

THE ULTIMATE FLOWER



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BOOKS



THE ULTIMATE FLOWER

*A*s a child, I was brought up in the country. We lived in the hills, in sight of the snow-capped peaks of the Andes. Alongside of the house was a garden with dovecotes and fountains, and there I used to play by the hour. My first friends were flowers and plants that grew in the garden.

One day I saw a hand emerge from the bell of a flower and wave to me, urging me to come near. To my childish eyes, it seemed perfectly natural that a hand should come out of a flower, and I therefore went over to it. My only worry was that I was not able to enter it as it seemed to want me to; I simply could not fit. Shortly afterwards the flower wilted, and its leaves and petals fell to the ground. I gathered them in hopes of bringing them back to life, but of course was not able to do so. Then I thought of making a paper flower, and spent many days cutting one out and painting it with bright colours. Once it was finished, I took it out into the garden and planted it where the other flower had been. My hope was that if the flower was well enough made, the hand would reappear. But when it did not come back, I realized that my flower could not compare to those in the garden which had been made by God.

At that moment, I stopped being a child: never afterward was I able to speak freely with the flowers and plants of the garden. Without realizing it, I had entered into competition with God, and so compromised my innocent relationship with nature.

ONE
Jason

The Meeting

The time had now come, it seems to me, to lift the veil and reveal the painful secret of my generation. I have not been authorized to do so, and I shall undoubtedly have to pay for it. But I am prepared for that, because the new generation of my country does not seem to realize that the sacred mountains are poised, ready to topple upon their shoulders; they don't seem to know that the great giants imprisoned in the rock are about to move.

* * *

I don't know who first introduced me to Jason. I think it was another one of our group, who has also gone from us now. At any rate, Jason was magnificent. He was the brightest light at our meetings, telling us wonderfully subtle and beautiful stories. He and I were friends from the beginning, and even more so when I heard him say that he could draw a perfect circle with his eyes closed, a thing which Leonardo was capable of doing. I myself had spent hours shut up in my room, trying to do so. Jason was like a prophet to me, and I always tried to see him alone, without the nomadic group which usually accompanied him. We would meet in a bar in one of the worst parts of the city. Sitting opposite each other at a table, we would not speak a word, but would begin to draw circles with our eyes closed. Later, when we opened them again, we would no longer be two men sitting in a bar; we would both be in the centre of a circle.

Not long afterwards Jason introduced me to another Circle composed of a Master and a group of disciples. Although it was then a mystery to me, today at last I understand it.

The Circle

What was at first most noticeable about the circle was its constant state of flux. New members would join; others would depart. Still, a sense of continuity was preserved by the Master himself and by the fact that most of the disciples, or students, were my own age. According to a predetermined plan, we would gather at the Master's place, and there we would sit on the floor in a circle around him. The point of these meetings was somehow to establish a relationship between those of us on the circumference and the master in the centre. The very fluidity of which I have spoken was emphasized here, for that centre was never absolutely fixed. It was at once everywhere and nowhere.

In order to induce a meaningful relationship between all of us together, and ourselves with the Master, we had to overcome the restrictions of our limited everyday existence; we had to break through the ordinary barriers of time and space. We thus exerted our imaginative powers and adopted the personae of important figures in our cultural and spiritual heritage. Sometimes we would be Spanish conquistadores; at others we would become the remote aboriginal inhabitants of our America, for the Master always emphasized our mixed heritage. We were at once products of Christian Europe and of Atlantis and Asia. It was no mere charade that we played, for as I shall later explain, we all of us, by a species of transference, became those figures from the past in whose name we spoke. We suppressed ourselves in order to let them speak through us—not for the purposes of a frivolous séance, but in order to bring to bear upon our own beings the drama of their souls' dreams and anguish.

Within the Circle a game was played which was a mixture of the Inca bean game called *Porotos Pallares* and the ancient Chinese Book

of Changes known as the *I Ching*. The Master was especially interested in this game because he believed that the Incas were Chinese or Hindu in origin, and that they had been superimposed on a world already enriched and ineradicably affected by the earlier civilizations of Atlantis and Tiahuanacu. He explained that the word 'Tihuanacu' was relatively new and that it had been applied to the famous ruins near Lake Titicaca by the Inca Yupanqui. When one of his couriers met him there, having come all the way without stopping, the Inca said 'Tihuanacu'—that is to say, 'Sit down, Huanacu.' Thus, when I first entered the Circle, feeling very tired, the Master said, 'Tihuanacu.' The Circle as a whole was called Huillkanota, and the Master, Huilka.

The Giants of the Moon

One day the Master gave us his version of the history of the world. Originally, he said, the world was inhabited by a race of giants who established a magnificent civilization which had intimate relations with the other stars and planets of the universe. At that time, the sun was unimportant because the moon was much closer to the earth than it is today and consequently obliterated the brightness of the sun. For that reason, these early inhabitants of the earth were called Giants of the Moon. They were hermaphrodites and had only one eye in the middle of their foreheads. With this eye they could gaze at distant beings in other worlds; they were also strong enough to fix the course of the stars.

Also at this time, over what is now the Pacific Ocean, a huge continent was extended which in its eastern extremity included the area occupied by the present-day cordillera of the Andes. The centre of that world was the now solitary island of Rapa Nui or Eastern Island; and Tihuanacu, which is now in Bolivia, was its seaport. For uncounted aeons the earth continued in this form, but at length the day came when the minds of the giants were not strong enough to govern the stars in the firmament, and the moon collided with the earth, submerging the great continent of the Pacific and destroying all of its glories. All that survived were Rapa Nui, Tihuanacu and, on the western extreme, Tibet.

At the time of this tremendous upheaval, the giants withdrew into the newly-rising mountains of the Andes and Himalayas, and there for countless ages they have lived in caves, waiting for another moon and another sun to come and redeem them. They are the guardians of an ancient and supreme wisdom, which alone is capable of transforming an earth that is occupied today by a race of dwarfs.

