergrowth,
set traps for the gang next door.
Regular knocks on the window for drinks.
and have I any more superhuman food?

Two boys, at six, lean into each other, unable to talk.
I unbuckle and squeeze their nut-brown feet,
tell them little boys toes are my favourite food.

Donna Coogan

Prayer

When I was a child
I could not sleep
Until I had prayed
For every person dear to me
Even those whose gaze would not meet my own
I willed them to love me.

I prayed for
My Noah's Ark family
Of hamsters and toads
Grass snakes and bats
Hands clasped in supplication
Please God, make me good at maths.

And then
My narrow world imploded on
a voyage to the edge of infinity
And I prayed for a wider perspective.
When I grew up
I could not sleep
Thinking of those
Suffering pain and starvation
I prayed for babies
Small children
And those who had already passed
Their images captured in posterity
In camps, in prisons, pogroms
On the field of battle

And even in the presumed safety of home
I prayed for those with the blue grey halo
The walking dead.

Now I am older
And I pray for the tyrant, the executioner, the bully
The master of ceremonies
Strutting, scapegoating
Tarring and feathering by design
Beady eyed
For the sign of the tyrant is in the beady eye
Trading integrity for histrionics
Spurning love.

And in my own small life,
I castigate myself for my own misdemeanours
I too come up short.

For I know that the power of prayer
Is all I have at last
for all the rhetoric and the damning
For all the abhorrence
For all the insanity
For all the impotence and active opposition
It is all we have.

Seraphina Manferrari

Morning Dream

Luxuriating in hypnapompia,
I glided into a little cloister,
Sunlit by autumn light-
Gleaming on the glass and brass
Of a corner of clocks
Just behind my right shoulder.
I was not distracted by
Their cleverly competing voices and
Was being urged forward and away
Into a dusty, dusky corridor.
But there was a delicious melancholy
About this melting moment I wanted to keep.

My wish was granted,
Time solidified.
I tasted Forever-
No before or after.
I needed to escape.
A bubble burst.
I awoke.

Ramon Roper

© Copyright 20013 Ramon Roper

Flying In

My life in building started when I was eight or nine with treehouses and snowforts and drawings for live-aboard rockets and for river-journey rafts that I would build someday. My golden age for tree-houses began when I was ten when my parents divorced and we moved from the large house I had lived in since I was an infant to a new house my mother had built in a subdivision on the other side of town. The lots on Sears Road were very large by today's subdivision standards. Ours was over two acres and included field and woods, with an additional stand of woods on the empty lot next door. There were other houses being built nearby and on weekends I would raid the sites to collect wood for my treehouses. Mostly it was cut-offs and scraps that would have been thrown away or used for little more than blocking, but I do remember taking a whole eight foot two by four on at least one occasion. I still feel guilty.

When I made friends in the neighborhood the treehouses became forts and many a battle was waged defending our ground with slingshots and crab apples. I also remember great falls with the wind being knocked out of me on hitting the ground.

When I was twelve, my mother remarried. She did not choose well. The man who at first looked daring and exciting blew like a hurricane through our lives and left us all in tatters. Over the next few years we moved first to a new home in Carlisle, Massachusetts and then to Vermont. All that time we were prey to his grandiose plans to strike it rich and to display his daring to the world. His schemes included an Appaloosa horse-breeding farm in Vermont, hunting camps in Newfoundland and a scheme to control the patents on the anodizing process used to harden aluminum for the manufacture of military light-weapons. Amidst the excitement of ski trips in New Hampshire and summers >

on Martha's Vineyard, there was a constant booming of guns and a howling of dogs. There were 38 guns in the house and nearly a dozen Plott bear-hounds in the pen.

After three years Frank was gone, along with all of my mother's money, and our family was in ruins. He went on to ruin the life of some poor woman in California, and then to mining ventures in Nevada, an activity from which he was eventually barred by the Nevada court system. He lived the last of his days with a native woman in a small village several hours north of Luzon in the Philippines. My guess is that the village will never recover from his presence. I would also guess that where Frank is now is very, very hot. I sincerely hope you never meet such a person.

But, as they say, it was fun while it lasted. At least in some respects.

There were two aspects to the reign of Frank Hoar that would begin the process of taking me beyond treehouses. The first was the 1760 farmhouse in Carlisle that we renovated and then lived in for two years before the relocation to Vermont.

The Carlisle farmhouse was set at the end of a dirt road, far removed from other houses. The original building was a simple two-story structure with a central entry hall and stairway: a very common colonial layout. There were two rooms to either side of the hall on each floor. An ell had been added at some point many years before, housing two bedrooms and a bath. Our renovation entirely gutted and rehabbed the ell as well as making over the entire original structure. A new living room was added at the rear of the building, Bauhaus modern in its shape and materials and providing a wonderful contrast to the older structure.

Working on the house was my first experience in building. My brother, a sister, a stepsister and I were the demolition crew assigned the job of gutting the ell. We spent several days removing the horse-hair plaster and nailed wood lathe from the two bedrooms, bath and hallway that comprised the ell.

After we had moved into the house, the carpenters my stepfather had hired stayed on to build a barn to house my mother's and a sister's horses. Every day I would spend a few minutes talking with them when I came home from school. I enjoyed watching their progress and the way they worked together.

My second experience of building involved time spent in Newfoundland when I was 14, at the site of a hunting camp that was being built as part of my stepfather's hunting camp enterprise.