The Master also suggested the possibility that the upheaval was

a result of an atomic catastrophe or war which altered the very shape of the earth. He believed there was evidence for this theory in the existence of so many deformed individuals amongst the aboriginals of America—men with ostrich feet, with soft bones, with two right arms and two heads—all these as a consequence of malignant radiation. The small stature of the present-day race of men may also be a result of that catastrophe. Some of the giants who failed to reach the caves wandered for a time over the lower reaches of earth and were seen for the last time in Patagonia and Greece. The fall of the moon had divided them into separate sexes, and now alone, they went around the world in search of their mates. The exigencies of the search caused them to lose stature, and when they failed to find their women, they became sodomites like the giants of Ecuador who, according to a legend, were finally destroyed by a fire descending from the sky.

The known history of South America is relatively unimportant. The Incas came in comparatively recent times, from India to China, bringing with them foreign images and settling in or near the remains of the ancient cities of the Giants of the Moon. The roads which are generally attributed to the Incas in fact existed long before them. Nevertheless, they also brought certain vital elements from their distant heritage in Asia, and the royal Incas knew a secret language that had been handed down from father to son for ages on end. The bastard Atahualpa, who was only partially of royal blood, ordered all those who knew this language to be butchered; and thus perpetrated a tragedy similar to the one which took place on the island of Rapa Nui when the nobles and wise men who knew the language of the Speaking Tablets were removed from the island and taken to Peru to work as slaves in the gold mines. It is possible that this secret language was an archaic Sanskrit or an ancient Chinese dialect. In Eten, which is in Peru, and in Aten, in Bolivia, there are aboriginal people who speak a language that is understood by the Chinese.

Writing and literature thus came to be considered as wholly evil and were prohibited. The writer was condemned to death and the word itself, the *logos spermatikos*, lost its force. The Inca language of colours and wools was like the symbolic game of *Porotos Pallares*, but since it was a language of ritual, meant only for the moment, it

was not considered to be offensive. The Incas also imported the caste system into America; what is more, they created an artificial race, known as the *Orejones*—or ‘Big-eared Ones’—who were similar in appearance to the paintings of the Buddha that are found in the Orient. They also brought with them a cult of gold, which suggests that the sun, rather than the moon, was of primary importance with them.

But there was one power at Tihuanacu of which the incoming Incas were ignorant, and that was the supreme power of flight. That the Giants of the Moon were able to fly is demonstrated by the huge stone blocks at Tihuanacu which are decorated with winged figures bearing sceptres. Their faces are those of men or griffins.

In India, there is also a many-armed giant who is today known as Siva. He was there long before the coming of the Aryans. The principal giant of America was sometimes known as Kontiki Viracocha, and it is possible that he was the real king of Atlantis. Like the Giants of the Moon, he was white.

A Glimpse of the Giant

One morning at dawn, I opened my window and looked out at the snow-covered Andes in the distance, and there I saw them. It was as though my eyes were operating on a new level of consciousness, for in the great bulk of the mountains, I could see the outlines of two giants imprisoned in the rocks. Their hair hung down over their shoulders, and their features were highlighted by the rising sun. One seemed to be stretching his arms upwards in an imploring fashion, while the other bowed his head towards the earth. So violent was this vision that I became convinced that all the mountains were but petrified bodies of giants, waiting for liberation.

The City of the Caesars

I have a feeling that the stories which the Master used to tell us and of which we used to speak within the Circle, never had an objective reality. They may have been an externalization of a private vision, but I do not really know. Perhaps they were simply there to urge us toward a further awareness, to move us and shake us. In any event, the Master also told us that we had to change, even in physical form, in order to bring about a new age. We were told that we had to learn a science that had been secretly preserved throughout centuries, and which alone would make it possible for us to enter the new age and be worthy of it. This science would give us knowledge of immortality and would open the third eye in the centre of the forehead.

The Master believed that our work was so important that the whole future world depended upon it. He said that we had to use the ancient knowledge of the Giants in order to control the cosmos and prevent a new moon from falling onto the earth. Chile was especially destined for this great work because of the great number of Giants imprisoned in its mountains. The Master believed that they were equally divided between the Andes and the Himalayas.

Indeed, the true inhabitants of Chile must be the Giants, since the present race of human beings does not fit in with the countryside. There is now a profound disequilibrium between man and his landscape, and a benign relationship can only be established when a few people rediscover the ancient wisdom of the Giants. The doors of the mountain will have to be opened in order to liberate the beings who are trapped within them. Only then will the earthquakes and tidal waves cease. Once the equilibrium is established, and entire continent will rise along our coast, revealing its ancient palaces and submerged temples. Then the mountains will cease to tremble and in the calm light of the moon, shining through its pale

beams, a star will appear like a flower.

If this does not happen, then the mountains will fall into narrow valleys running along the range, and as the boulders hurtle down, a race of dwarfs will be extinguished. To avoid this catastrophe is the work of our generation.

The Master also told us of another race of beings who seem to have no connection with neither the Giants or with ordinary mortals. No one really knows who they are or where they come from, but they seem to function as prophets for the New Age. They have lived here and there, mysteriously, on an island, or an oasis, or in a city hidden in the mountains. This city used to be called Great Paytiti, and was thought of as being located somewhere near the border of Peru and Brazil. Others have identified it as the Gran Quivira in Mexico; yet others have called it Elelin and Trapalanda. It has also been called the City of the Caesars. This name has been given to it, somewhat inaccurately, simply because the Spanish conquistador Francisco Cesar claimed in 1528 to have discovered an enchanted city fitting its description. Many of his followers remained there and so it gained considerable notoriety when the others returned to Spain. The exact location of this city has never been determined, although it is generally thought to be in Patagonia, perhaps near Lake Nahuel-Huapi, or the Payehue lagoon near the Llanquenco swamp, or in the Sarmiento mountains. Its importance rests in its having successfully preserved the secrets of eternal life.

The Shipwreck

Throughout history, many have reached the City of the Caesars. To do so they have had to be desperate, and they are therefore like shipwrecked people who have had to abandon father, mother, children and all the familiarities of home. When they arrived at the enchanted city, they undertook roles natural to them as masters or servants, and remained there ever afterwards. Most of those who reached the City did so in the sixteenth century, but in our own time there have been others who found it. They are there now, awaiting our arrival.

The Initiation

As should now be clear, the central concern of the Master was to prepare all of us in the Circle so that we would be able to discover the City, and in turn the New Age.

The initiation was planned with great care and all of us were dressed in elaborate costumes. Their purpose was to help the initiate identify himself with one of those shipwrecked sailors of the sixteenth century, or with one or other of those who have subsequently searched for the Eternal City. The choice of the particular person which each of us 'became' seemed fortuitous, but I imagine that without our realizing it, the Master controlled it through his hypnotic powers. Furthermore, he gave us an Araucanian liquor which we called *soma*, using this ancient Sanskrit name for such drink. Thus we became the shipwrecked witnesses who had passionately searched over the endless plains for their city, enduring mirages and sufferings of all kinds.

The ceremony always took place in the form of a Mandala or Circle. The Master sat in the centre, holding an ancient sword in his right hand and a book in the other. The book was written in a language incomprehensible to us, but the Master would nevertheless read from it. After he finished, someone in the circumference would begin to speak.

First, we heard from the shipwrecked men and lost crew members of the sixteenth century. Simon de Alcazaba, the Bishop of Plasencia, Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa—all these and also the companions of Captain Cesar spoke of their sorrows, fears and hideous hungers. They told us of their long nights in the straits of Patagonia when they searched through the roaring winds for a sign of a ship that would rescue them. They then spoke of the extreme cold and their long marches across the pampas in hopes of finding a road somewhere, or indeed of finding anything at all. They then told us

of the mutinies and murders they endured and even of their cannibalism until finally they found a fruit called Calafate. This fruit was the 'Flower of Return', and upon eating it, they saw a strange city appear with high walls and a drawbridge, and with ringing bells and smiling guardsmen who beckoned them to approach. They passed through these walls and thus were saved, for they were now dead and no one would ever find them. They reached the City of the Caesars. And their bodies, like tattered flags in the wind or the limp rags that hung from the Tree of Justice in Puerto Hambre or in the Ciudad del Rey Felipe on the Magellan Straits, emitted a light that came from a better world.

Simon de Alcazaba, the Portuguese, was assassinated; the Bishop of Plasencia never even left Spain; Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, fascinated by magic and alchemy, was pursued by bad luck and driven by strong southeasterly winds into the Strait where he founded the Ciudad del Rey Felipe. There he left a handful of men while he continued his explorations, but he was never able to return to them to bring them help because of the violent tempests which battered the area. To the end of his life he was bothered by dreams of these men, even though they had entered the City of the Caesars and gained immortality there.

Thus the witnesses spoke with forced and strained voices, Spaniards and aboriginal alike.

All in different ways described the City, and their eyes opened wide as they spoke of its wonders. The inhabitants, they said, were white and bearded men called 'Ancahuincas'. They were magicians and had Indians for servants. The survivors of Bishop of Plasencia's expeditions told us that they had lived in the City of the Caesars. None of these who were rescued had eaten the Calafate, or Flower of Return.

They all said that the City had golden walls and that the roofs of the houses were encrusted with diamonds. Bells played throughout the City, but the sounds seemed to come from another world. The inhabitants were neither born nor did they die; they were eternal and spoke an unknown language. Thus the City was enchanted, and it was affirmed that if it were violated, then the world would end. That the inhabitants were white was confirmed not only by the

natives who called them Ancahuincas, but also by a priest who affirmed that having sailed through the Magellan Straits at 50 degrees of latitude south, he saw a man standing on a hillock in the company of a large white dog. This man was blonde and blue-eyed, and he disappeared in the direction of some towers which shone over against the horizon.

When the witnesses became violent in their assertions, the Master would raise his sword to quiet them so that the others could speak. We then heard from those who had gone in search of the City in later times.

And thus we heard from all of those who down through the ages had searched for the City. As they spoke, they seemed to be living in other worlds. Their voices were calm and dream-like, but at the same time passionately straining after eternity. We listened to them with profound concentration as though listening to sacred music.

The Great Ceremony

The day of my initiation finally arrived. Up until then, I had been accepted as an aspirant to the Circle and was able to look on from the outside. I had participated in the festivities and spoken as a shipwrecked man or as a witness or seeker, but my words had always been somewhat haphazard, and I let my sentences come forth superficially as in a game, changing from one person to another without much difficulty.

On the day I was to be initiated, I wore a gown similar to those worn by the carved figures at Tihuanacu, and as usual I entered the Circle grasping the hand of the person by my side. I knew that my performance would have to be exemplary. The test was to be definitive, and upon its outcome rested my right to continue into this timeless Order. I knew therefore that I had to be especially alert in order to allow the soul of another person to enter into myself and use me. I had to die so that he could live. I had no idea who my person would be. One never knew. The Master may have known, but even this is not certain. Thus it only remained to wait quietly until the Master indicated that it was time to speak.

Meanwhile, others spoke, and the ceremony began. As I listened, I felt it was I who was speaking through them all. I almost felt that there was no one else in the circle, and that I was listening to myself.

I shall not serve a Mortal Master

The first voice that I heard was that of the Portuguese, Simon de Alcazaba. He said nothing about the City and hardly mentioned his own adventures; instead, he spoke of other things, especially of love.

As you know, [he said] I am Portuguese, and in my time, Isabel of Portuguese was married to Charles V who was then the greatest king in Europe. The public affairs and battles of this great warrior kept him frequently away from home, and Isabel led a lonely life. She was distracted only by a few minor affairs of state, such as the royal order signed by her beautiful hand which granted me 200 leagues to be conquered in the southern part of Americas. Have you ever seen the portrait of Isabel painted by Titian? I don't believe a more beautiful woman ever existed. She had deep eyes set beneath a high forehead, and her complexion was as pure as ivory. For the most part, while her husband roamed about on horseback in faraway places she lived alone with her books, lost in dreams. During these absences, she was entrusted by the King to the care of the Duke of Gandia. This Duke was of the Borja family which is the same as that of the Italian Borgias who are famous as Popes, mystics and libertines. He was thus an exalted man, capable of dreaming the impossible and worthy of residing in the enchanted City of the Caesars.

The Duke of Gandia was passionately in love with Isabel. He solicitously looked after her smallest desires and read old poems by the Troubadours to her while the sun set over the plains of Castille. Together they listened to the sounds of the lute and day-dreamed about the future. Kneeling at her feet, he would contemplate her ivory-hued fingers and then looking up, would see tears flow down beneath her lashes. He longed to comfort her and kiss her tears

away, but knew he could not do so; only alone in secret could he think of that.