The hunting camp venture was operated out of Corner Brook, a town on the west coast of Newfoundland. We had three seaplanes, with pilots, and several teams of guides. The guides were fishermen most of the year, supplementing their fishing income with guide work in the late summer and fall. Several members of my family had already spent time in the camps. My mother, one of my sisters and my brother had all gone up the previous year and shot moose and caribou, as had my stepfather. I wouldn't be hunting this trip, as the season wasn't on yet, though I did do some fishing, and the fishing was very good. I would return later in the year to hunt and to shoot my moose.

I had flown in commercial planes several times, but never in a seaplane. It is an experience like no other. It is noisy and physically shaking and cast in adventure. To fly into the bush is to go into another world, one without people, except those immediately around you. We would sight moose and caribou and bear from the plane and the pilot would descend at times for a closer look, though not so close as to disturb the animals, which were no doubt already frightened by the sound and mystery of the plane. The excitement continued as we descended closer and closer to the water until the noise and shake returned and we skimmed the chop to the dock.

I doubt the interior of Newfoundland has changed much. Beyond the coastal area, the interior is low and rolling; small hillocks with the occasional higher peak of several hundred feet. There are lakes and ponds, linked one after another, in many places with as much water as land, all broken up >

into small servings of each. The landscape is tundra, formed by glaciers and surfaced only with flora that can withstand the severity of the climate: lichen- covered rocky ground and low scrub.

There were three guides at the new camp-base. They were carpenters now, building the simple structures that would house the hunters in the fall. These would begin as raised floor structures with canvas tents on top, which is how I knew them. Later, perhaps, they would grow into structures with wood and shingle sides and roof.

After over 50 years I have only a few distinct memories of my time there. I do not remember the structures well. I remember the lake and the dock and meals and the men and conversations I had with them. One of my strongest memories is of the guides unloading wood from the seaplane. We brought a small load with us when we came in and more came on later flights. I was amazed at the strength of these small, wiry men, each lifting a stack of six or more long 2x6's or 2x4's onto their shoulders and climbing the path up the small hill to the camp site. Only a few years later I would be doing the same thing on building sites in New England.

Of these three men, Morris stands out most clearly in my memory. He had been my sister's guide when she hunted the previous year and he would be mine when I returned in the fall to hunt. Small and weathered, he was probably still young when I knew him, perhaps in his late twenties. He, and the others too, were confident and honest men. Confident as carpenters, confident as guides and I'm sure, confident in fishing and everything they did.

After Frank was gone, I would have no contact with Newfoundland. But later the papers and the news would report the crash of the cod fisheries resulting from the intrusion of fleets of foreign factory-trawler ships. The limitless cod were pulled from the water until they were nearly gone. By 1993 the stock of cod had been depleted by 99% and a cod-fishing moratorium was called that would last for over twenty years. The world changed quickly for these men I knew and I can only imagine the suffering they and their families endured. I would read of the effects of the ban on the trawler fleets and of the displaced local fishermen of Newfoundland. I knew these men. They were fine, confident and hardworking men whose centuries-old lifestyle was devastated nearly overnight by corporate greed and ignorance.

Sometimes I remember those men and my time at that camp. It happens when I smell a certain type of framing lumber on a particular type of morning, when the temperature and humidity are at a certain level, and when I hoist a stack of lumber onto my shoulder.

Daniel Foster



Daniel's Library

This is a library I built in a 12,000 square foot house constructed in McLean, Virginia. I was originally hired to build a paint-grade library, but once I had begun constructing the framework within which all the panels would fit the designer/builder decided he would like to see it done in stain grade. I suggested walnut for an interesting color palette with the pine. I purchased three large walnut logs, dried and cut into sequentially numbered boards, from a friend who ran a custom sawmill. I planed, cut and moulded the panels on-site. All the major panels were book-matched and all linear runs of paneling were sequential panels from the same board. I also built a walnut bar in the downstairs part of the house, near the pool, and built out the master closet (roughly 350 square feet). It was a long way from the hunting camps.

At Womadelaide – World Music Festival

i) The weather

As Tim plays his old song
"Everywhere you go
you always take the weather"
The drifting grey clouds
which have threatened rain
all day lift and thin.
For just a moment
a weak sunlight filters
amongst the dancing crowd
and slight shadows partner us.

ii) Under the fir tree

The men from Azerbijan sit
in long red coats trimmed with gold.
The singer with the voice of an angel
frees it to swell on the wind;
the sorrow and yearning of all humanity
distilled in each second.
He holds a tinted gold disc
which mirrors the sky.

The wind sways and dances,
The huge fir tree swirls and waves
layers of soft green-needled branches.
Old brown cones,
their seeds long shed
listen quietly.
While the young green cones,
pale as candles, pay attention.

The strings weep.
The drum breathes and booms.
The voice flows like a never ending river –
Even when we cannot hear it –
it is somewhere (like a dry river)
Then it runs again on the wind,
bathes our souls.
The fir tree dances.

iii) Djan Djan

Blue lights in a row above the stage
Blue light inside the tabla. Another – red.
Red light caresses the chora's long neck,
flashing on the muso's shades,
making a huge square ruby of his ring.
Red light gleams on the slide guitar's curves.

A soft river of sound –
flowing, glowing,
rippling, sliding,
smoothly running
on and on and on
beyond the pine tree down to the sea.

The chora's belly glints and throbs
as the muso's fingers flick and thrum
The table player's hands fly and flutter
the heels of his hands drum their own rhythm.
The slide guitar player's hands flash- flatten-stop.
Start and pluck; his flat hat masking his bent head.