Certain women are made for love, others merely for the reproduction of children. A true queen is made only for love, not for matrimony, and Isabel was that sort, a vestal or priestess of the sun or moon. Perhaps Charles V was aware of that and therefore spent his time in travel or in warfare, even ending his days as a monk. Nevertheless, he profaned the temple of this virgin queen, and she gave him children. Isabel even died of child labor, as was inevitable.

The Duke of Gandia was on a journey when he heard the news. True lovers seem to be separated at crucial moments, and so it was that Isabel died alone. When the Duke of Gandia, Francisco de Borja, received word from the court, he galloped to the funeral in a mood of withdrawn desperation. He arrived just as the cortege was entering the cemetery. Recklessly he asked to see the face of his Queen, to look for the last time at her delicate features and hands. Permission was given; Francisco de Borja looked and then fell insensible on the ground. The glorious beauty that had so entranced him had faded; his dream of eternal beauty was shattered for there was nothing in the casket but rotting carrion. His flower was an illusion, was broken music.

Then the Duke of Gandia exclaimed, 'Never more shall I serve a mortal Master!'

Later, Francisco de Borja was canonized. Thanks to the love of a queen who transformed herself into rotting flesh before his eyes, de Borja henceforth concerned himself with heavenly matters and thus became a saint. And as for sainthood, it does seem to develop most fruitfully in those who by inclination are libertines.

The Queen is Indispensable

At last, Simon de Alcazaba fell silent. The Master then pointed towards the figure sitting at my side, and then Father Nicolas Mascardi began to speak. Italian in origin, he spoke softly and gently:

I do not remember when I first became fascinated by the City. It must have been when I was very young, however, for I was long attracted by the snow-covered mountains and sensed that they were enveloped in an ethereal atmosphere. I began early to listen to stories told by the Indians, and from time to time I overheard certain secret things spoken to one another by some of my compatriots. They used to grow silent when they approached me, but gradually I began to understand them, even before they spoke openly with me. I learned that these men belonged to a hermetic order and that they hoped to discover a lost city amongst the mountains. I found out more about their concern from an old man on his death bed whom I administered the last rites. This occurred during a terrible epidemic that took hundreds of people, and the old man told me about the City, and saying that he had seen it in the far South beside Lake Nahuel-Huapi. He said that its walls were made of gold, that its streets were paved with silver and that its houses were decorated with precious stones. The people cheerfully smiled and invited him to come in, but he was afraid to do so because no Christians lived there and because there were no priests. The bells rang not for Jesus Christ but for another God whom he did not know. The old man thought that the City was bewitched.

I then told the old man that I wished to go there and urged him to tell me how I might do so. He crossed himself and appeared to be very frightened. 'A priest would never be able to enter that City' was all he said.

From that moment, I knew that I had to reach the City. I rationalized my desire by saying that I wanted to convert its population. I began to make enquires, and gradually the natives began to talk to me, first very guardedly but afterwards quite openly. I was then transferred to Castro, on the island of Chiloe. The people there have an ancient heritage, and they told me much. But all the information I gathered constantly directed me further towards the south.

During this period, I had a number of visions. St. Xavier appeared to me and ordered me to go in search of the City of the Caesars. He said that if I were to enter it, I would become immortal. I argued the point with him, and said that I only wanted to go there to convert its inhabitants and to say the Mass there. St. Xavier laughed uproariously, and then disappeared. He had first come wearing a cape and accompanied by a white dog.

On other occasions I used to see the City in my dreams. I would pass through its narrow and empty streets which I fancied were similar to those of my native city, Assisi. No one was ever about, but I would feel a gentle breeze passing over the town, and I had the sense that someone was watching me from within the houses along the streets. I would then wake up with a mixed feeling of happiness and sorrow.

After that I freed many of the natives whom the governor of Chiloe had imprisoned. These people were a gentle and meek people. Amongst them I met the wife of a chief whom was given the title of Queen. I decided to take her back to her own people and during the long journey through the canals of Patagonia, she gave me much information and promised to guide me to the City. 'Only I can be of help to you,' she said, 'because I am a woman and a queen. Before entering the City, one must first find a queen.' She then looked at me, and I shall never forget her dark, penetrating eyes. 'You are chaste,' she said. 'Therefore, you are not laudable of the City.'

She spoke like a true Queen, addressing me not as a priest, but as a man. Nobody had ever spoken to me that way before, and no one has done so since.

I absolutely believed what the Queen said; indeed I still do. I was convinced that I was going to find the City and therefore I was never disheartened. Even when I endured extreme hardships, I was

sustained by the vision of those dark eyes urging me on to the unknown.

I was so bewitched that I crossed half the world in search of that City. I discovered streams and lakes that no one has ever seen before and crossed mountain passes that were wholly unknown. In the high mountainous regions I discovered flowers blooming with a strange brightness and found high plateaus enveloped in snow that looked like froth. I bathed in the freezing waters of lake Nahuel-Huapi and at night I slept under the trees, gazing at the heavens in hopes of a sign that would direct me on my way.

No sign ever came, but I knew that the City was near; at times I nearly believed that I was within its limits. One day we met a lone traveller from Patagonia who was accompanied by a white dog. He was not going to stop, but I called out to him. He was Spanish, and I asked if he wanted to make his confession. He gave me a strange look, and his eyes revealed the influence of the Queen. He then spoke: 'It is not I, but you, who needs to make confession—not, however, with a priest of your sort, but with another kind I know of. You are searching for something that has nothing to do with our times. You can confess as you like, but I will tell you the truth, and that is that you are an Ancahuinca.'

As the man moved away, I looked at his white dog and recalled my vision of St. Xavier. I then began to pray and say my confession. It was a shattering experience, for in truth I knew that I was an Ancahuinca. I also realized that I was looking for the City, in order to make myself immortal.

I then sent my last servants in every direction, carrying messages for the inhabitants of the City. These were written in six languages, amongst them Greek, for I had come to believe that the inhabitants of the City were ancient Greeks—a race of Apollos reborn in those southern regions. I then planted an apple tree on that barren, wind-swept plain.

After that, I prepared to enter the City, for I had at last begun to understand the secret message of the Queen's eyes—that only by dying would I be able to achieve my goal. Physically, I was a Christian priest, and I realized that as such I would not be able to enter the City; I would have to transform myself into a priestly magician.

And thus it happened that when the spears of the natives entered my chest and passed through my heart and my blood fertilized the apple tree I had planted there, I also spilled out many magical cities with walls of gold and roofs encrusted with diamonds. I had carried them with me ever since I was born.