The three sounds ebb and interact
rippling and weaving
like the small waves
that catch the fading light;
one facet gold, one blue,
one red on the evening shore.

Mardijah Simpson

Back in the Day, from Hamid



At the turn of the century I had sent an excerpt from an unfinished booklet I had been writing to Hamid Camp, titled "The Messenger". It's part of a "Book of Days" which I started around the year 2000 when Hamid Camp was still alive.

I include some correspondence from Hamid, from back in the day…

From: "H H Camp"
To: rasunah@shaw.ca
Subject: RE: for wonderful, albeit nosey, picky and obtuse
Date: Monday, August 19, 2002 7:21 AM

The Jesuit poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins writes: "....and wisdom is early to despair."(Leaden Echo, Golden Echo)
And yet I receive daily: "Wisdom is in Allah." Must be the difference between worldly wisdom and eternal.
You write: cultural things which have to do with communities need to become more common, e.g. because there is more collaboration there.
You have, for me, defined the essence of SICA. The key word is collaboration, within Subud and with the community at large. The notion that cultural things need to be more common resonates with me. Subud centers can be cultural centers which serve the community in which we live.
Then there would be no reason to "talk about Subud." Subud would be made manifest by its action. Collaboration also connotes equality within the group. No higher or lower, just different functions toward the aim of the work. I like it!
It's all there in Roget: "Joint work toward a common end: coaction, cooperation, synergy, teamwork."
Your metaphor of the universe as God's garment also resonates with me. I often receive the words: "You are in Allah. Space within Allah." I notice when I am anxious and afraid the space is narrow and confining, but when I receive the latihan I find myself in a very wide space and feel the limitless possibilities within the space. As for Bapak and 'the folds of the universe': In 1963 in SF, when Bapak was so accessible and we could sit in the living room with him after the talks, he asked us:
"Why does Satan hate mankind? Because, when Bapak dies, you will be in Bapak." Nice huh?
So there we are. And to think the subject of your first message to me was my 'incommunicado ness' Now, I can't seem to shut up. Better to let sleeping dogs lie.
Hamid

From: Hamid Camp
To: rasunah@shaw.ca
Subject: RE: P.S.
Date: Wednesday, August 29, 2001 2:36 AM

Hello Rasunah, it is my observation that when we are centered a certain balance can be achieved. I have found that when I am in alignment with my "inner self" that all the rest becomes clear as I go about my life in the world. There is, I feel, no formula for achieving our goals. When I allow for something new to happen in my work, I find that I have no problem with outcomes; the result seems beneficial for all concerned. When I fix my course, as it were, that seems to cause certain hiccups >

in the procedure. I am really trying for simplicity in my life. I have found that when my first concern is with my relationship with God through the latihan that everything seems to work toward the benefit of who, and with whom, I work. Sometimes the result is not what I expected, but is in harmony with the situation. It seems that intention is all. What is my motivation for taking a certain course? If self-interest is too strong then the result never seems quite right, and sometimes ends up in the catastrophic range. As Bapak advised, we will know the Will of God by what we are faced with, moment to moment. This, I feel, is when we must needs refer to the inner movement, for a harmonious response. Subud is simple, I have found, but not easy.
All the best and blessings,
Your brother, Hamid
P.S. One of Bapak's definitions of true democracy was: "What I have, is for others." A clue there perhaps?

From: Hamid Camp
To: rasunah@shaw.ca
Subject: RE: Things to do...
Date: Wednesday, August 29, 2001 12:17 AM
Hello Rasunah, It is plain that the latihan is essentially a one on one experience. It is this relationship that must be fostered so that I can be guided in my day to day behavior toward the world. When I neglect this relationship, my actions become chaotic or random and I experience a certain disconnection with reality. I have found that it is essential for me to receive the gentle movement within myself throughout the day, or I continue to bump my head on the doors.
Ibu's advice is extremely practical.
It has been suggested on a Subud list sever that the latihan is related to auto-hypnosis. I suggest the reverse is true that our every day "reality" is much more akin to auto-hypnosis than we care to admit. Why do I find that I have driven two miles past my turn-off without realizing it, if not caught in a semi trance state? It gives weight to the saying of Jesus: "Father, forgive them; they don't know what they are doing." For me, surrender to God is not just a pretty thought, but an absolute necessity.
Your brother, Hamid

From: H H Camp
To: rasunah@shaw.ca
Sent: Tuesday, November 20, 2001 12:14 PM
Subject: RE: The Messenger (prose)
Dear Rasunah, thank you thank you and, again, I thank you.
Your piece comes right on time for me. I have had the same thought concerning my talent and my expectations for it. When, some years ago, I finally came to the conclusion that my music had no commercial appeal it was a liberating realization. I was free to develop according to my capacity and no longer wrote and sang for "the market", only for myself.
I couldn't agree more with your notion that we should share our experience about these matters. When you have finished it, I think it would make a wonderful SICA piece for the Subud Life, Voice, papers. I think your comments below, too, would be so helpful to other siblings who are concerned with developing their inner potential.
The piece, itself, I found very beautiful, relevant and moving. I don't know what 'world class' means, but you are some writer, of the universal class. Bless you and please let me read the 'finished' product.
Love and respect, Hamid (still "shaking it off!")

A Course in Miracles

The Introduction to ACIM states

Nothing real can be threatened.
Nothing unreal exists.
Herein lies the peace of God.

This extraordinary book then devotes around 1,300 pages to exploring this theme in all its stark simplicity and rich profundity. As a relative newcomer to the Course, I cannot hope to do justice to the majestic breadth of its content, so I will draw upon the words of Jon Mundy* to lift the veil for us: "A Course in Miracles is the wisest, sanest, deepest book I know. It is a unique spiritual document, a self-instructional textbook, eloquent in its loveliness and psychological sophistication. It is a modern spiritual classic, regarded by many as the most important book since the Bible. . . . Pick up the Course, go to any page, start reading, and you'll soon say, 'Wow, who wrote this?'"

My failure to tune into the answer to that question some thirty years ago, when I first encountered ACIM, may well explain why it didn't seem to speak to me back then. It was only when a dear Subud sister reintroduced me to the Course a few months ago that I woke up to the fact that its voice is actually that of Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, or – if you prefer, since All is One – your own deepest Self. Since then, I rarely let a day go by without immersing myself in its gentle but firm embrace, even if for just a few minutes.

The text itself says, 'This Course is not aimed at teaching the meaning of Love, for that is beyond what can be taught. It does aim, however, at removing the blocks to the awareness of Love's presence.' For me at least, this one statement encapsulates much of what makes it the consummate outer counterpart to Subud. Like perfect Love, the latihan – which remains the most precious gift ever to come my way – cannot of course be taught, but 'removing the blocks to the awareness of Love's presence,' in my limited experience to date and in my humble opinion, can perhaps be said to equate with the freeing and flowering of the human qualities implicit in the words Susila, Budhi and Dharma. Below I will tell you about the one practice that I believe warrants this optimistic assertion.

"There must be another way."

Dr. Helen Schucman and her boss Dr. William Thetford were professors of medical psychology at Columbia University, College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York, and in June 1965 an interaction took place between them that was to have profound and far-reaching consequences, far beyond what they could possibly have imagined at the time.

Dismayed at the petty bickering and infighting between the two of them, and indeed throughout the faculty at their institution, Bill turned to Helen one day and said, "There must be another way." Helen, who for some time had been subject to visions and other spiritual intimations, found herself spontaneously replying, "You're right, and I'll help you find it."

Four months later, Helen received the first of countless dictation sessions from the voice that she recognized as being that of Jesus. It began with the words, "This is a course in miracles," setting in motion a process that was to continue for the next seven years. Throughout that period, Helen faithfully took notes and Bill typed them out for her. The result is a radical philosophy, one of the most significant spiritual messages of our time. It is, I feel, the most perfect blend of psychology and spirituality imaginable - decidedly not the product of an ego, but unmistakably that of a wholly healed mind completely identified with the Creator

To date, A Course in Miracles has been translated into twenty-five languages – the latest being Estonian - and more than two million copies have been sold.

A World of Make-Believe

A basic premise of the Course is that this world of ours is not real, an idea that would hardly challenge the belief systems of either Buddhists or of adherents of the Vedanta, both of which groups see the world as illusory. Likewise, around 900 years ago the Sufi mystic Ibu Arabi echoed this view when he said, "The entire world is truly pure imagination. Only God is real reality. Anyone who understands >

this knows the secrets of the spiritual path."

In fact, however, ACIM goes rather further, stating quite categorically that our existence is no more than a dream, a dream in which the ego fashions our 'reality' in such a way as to ensure that we never really wake up from one lifetime to another. How blessed we are, therefore, that the latihan is forever working away deep within us to ensure that the ego doesn't have its wicked way with us!

Although terms like the Holy Spirit, God and Heaven are freely used throughout the Course, it is by no means a traditional Christian document. It could, however, I suppose, be said to be a very radical version of Christianity, one in which Jesus is a forerunner, blazing the trail for a return to Oneness with God. He is the elder brother, one who has awakened from the ego's dream – as indeed did the Buddha - and can be trusted to show us how to do the same.

Once dubbed 'the Christian Vedanta,' A Course in Miracles is probably the most non-dualistic of all the great mystical writings. Its message is crystal-clear and entirely uncompromising: the only Reality is God, and we are extensions of that Reality in the same way that each seemingly inconsequential ripple is a unique expression of the vastness that is the ocean.

That last observation is somewhat hackneyed, a rather clunky attempt to express the inexpressible. The Course itself, - unsurprisingly! – says is so much better:

'Beyond the body, beyond the sun and stars, past everything you see and yet somehow familiar, is an arc of golden light that stretches as you look into a great and shining circle. And all the circle fills with light before your eyes. The edges of the circle disappear, and what is in it is no longer contained at all. The light expands and covers everything, extending to infinity, forever shining and with no break or limit anywhere. Within it everything is joined in perfect continuity. Nor is it possible to imagine that anything could be outside, for there is nowhere that this light is not. This is the vision of the Son of God, whom you know well. Here is the sight of him who knows his Father. Here is the memory of what you are; a part of this, with all of it within, and joined to all as surely as all is joined to you.'

In reality, therefore, according to the Course, we are safely at home in God right here and now. Indeed, where else could we possibly be since God is All That Is! In a 'tiny mad moment,' however, wondering how it would be to go it alone, we slipped into the insane nightmare of deluding ourselves that we are separate from Him. Enter the ego, along with the dream that appears to enslave us. As with any dream, however, all that is required is to wake up.

A Course in Miracles is the only exegesis I am aware of that offers a rational answer to the age-old question: 'How could a loving God create a world that allows such suffering to run rampant within it?' The answer, according to the Course, is that He did not create it, that in truth He has nothing to do with the dream world that the ego has brought into being. How, after all, could God possibly be part of the illusion, any more than we can be said to be truly part of the dreams that often beguile and bedevil us through the night?