As Nicolas Mascardi fell silent, the Master explained: 'Thanks to the Queen you obtained wisdom. He who does not find his Queen shall not enter the City.'

Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa

For a few moments we all remained silent and then the Master began to read from his book which none of us could understand or even remember. He then raised his sword, and pointing towards me, said, 'You now, Huanacu!'

For a moment, I felt a shudder and a sensation pass through me, and then I began to speak, I had become Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa.

I have always been interested in magic [I began] I have gazed at the heavens in order to discover man's destiny, and I have also searched for a clue to man's happiness in the fusion of metals. Petrus Toletanus was a friend of mine, and in his magic codices I discovered formulas derived from a union with the soul and body of women, which made it possible for one to remain in this life colder even than ices of the Southern Strait. But those studies were youthful dreams which I had to abandon since I was under observation by the Inquisition. I therefore had to thrust myself into the world of living men, even though in fact that grew to be the world of the dead. Such was my error, but no man can hold himself back once he has undertaken a particular course of action; he must follow it to the end if he does not want the whole of his world to collapse.

I therefore went to colonize the Strait that cuts through the end of the world and which lies near the icy regions of the South Pole—an area known to us still as Terra Incognita and inhabited perhaps by angels and demons. Frequently we encountered the thick fogs and furious seas of those latitudes, and often listened to the groanings of cosmic sounds. Unfortunately, that trip ended indecisively and we returned to Spain. Soon after, however, we set out again, only once again to encounter the terrible seas and hurricanes of the South Atlantic.

On the surface, the purpose of the trip was to found cities along the Strait so as to prevent the English from passing through. Privately, however, I felt a kind of compulsion dragging me towards the deeper waters of the South. This inexorable drive seemed to correspond to a psychic attraction, particularly to my long-neglected fascination with astrology and alchemy, since it is impossible to penetrate those regions without magic. Whoever has felt this attraction and has then gone away, perhaps because of physical weakness, will ever afterwards be caught between two contrary forces that will destroy him.

So at least it was me. I founded the Ciudad del Rey Felipe on the Strait and left a handful of brave men there while I left in search of reinforcements and food from one of our Atlantic ports. But then the stars and fates turned against me. My ships were pushed inexorably further and further away, always in the direction of Europe and Spain. I was seized by English corsairs and suffered all manner of hunger and sickness. But they were nothing compared to my inner agony. Continually I thought of my deserted crew, living on the bleak shores of the Strait, always staring through the mists that enveloped their encampment in hopes once again of seeing my ships. In my mind I saw them hungry and thirsty, trembling with cold and fear. As they died in frozen isolation, I heard them curse me as a faithless leader who had deserted them.

Thus the whole latter part of my life was full of sorrow and regrets—so much so that long before I died physically, I lost all interest in ordinary life. Those I had left behind could not have known that I did all I could to help them, they must have thought that I had wilfully deserted them. Thus early dreams and the compulsion which had first driven me towards the south. Fascinated by the idea of the Enchanted City all vanished in the face of this human grief. This misery and fury followed me until the end, continually reinforced as my unheard pleas fell on the deaf ears of the powers in the land:

‘I implore Your Majesty, by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, to remember your loyal servants who remained in those remote and frightening regions!’

I was breathless, and it seemed to me that I’d shouted and that the hero had made me say improper things. The Master looked at

me; his eyes seemed hard, but there was a spark of pleasure in them. He remained still and only said 'Tihuanacu.'

El Caleuche

The inhabitants of the City of the Caesars have a fleet made up of ancient triemes and sailing vessels, but also including modern ships and submarines that were concealed in this southern region during the last two World Wars. These ships are supplied from a mysterious oasis in the Antarctic and are commanded by undying and skilful sailors. They navigate beneath the surface of the water and use canals that pass under the Antarctic and the islands of the mainland. That is why the chorus of these drowned sailors seems to emerge from below the surface of the water. From time to time the fleet comes to the surface of the ocean and disappears with a man or two, or even an entire crew. These now become members of the City's navy and move about from the Sea of Drake to the Antarctic and the Land of Queen Maud. Sailors of this navy have occasionally been seen, and are described as a motley crew, wearing sixteenth century vestments and coats of mail, or tunics embroidered with the wings of Tihuanaco, or the uniforms of modern sailors.

This fleet also conducts trade with people living ashore, especially in the hills above Valparaiso. This famous port is well acquainted with the Invisible Armada, as are Punta Arenas in the Straits of Magellan and Chonchi on the island of Chiloe. Those who trade with this fleet lead mysterious lives, sleeping by day and working by night.

The flagship of the fleet is called El Caleuche. According to the Master, this ship navigates beneath the surface of the water with all of its lights on. In its movements, it most closely resembles a sea serpent, and for this reason it has also been called *Kundalini*, which is that fiery beast, alone capable of opening the gates of the City of Caesars. An Admiral sails on El Caleuche and carries in his hand a spy glass that in reality looks like a sceptre. He also has wings, and

when he unfolds them the ship becomes a plumed serpent that is able to sail to the heavens, visiting all of the stars. The Admiral is always silent; he does not command, but is commanded by the shipwrecked men and fulfils their hopes and desires thus when he finds a new course, the crew sings its canticles of joy that rebound from wave to wave; and the ship, like a flame rising from the depths, crawls up the narrow canals of the deep south called Teremquelas in the language of the Selenams. It heads up toward the old north which is called Ctait until it finally reaches the gates of the City.

The Master then gave different names to the various parts of his description. He said that the Patagonian canals were called, *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Susumna*, and that the drawbridge at the City of the Caesars was called *Manipura*.

* * *

The language that the Master spoke was becoming increasingly unintelligible to us, but at the same time we forgot less. He was speaking to us as those who had become initiates in the Great Ceremony and it would appear that he considered that the image was still active, as though transferred to a higher level of understanding.