I fully appreciate that this is not exactly the easiest of propositions to get one's head around, though I still recall a Subud brother, a student of the Course perhaps, once asking Bapak if this life was indeed a dream. "Yes," replied our spiritual guide, "But you'd better take it seriously."

Quantum Forgiveness

Whether or not your interest has been piqued by the foregoing, dear reader, and whether or not you ever choose to pick up a copy of A Course in Miracles, it is not impossible that your patience in staying with me thus far is about to bear fruit. I am about to share with you the 'one practice' I mentioned earlier, the raison d'etre of the entire Course, the guiding star that so perfectly complements the latihan in lighting our way out of the illusion.

This might be an appropriate point to state that I am in no way trying to either challenge your own beliefs or to convert you to mine. I am merely doing my best to share with you what I have found to be a fascinating and stimulating call to question my own view of reality.

ACIM tells us that every negative trait we see in other people, every affront to our susceptibilities - from the mildly irritating to the most repulsive - is nothing more than a projection of our own deep-seated guilt at having seemingly cut ourselves off from God. It would seem that we desperately need >

to externalize this guilt, which we do by blaming someone 'out there' for negativity that actually lurks deep within our own subconscious. By automatically judging and blaming others in this way, whether we are aware of doing so or not, we buy into the pseudo reality of this world, thereby reinforcing our sense of separateness and individuality and condemning ourselves to a potentially never-ending sequence of birth and death.

The card that trumps all the ego's apparent aces is the practice of quantum forgiveness – the forgiveness of all and everything that day by day threatens to disturb our peace of mind and ruffle our feathers. What we are talking about, in other words, is an alert vigilance that substitutes the habit of forgiveness for the habit of judging, whether in relation to the latest media horror story, the uneasy memory of a long-held grievance, our personal health concerns or what we may currently perceive to be a hurtful attitude or action on the part of someone close to us.

A powerful response in the latter instance is to quietly say within oneself:

"Name, you are Christ (or Spirit), pure and innocent. All is forgiven and released."

Paradoxically, we ourselves are the prime beneficiaries of this practice, because such an enlightened reaction is also registered by that unconscious aspect of the ego which is the true origin of what we find reflected in others. In this way, we are progressively chipping away at the hidden depths of the iceberg of guilt that separates us from our own Identity in God.

The simple willingness to forgive, says the Course, is all that is required for the Holy Spirit to do the real work of untying the knots of the subconscious and restoring us to Oneness. As Bapak put it, "Human beings are required only to surrender; to surrender with acceptance and a willingness to let go."

In my own experience to date, the practice of quantum forgiveness has proved to be something of a breakthrough, alerting me to just how quick I am to judge and label. It is akin to peeling away the layers of an onion and contributes significantly to clarity of mind and a sense of spiritual well-being. It is also, I suggest, a practice of which our beloved Bapak would whole-heartedly approve, one that would be conducive to the triumph of Love and Oneness throughout our Association.

A few weeks ago I shared the principle of quantum forgiveness with an old friend, also a longstanding Subud member, and she recently wrote to me as follows: "My limited exposure through Gary Renard's CD set [Secrets of the Immortal] has significantly changed my outer approach to life. Much more peace to be felt when I practice quantum forgiveness instead of tilting at windmills. Grateful."

In Conclusion

I said at the outset that I have a dear Subud sister to thank for helping me to look at A Course in Miracles with fresh eyes. And this is true. At the same time, I owe a great debt of gratitude to Gary Renard's trilogy of books, and particularly his Disappearance of the Universe, described by Dr. Wayne Dyer as "a book that is destined to be one of the most significant contributions to spiritual literature in this century.'

I am also indebted to the commitment and insights of many other commentators, including the aforementioned Jon Mundy, Nouk Sanchez, Kenneth Wapnick, David Hoffmeister and Tom Carpenter. All these writers have lived the principles of the Course for decades; by comparison, I am but a neophyte and this short article amounts to little more than a superficial glimpse into its wonders.

I will conclude with my favourite paragraph (so far) from A Course in Miracles:

'Simply do this: Be still, and lay aside all thoughts of what you are and what God is; all concepts you have learned about the world; all images you hold about yourself. Empty your mind of everything it thinks is either true or false, or good or bad, of every thought it judges worthy, and all the ideas of which it is ashamed. Hold onto nothing. Do not bring with you one thought the past has taught, nor one belief you ever learned before from anything. Forget this world, forget this course, and come with wholly empty hands unto your God.'

**Living a Course in Miracles: An Essential Guide to the Classic Text'*

PS: At this particular time, it occurs to me – with so many of us concerned about the election of the new President of the United States – that extending regular Quantum Forgiveness to Donald Trump would be a very appropriate and positive response to his well nigh daily excesses!

Emmanuel Elliott

I am not what I seem

I am not what I seem to be
What you see is not who I am
I move and act in time and space
Reliant on my memories
Unpredictable.

My age is something I forget
Though I believe I am now old
I did not always live in here
With others who do not talk
Because they are not what they seem
And they are very old.

I am not who you think I am
I am alive in my own mind
And do not notice things around
Because my life goes on inside
No need to disturb.

But talk to me, I do not mind
This space I sit in being shared
With you whom I don't recognise
You came before I seem to think
I am not sure.

I was not always quite so still
I can recall my younger days
When I dressed brightly, had a house
And family and other folk
And caught the bus to work.

This space I hold, I hold so dear
My sacred space is all I need
Do not correct me for it is my own -
My memory of sights and sounds
That's who I really am.

And I am not who you think at all.

Myrna Michell

Cognoscenti

For a fourteen-year-old, Marcy's taste in music was just a touch toffee-nosed, though her absorption in Beethoven's Choral symphony or a Wagner overture spoke volumes of sincerity, and her most pensive moments could be observed at these times.

When I partnered with her whilst working on a summer play-scheme, she was the most able of the young people, and vitally interesting for me as a musician. Grieved to hear one of the teenage staff beg for a pop music track at morning break, when Marcy and I had just selected the Meistersingers Overture, we stood our ground. After all, they could flick around on their car radio to any three-minute wonder, the second they left for home, but this was her choice and it was already begun, so the bubbly staff member had to back off.

During the fortnight, other staff discovered I was a pianist. It was some years since I had worked in music for children. At home once again amongst volumes of ring-bound songbooks, shakers, bells and drums, I learnt anew the value of music as energy for wellbeing - about smiles and wonder, stillness and movement. Marcy's dark eyes, once soft and absorbed, now shone in a face wide open to all possibilities.

Marcy's only moments of sadness came when dealing with events she had no power to resist. The mini-bus trip meant ascending the ramp, which brought fear. And there were invasions of her privacy: In a subtle language of her own, the unpleasantness of the toileting procedure provoked tongue-clucking and a still anxiety in her eyes. A slick procedure here would have been the ideal, but I was new to it. For all my strengths as a musician, these other things at first totally defeated me.

A music therapist called one day, and played oboe for us with great beauty and sensitivity. My role removed to that of assistant, the practical needs of some children now became my focus. Ellen's approach was impeccably well-trained and supportive, but it seemed no-one had had time to tell Ellen about the children's individual disabilities. I found myself signaling to her discretely as she exhorted the lively Marcy to sing, and later again to beat the tambour. But her arms could only go sideways; and she could not vocalise.

Marcy-doll had cascades of thick hair, like her owner's. Like Marcy, the doll had had an operation >

on her neck so she could breathe. Marcy-doll got everywhere, and there were paroxysms of rattling from Marcy's throat as I made the doll swoop into view on all sides of the wheel chair!

Marcy's trachy-pipe meant she could not use the pool. That meant music for some, and out would come the instruments again. Twelve-year-old boys encased in wheel-chairs had jingle-bells velcroed to their wild wrists, their voices breaking with the exhilaration of the sounds. Marcy's unvoiced, visible laughter, head flung back, convulsed her whole body.

Maybe, just maybe at such a moment, she would forget my mismanagement in the 'lady's department'?

Myrna Michell

Upon growing old

We've all had that experience, I'm sure, of sitting or standing quietly for a moment and asking out of the blue "How old am I?' and the answer comes, "Twelve. I'm twelve years old," or "sixteen", or "thirty-five", or "fifty four" - any of these. In other words at that moment of non-pain, we are just about any age that pops up into our head. Reminding us that when we are not conscious of our bodies, we really have no age!

Usually, along with age comes pain in some form. Then consciousness of our body ills reminds us we're going to die. Here, I can only speak for myself, because I have no idea what the explanation can be for someone else.

What happened to me, is this. During the course of my life, I suffered from occasional illness or pains. They seem to occur haphazardly, due to outside circumstances more than anything else. Due to a virus, an injury- something explainable. Then in my 70s, these ills changed. They seem to have a different meaning. A simple example would be, arthritis of the hip. Now, I know for certain my mother had severe arthritis of the hip. So I attributed it to something I inherited from her. But as time went on, there were more illnesses not so easily identifiable to someone in the family.

It was testing which brought me to the conclusion that various pains or illnesses were, in fact, "purification". I began to notice that one illness would leave for a while, and another would spring up somewhere else. I began to have the feeling that these bouts of purification were taking turns around my body. For sure six months later, it would come back again in the same place. It seemed like a higher entity was touching various parts of my body, little by little I was being cleaned up, being made "pure" -(as Ibu once told me, "later you pure").

Then I remembered Bapak telling someone who was complaining: "Pray for more boils!" And in another passage, that we can't enter Heaven while we're still dirty. We need to experience at least a little bit of Hell - either over there, (which takes much longer) or here on earth. Hence "pray for more boils."

So whether I'm right or wrong, it helps me to regard these aches and pains as part of the process of getting ready to die. I'm just bloody lucky if it isn't the Big "C" or something really hard to take.

Now, I'm a diabetic. No one in my family is diabetic. I'm pretty sure it is the wages of a greedy person. Because, I am greedy. And now I am obliged to curb that greediness, to some extent, and puncture my tummy once a day with a needle, for my sins. (Isn't that an image straight out of Dante's "Inferno"?) I am submerged in all kinds of medications and have to remember what they are and when to take them. But luckily, all of this does not hurt. If I curse, my angel says, "Well, does it hurt?" and I have to say, "Well, uh, no." So I am fortunate on that one. So far.

But one day my wrists swelled up painfully. I couldn't move my thumbs. Think about it! You can't do anything if you can't move your thumbs!

"It's crystals." The doctor said. "You have crystals. You just have to wait it out. And they'll come back again." I bet they would. This kind of thing is typical. Typical of Subud old age syndrome. Who ever heard of such a thing as 'crystals'? Especially designed for me by my angels.