The Master tells us about the City

Once the first stage of our initiation was completed, the Master told us that we should leave the Circle for a while in order to concentrate on a physical search for the City; and he told us that we should not return until we were able to give a description of our discovery. He said that we should give all our time to this project and consider it continually. He then gave us his conception of the City:

It is everywhere, [he said] not only on Lake Nahuel-Huapi or in the far distant part of Patagonia, but right here in the centre of Santiago even on Matta Street or Lira, or Carmen or Recoleta. You are there at all times and you breathe its air every time you inhale; yet when you think you have found it, it will have disappeared, and you will have suffered one more deception. You will only find it when you are no longer looking for it, or when you have become convinced that it does not exist. Thus it is everywhere and nowhere; it is both existent and non-existent.

Physically, it takes the shape of a square with an entrance that is almost impossible to find. One has to go around it dozens of times before discovering it; sometimes even years are needed, although it may also be discovered in a second. But first the password must be known, so that the guard who never sleeps will lower the drawbridge for you. And yet even there, you risk deception, for there are many false doors and bridges which lead to dead ends as in a maze. Moreover, even if on the right track, there are many other doorways, each with its passwords, which have to be passed through before reaching the centre, the throne room. Perhaps it is better never to have entered the City or never to have heard of it. Then at least you would not have lost your life as a man or have risked the

sickness that comes with this knowledge.

The City then is a labyrinth, a circle having no one centre and precise circumference. You must look for it calmly and continually, and you must not come back without a description, however inaccurate, of it.

Now perhaps, it may be that those who knew him, will understand why our friend, Jason, acted as he did during the last years of his life. For months, he remained in bed, concentrating and searching for a route through his dreams. Then he would come out into the streets and search feverishly for the City. He would lead us, his friends, on a frantic search through strange and barely lit neighbourhoods, as though taking part in a witches' dance. Along the way, he would suddenly stop before an obstacle which none of the rest of us could see, and then he would jump to one side or over it.

We were all involved in this search, and months passed before we returned to the Circle. The intensity of our search made time seem relative, however, and the period may have been longer or shorter. The first to return with a description of the City was Jason. The Master called us all together, for the rest of us were allowed to attend as listeners—so that gradually the Circle would be completed.

Jason speaks of the City

The city is called Lamella, [he began] and Lamella is the same as Dodona, the centre of the oracle of Zeus. It was there that Jason, the Argonaut, was brought up, and there the Golden Fleece was found. Today, that city has fallen on evil days and is like any other, but once it had a soul and a vitality that enlivened all its citizens.

Everyone in the City wears a mask, but the one I wore when I entered it was out of fashion, and for that reason everyone stared at me. I walked for some distance until I reached the central square and there was surrounded by a group of people who began to question me. When I did not reply they gathered in greater numbers and talked together with some violence. Since I remained silent, they became more irritable and made rough gestures. They continued to question me and reached out to grab me. Finally, I straightened up and looking at each individually, showed them my hands. After that they all fell into silence.

Evening was drawing near, but the walls of the houses were still hot from the rays of the sun. The atmosphere was heavy, and people walked by slowly. I also strolled about in a preoccupied fashion until at last I reached the house.

Inside, everyone was assembled, waiting for me. Then at a signal they gathered round a table where they talked and argued until at last they broke up in disorderly fashion. The Word was the centre of interest, alive, consuming everyone present. Then finally there was great silence which in turn was interrupted by a sharp laugh. Everyone was astounded and surged forward, violently tearing their masks. I kept mine on, however, and backed away into a corner. A woman then suddenly leaped on the top of a tripod. She wore no mask, but began to shout and gesticulate violently, signalling others to draw near. She then came down from the tripod and tore at her clothing. The other encouraged her and soon she was

naked. After that she ran behind a curtain to hide herself. That in turn was drawn back, and there she stood, personifying the Gesture.

There was now nothing more for me to wait for, and so I walked towards the doors. When they saw me, they began to sing the grave diggers' song. But soon they quietened down and each one sat down in a soft chair. I called out to them but they refused to answer.

The sun was slowly setting in the west, and I therefore ran out of the place. As I passed along, arms reached out towards me. I ran by rows of houses till I reached the outskirts of the City where I discovered an outcrop of earth. It was made of white marble and was like a box in a theatre. There, suddenly overcome by exhaustion I sat down, and felt enveloped by a soft lethargy. Down below was the City, surrounded by dense clouds that began to pass over it. As I felt myself falling asleep, I heard some voices come up to me from below calling my name feebly and weakly.

When Jason finished, the Master said 'Yes, the City can be sweet like a mother; but it can be also terrible and atrocious like the Fates.'

I also speak of the City

I also continued my search, usually alone, though sometimes with my friend. Then there were times when, without meaning to, we would find ourselves at the same corner, in a park, or on a hill, concentrating and searching for a sign. Sometimes, though rarely, we recognized each other; then we would shake hands briefly, or smile. More often, however, we did not even look at each other. We could have entered the City through the same gate at the same time without realizing it.

One night after I had taken leave of him and was walking down through some side lanes, still paved with stone in those days, I found myself in a narrow street which I'd never seen before. It was illuminated by a few dim lanterns, and all the houses were oddly shaped, with little balconies. At the far end of the street, there was a narrow lane through which it was barely possible to pass, and right beside it rose a clock tower with a painted face.

Quite unconsciously, I began to walk on tiptoe so as not to make any noise. Someone must have heard me, however, for a door creaked open, and I caught sight of a very white hand holding onto the door post. A young woman emerged into the light, apparently without seeing me, and looked up towards the tower. 'It is raining,' she said. 'Who will enter the Circle tonight?' But it was not raining; and the night was warm. I tiptoed up to her and said, 'Please let me enter.' Then she took my hand and placed it against her breast. After a while, a large woman came out from the interior of the house with her legs wrapped in paper leggings. She looked at the young woman without saying anything, but a white dog that accompanied her leaped on me and tried to prevent me from entering. I fought with the dog until at last I subdued him, and that night I slept with my head resting on the snow-white breast of that young woman. My whole being questioned her about the City.

I spoke of all this in the meeting of the Circle. I told everything and confessed my error in thinking that the City was located within that white body. That night I had travelled over all of the contours of that marvellous woman's body from her diminutive feet up her legs, through her womb, over her breasts and head, in search of the entrance to the City, while all the time her eyes did not see me, lost in imaginary rain.

'Why did not I find the City?' I asked the Master. 'I threw myself into this adventure with great spirit, and it is true that she allowed me to enter her. But the fat old lady in the paper leggings just sat there watching us make love, and I was deceived.'

The Master remained unmoved and simply asked, 'What did the dog say to you?'