It's like my broken foot. Broke it three years ago, and suddenly it hurts like the dickens. "Nothing >

wrong. It's all healed!" the doctor said. OK, I'll give it two weeks, and then it'll feel fine. Because the purification will be off the foot and on to some other place.

And so it goes, at least for me, at least so far, if I haven't jinxed it by writing this up.

Mardiyah Tarantino

Growing old in Subud - 2

I sometimes takes an ironic pride in the degree of suffering to which I'm being subjected as I age. To be given four and a half years of daily migraine and nearly three years of tinnitus surely means that I've been identified as spiritually strong enough to take a hell of a beating.

So to speak.

I'm learning to adjust. I'm learning – and being helped – to stay clear of despair. As an English prewar child I understood from early on the value of the stiff upper lip.

As a migraineur I have three behavioral modes: Normal, Moonwalker, and Cosmic Debris. I've learnt what I can undertake according to the mode of the day.

Normal has been quite rare this year: a few hours of normality some mornings. But oh what joy to be normal! I can do anything! I can change the world!

Moonwalker… I can do all the Cos. Deb. stuff (see below) plus computer work, editing poems and stories, driving down unfamiliar streets, telling riddles to strangers and staying on task.

Cosmic Debris is an increasingly frequent b. mode. "I" leaves the stage to be replaced by "one". Cos. Deb. once meant total shutdown – close curtains, bed, icepack - but lately one has cajoled or gently pushed oneself or been helped into the following activities: gardening, playing with granddaughter Jayla, stroking cats and rabbit, singing songs in quasi-medieval Italian. shopping (if there's a list), cleaning the beach, going for long walks, even playing piano at the Food Bank.

It could be worse one tells oneself. Yes.

I've been reading "Waiting for God" by Simone Weil, one of the 20th century's most insightful writers. On advanced Cos. Deb. days one may sit in a comfy chair looking out at trees and listening to medieval or Renaissance choral music. Recently, as one was sitting and listening and reading Simone, one came across the following passage:

"In 1938 I spent 10 days at Solesmes, from Palm Sunday to Easter Tuesday, following all the liturgical services. I was suffering from splitting headaches: each sound hurt me like a blow; by an extreme effort of concentration I was able to rise above this wretched flesh, to leave it to suffer by itself, heaped up in a corner, and to find a pure and perfect joy in the unimaginable beauty of the chanting and the words. This experience enabled me by analogy to get a better understanding of the possibility of loving divine love in the midst of affliction."

"Loving divine love in the midst of affliction." Thank you Simone. I needed that.

Emmanuel Williams

A Far Away Look

My personal sense of unease had been with me for some time, although unease is putting it mildly. There had, however, been milestones of relief, little landmarks along the way, often books. A man called John Coleman wrote a book called The Quiet Mind. I found the title riveting. Something inside rose in affirmation, but I did realize that it was not me at all that had reacted. No, it was something else, but not me. I had read from a mystic that real prayer is not done by the person. You can make like you are praying, but real prayer is something the prayer does all by itself. With a little grace you might be able to get out of the way. That is the most you can hope for.

As a writer I was doing mental callisthenics. Some of it was good and I even got published. My wife found it reassuring because most writers are not famous for making money. Translation filled >

some of our wider gaps. Somehow we got by.

There occurred a telling late-afternoon incident. The kids were not home from school. My wife was still at work. I was deep into a translation. An immense calm arose. I remember the mystic saying that meditation is not something you do; you must get very quiet and 'feel how you feel'. How did I feel? My feeling was having a quiet sunbathe in something sublime. The world had gone away. My mind dulled into abeyance. I looked up from the keyboard, tentatively, almost afraid of breaking the spell. The quietness was huge and the room seemed to be at a perfect temperature.

The air felt unaccountably clean, somehow intangible but definitely felt. I remember a quickly arising feeling of isolation and a sudden feeling of worry. I held on, almost gasping like a fish out of water and then the worry dispersed, I can only express it that way, and I realized that it was all right to be me. Something tingled above my heart and below my throat. My chest felt the way you feel when you drink a glass of cold water and you feel it going down. I turned to the translation. Something inside prayed that there would be nothing crass to disturb the spell. I remembered Patrick-Leigh Fermor's A Time to Keep Silence. The author had entered a monastery to work on a book. He related of at first being bored to desperation in the monastery where nothing happened, then the bubble of boredom broke and he felt perfectly at ease with his situation. But he did record a changed state to a fine degree of sensitivity. When he left the monastery he found driving along a freeway appalling because even the most innocuous advertisement placards along the way were an insult to his sensibility.

My wife arrived home. She looked into the room in which I was sitting like a stunned ox. She said, "Gosh, the house feels nice."

I knew what she was talking about, of course, but couldn't explain any part of it. I mumbled something like, "Yeah, the translation went well." But the house feeling nice was the best thing that I had ever experienced, and I have no idea how it happened.

The children came home, bringing their world with them. I knew that what I had experienced was the way it was meant to be. A vibration inside of me was

speaking from beyond my mind. There was no mental conversation. Everything was simply seen. I sat dazed, gently resistant to a now muffled little voice trying belligerently to assert itself. The mystic had related of another voice, the whisper from the soul.

I learned, realized, what great artists give. They offer something that is so special that one's focus is removed from self. It was curious that George Ivan Gurdjieff proposed a system of 'self-remembering', I was then convinced that 'self-forgetting' was possibly more useful. I believe that if one has the ability, luck or grace to forget oneself, it could be the first step placed on a spiritual path. Nevertheless, right there would be the realization of all one's troubles and certainly not instant salvation.

I had the feeling that this is what Mr Hemingway had, perhaps unconsciously, been looking for as he shaved his sentences down to a minimum until a rhythm arose like counting the beads of a rosary as you read his lines. Laurens van der Post touched upon inner feeling in The Lost World of the Kalahari when relating of tracking an animal over two days to finally make a kill and a Bushman saying that the women would be rejoicing and heating the cooking pots. "But how will they know about the kill?" van der Post asked. "They will feel it, here," said the Bushman, tapping his chest.

I feel sad about Mr Hemingway. I suppose it is the sadness felt at losing a good man, a sadness you should feel when losing anybody. I believe that he acquired the grace of seriousness, perhaps even a quiet mind, but there was much inside of himself that got in the way as he led a riotous life of worldly adventure. Mr Hemingway did deal with this, or his, dilemma in A Clean, Well-Lighted Place. Despair is of the mind and the mind is a tyrant. The quiet mind is a mind that is modest, in abeyance, it serves and does not lead.

*

Any writer who would describe with words something beyond words has my sincere best wishes. Of course, there are the atmospheric interludes in one's life that offer a divine nudge. If any reader has heard the hypnotic call to prayer from a muezzin, floating at dawn over trees at the edge of a jungle, they will know what I mean. The point is that although there may be a sudden crashing rise of birds, >

the voice itself does not shatter the silence. It really does float hauntingly as a sound ethereal. The call to prayer heard in a city is often more strident but no less enchanting. One is struck by something stealthily all-encompassing, something impossible to ignore. Something that lingers in a sudden brittle silence.

Religion was obviously not to be avoided. There were too many hooks, like "The peace that passeth all understanding." I got the message, all right. Real understanding must be subservient to peace. The world drags me back, however. I had my private picture of myself as a writer. When I write I would have a packet of cigarettes at hand and a glass of red wine while sitting at a village café somewhere around the Mediterranean. It would be a part of me being creative. Alas, red wine makes me tired and after two cigarettes I'm as sick as a dog, nerves aflame and about ready to take pills to still an increasing headache. The end of a beautiful, mind-induced fantasy.

I am happy with reportage, non-fiction, memoirs. But the stunned-ox experience has brought a new dimension. I sit, gaze, go empty, and it works. During the night, of course, I switch on my bedside lamp, scribble notes. I have become terrifically aware of the danger of laziness. My mind, working as a part of a double act with my lowest instincts, tells me that I have an excuse for not switching on the lamp and that I should roll over and sleep because one does not wish to wake up my lady wife. Baloney! If I don't write down this current gem I will not be able to sleep, anyway. My wife snores. I am jealous of this because it means that she is deeply asleep, out of it for a few hours. On the other hand I suppose I should be grateful. I can scribble with impunity.

I am interested now in 'the thing itself'. When Gertrude Stein wrote, "A rose, is a rose, is a rose," she was perhaps thinking, 'What else is there to say about that abundantly endowed blossom?' At one point Freud was heard to concede that "...sometimes a tree is just a tree." This obviously means a lack of interpretation, no personal coloring, no philosophy, no special meaning. Even a writer's often strived-for metaphors are redundant, adjectives can be eliminated. The 'writing tools' must be used with care, perhaps with restraint. It is obvious that as a writer living in Austria I am bound to be writing about the current influx of refugees. I feel ashamed if I attempt writing with flair for there is no fun to be found in the matter. Mr Hemingway's reporting style would have been most appropriate. The winter is coming. They sleep on the earth, wrapped in a blanket. There is frost on the blanket at dawn. They shiver, waiting for the sun. This is Mr Hemingway's 'real' and 'true', given in a writing style that is no style at all. I rather feel that it was his subconscious attempt at an elimination of self. On the other hand it does say everything that needs to be said. The reader will be able to relate because there is most likely nothing there that is beyond the reader's own experience.

Lawrence Brazier

Brothers and Sisters,

It is with the greatest of respect and gratitude that Ridwan and I wish to thank all the readers and contributors who have made editing and laying out your quarterly editions of SWIM (Subud Writers International Magazine) so special.

Ridwan and I wish to especially thank all those who took the time to write, comment and contribute to what has been a very special endeavour. We wish SWIM all the best under the leadership of Emmanuel Williams.

Please forgive us for any unintentional errors or issues. As Subud members, it has been a privilege for us to facilitate all the fantastic creative work coming from such a special place. As creative individuals ourselves, we have learnt a lot a lot and are most grateful.

With love and gratitude

Katharine Walmsley and Ridwan Treacher



Write a story or a poem about this image and send to the Editor:
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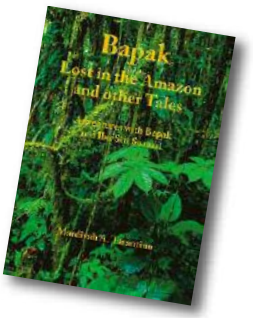
Bapak

Lost in the Amazon

and Other Tales

Adventures with Bapak and Ibu Siti Sumari

Mardiyah A. Tarantino



This delightful little book contains a series of short, vivid sketches of events remembered from the years the author lived closely to Bapak and Ibu Siti Sumari when on the South American tours over 40 years ago. The book also includes snippets from the seven years when the family lived in Cilandak. It contains much spiritual advice and guidance given to her by Ibu as trust and intimacy built over time, up to Ibu's death in 1971.

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