I remembered, surprised.

'The dog wanted to prevent me from entering.'

'You should have obeyed him,' said the Master, 'because the dog is also the City. Indeed, he knows your course best; his sense of smell is infallible. Moreover, he is loyal to the death.'

He paused for a moment before continuing: 'But you came here to describe the City to me. Tell us what it is like, for even when you think you have never seen it, you really know it.'

'The City is like a flower made of coloured paper,' I replied.

Jason leaves for the City

Suddenly Jason stopped coming to the Circle, or rather, stopped tracing it as he had first done with his eyes closed on the dirty bar table. His decision upset me greatly, for I did not see how I could continue to go on alone; a circle had to be formed by more than one person. At that time I was not mature enough to be able to substitute others, nor did I realize that my own solitude was sufficient to form the circumference of a circle—alone, with my ghosts.

Jason went down to Valparaiso, and for several months I stopped seeing him. I suspected that he had discovered some truth in an ancient book, perhaps about El Caleuche; otherwise I could not understand why he had gone down to that ancient port full of old sailors' cantinas and dilapidated houses, decayed English, Dutch and German warehouses that never opened their doors in the daytime, that even went out of business fifty years ago. Then I realized that perhaps they still did work at night, with the lights on in old gas lamps, preparing cargoes for a distant port surrounded by snows. Perhaps Jason was interested in El Caleuche and was going to embark.

My supposition was correct, for when he came back, he was another person. His eyes were brilliant and dark, and he brought with him a small box which had been carved centuries before in Italy, and from which he occasionally would inhale grains of a blue powder. He kept himself in bed and refused to go out into the sunlight.

I now belong to the moon, [he said], I am approaching the land of the Giants. And do you know how this is done? Not with the physical body, but with its shadow, with the bird which exists within. The Selenams used to call it 'Huaiyuhunen', and it has wings like the Angels of Tihuanaco. I have come to realize that the City of the Caesars cannot be entered by those with the bodies of human dwarfs, but only with other bodies. The inhabitants of the

City live entirely within this other body and are able to use it to project themselves all over the world, and even to other planets. I have learned how to live in this body outside of this world. If you'd like, I will show you the technique. It is found in this little box which was originally carved in an evil period of history.

Jason no longer dressed like us and on the few occasions that he went outside, he would emerge in the late afternoon wearing clothing of other ages, Greek tunics, Egyptian mantles, the breastplate and arms of a Spanish conquistador or a crown of the Incas. But no one saw him, for since he was so strange and different, he had become virtually invisible. Then Jason invited me to what he called his farewell party.

I must go, [he said], but I cannot decide to do so by myself; I must leave it to the Great Game. It must be a matter of luck, of destiny. Therefore this is what we shall do: we shall play my game, and if you win, then you will decide whether I am to leave or stay; if I win, I shall decide. I've already consulted the I Ching, and its words seemed favourable. But they must now be confirmed by our favourite game of Porotos Pallares. We shall then see what the Incas, what Tihuanaco says.

So we began to play. In a mirrored room we sat on the floor with legs crossed in the Hindu manner, and for three hours we celebrated the ritual of farewell. We changed positions from time to time so as to imitate the liturgical figures drawn on an antique vase from Mochica which we kept near us. We drank a little *soma* and then Jason made the gesture which he had learned from the Master and which always marked the beginning of the Araucanian song called 'Awarkudewe-ul'. We intoned this song together reciting alternate lines and then played a game known as *Apaitalla*, as well as another child-like game called *Pallalla*.

As it had to be, as it was written in the I Ching, Jason won. I looked deeply into his feverish eyes which were at once glad and sorrowful, and I wanted to embrace him, but I realized that to touch him that moment would have meant death. He was surrounded by ghosts with wooden faces like the bloody sculptures of Rapa-Nui.

'And now I shall choose the way in which to leave' he said, and his voice was tender and gentle. 'I must choose the vehicle that will carry me. It will have to be as it was in the ancient times, for there

were fewer men then and they were better remembered. There will have to be blood at my departure, because the colour of blood is red, and that colour is not forgotten.'

The Premonition of the Ices

A BLOOD-RED flower rests on the surface of a floating iceberg. It is the national flower of our country and is called a *Copihue*. The further it drifts towards the south, carried there apparently by an invisible current, the more it changes colour until it becomes a white *Copihue*. This movement towards the south also wears away the bulk of the iceberg so that when it finally arrives at the temperate oasis that lies at the centre of the ice-fields, the flower can be deposited at the foot of an apple tree someone planted there years ago by now the flower has become eternal and is petrified, and it emits a music that is inaudible, at least for the time being.

* * *

I had many ups and downs, days in which I fluctuated between complete discouragement and inexplicable joy. On those latter days, I would take my pack and hike into the mountains, following a direction that had been revealed to me in a dream.

I dreamed a lot in those days, and most of the dreams were very strange. Sometimes I would find myself in the City, walking through empty streets. All of the houses were vacant, and everything showed signs of complete desertion: the gates were rusty and broken, the fountains and arches decayed. Then I would hear a voice: 'Hurry up or you will find that he is gone. . .'

In one of my dreams I saw myself at the bottom of a volcanic crater. It was burned out, and a small stream sprang from inside its side. This vision made me very happy because a voice explained that the purest of water was that which flowed out of a volcano. On yet another occasion I seemed to see the City in a distant part of the mountains. It was made of huge blocks of stone fitted together and resembled the faces of gods and heroes. The mountains also seemed to reveal the profiles of giant faces underneath the snow. Then I

heard a voice say, 'The key to all of this lies much further to the south, indeed, in the furthest extreme of the world.'

I then saw a solitary beach with a few red breasted birds on it. The horizon in the distance seemed to be on fire, and a group of icebergs looking like galleons and triremes passed by in a moment of troubled silence.

On yet another occasion, standing next to my bed, a giant wearing furs appeared and looked at me steadily. 'You shall yet arrive,' he said. 'You shall still come up here. . . .' I then woke up in a fright; it was dawn and the last stars were fading.

All of these dreams indicated to me that I should have to continue my search towards the South Pole in hopes of finding the City in that vicinity. I found a dog there, and I intended to follow him, as my Master had suggested. But the dog wandered away and disappeared in the ices. I'm sure he reached the oasis and that he called to me from there, but I was unable to follow him because I was yet unprepared and had not found a Queen.

TWO
The Princess
Papan

Years ago, among the Aztecs, there existed the white god Quetzalcoatl who foretold the coming of love, a force that would be recognized by flowers and food offered to the altar of the Sun. This prediction represented an attitude quite different from that of the Aztecs who preferred the sacrifice of bloody hearts. Like the giants of Tihuanacu, Quetzalcoatl had wings and was known as the Plumed Serpent. Disappointed by the changes which overcame Mexico under the Aztecs he abandoned the country and sailed off to another world. Nevertheless, he promised that he would return, and many Aztecs looked forward to this event. Foremost amongst those who did was Princess Papan, the sister of Moctezuma, the Aztec ruler of the city of Tenochtitlan.

Then one afternoon, on the outskirts of the city, Princess Papan died. She was cold and chilled to the bone. Yet, for some reason, perhaps through the special influence of Quetzalcoatl, she was not buried, but was kept on her death bed for weeks on end. Finally, months later, Papan came back to life. Her brother Moctezuma went to see her and sat with her, almost afraid that he would also turn to ice through the influence of her presence.

At length she told him about her visions and the experience of her death. She said that she had seen the return of Quetzalcoatl, coming back on a floating house over the waters in the company of white men who wore beards. She begged her brother not to reject these men.

It is not entirely clear whether the results were intended or not, but in any case instead of Quetzalcoatl came Hernan Cortes who was white and bearded, and who wisely accepted the predictions of Papan. Thus, her vision destroyed the empire of the Aztecs, and that perhaps was her intention in order to give life to a new world. Perhaps too that was what Quetzalcoatl also wanted, seeking a new equilibrium between the civilizations.

The Return of Papan

She belonged to another Circle and had a City of her own. Hers was called Agharti and was located in the Himalayas. In essence it was the same as ours.

She had chosen to have a certain illness in order to have time to contemplate her City without being disturbed by the events of our time. In a real sense, she had died and come back to life, and that is why I knew she might be also called Papan. I used to sit by her, in front of an open window through which the sun played. I told her about the Circle, about my friend who had disappeared, and above all, about the flower of my childhood. As I talked about that, I realized to my surprise that tears were flowing down my face. I then calmed myself with an effort and changed the subject. From my pocket I took a piece of a paper which I had carried with me ever since coming back from the Pole and I spread it out on her bed. It was a map of the Antarctic drawn by the 6th century Egyptian traveller, Cosme Indicopleutes. It showed a piece of land enclosed by another and with a river connecting the two.

Perhaps this is the other part of the world mentioned by Plato, [I said] or perhaps the river is the same one Dante saw in *The Inferno* and which is supposed to come out at the Pole where the Hill of Paradise is found. The Spanish explorers believed that the Amazon was this river. Also, here in America, there is, or was, a strong belief in the existence of a Tree which reached to the heavens, its roots were supposed to reach down to the Inferno. I have no idea where I may be on that Tree, whether still in the roots, or along the trunk. In any event, to return to the map of Indicopleutes, I think that both my City and yours must be found in that part of the world, but how does one get there, and where is the river?

She remained silent, for she was a good listener, and simply urged me to continue, and to tell her about my life. I therefore spoke

of Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa and his Ciudad del Rey Felipe in the Straits. I then described the Antarctic as I'd seen it and told her of my insistent search for an oasis. I told her how I had come across an ancient galleon in whose rigging the air played like violins; and I told her of the apple tree that I had found and the oar that lay on the ice. This oar had names carved on it which I could not read. Where had it come from? Where was the crew of that ship?

I also told her about the dog and how it had guided me to that boat and even onwards towards a deep ravine, at whose bottom I felt I would surely find the City. But then I had retreated in fear and did not follow the dog any further. I had remained forever on the threshold.

Without moving, without making the slightest gesture, she then gave me the sensation of passing her hands over my forehead. The feeling was an illusion because her two hands remained on the bed sheets, but perhaps she created it in her mind. At any rate, the storms raging in my mind grew calm because I had unburdened myself and told her almost everything.

Then at last she began to speak. To lessen the grief I felt over the loss of my dog, she told a story that is often recited in her own City of Agharti.

A Dog in the Sky

In the *Mahabharata*, there is an account of a great battle which took place no one knows exactly when on the plains of Kuruchetra. It was fought over the possession of the city of Hasti-Napura and resulted in the annihilation of all of the heroes of the Lunar Race, even including Krishna himself. Afterwards, the King of the Pandavas, Judhi Sthira, abdicated his throne because he could not endure the memory of the war. Together with his five brothers, amongst them the hero Arjuna, he then left in search of Indra's heaven. The group was accompanied by Arjuna's lover and by a dog which came from the city of Hasti-Napura.

The pilgrimage was long and arduous, for the Pandavas had to pass over mountains and through deserts and jungles. One by one they fell by the wayside, brought down by their own defects and weaknesses. First to fall was the woman because of her excessive love for Arjuna. He too collapsed because he could not esteem anyone else and considered himself to be the most handsome of all. His downfall was caused because he bragged that he could overcome all of his enemies in one day, which of course he was unable to do. In the end, only Judhi Sthira reached the throne of Indra still accompanied by his dog.

The god Indra then invited him to enter heaven, but Judhi Sthira held back, because he wanted to know whether his brothers would also be admitted. Indra assured him that they had already arrived and were inside, even though they had lost their accustomed physical forms. Indra told Judhi Sthira, however, that he would be able to enter both physically and spiritually. Even so, Judhi Sthira hesitated until he received assurance that his dog would also be allowed to enter, for he refused to abandon his faithful companion from Hasti-Napura.

Indra accepted this condition, and since then there has been a

dog from the city of Hasti-Napura in heaven.

So, you too [concluded Papan] will be able to enter with your dog, because he did not die in the Antarctic, but is within you. The dog in fact is the body which leads you towards the City and is faithful till death.

The Visions of Papan

Now I began to listen with great care and concentration because I realized that Papan was speaking from a land of visions. She lived in a world of dreams and was very alert to their significance. She had blue eyes, and when she looked at me, she seemed to be gazing out at me from another world. She almost seemed to be looking on behalf of someone else, as though ordered to do so.

Her hair was golden blond, and it fell in long curls over her shoulders. Her skin was very white, and her arms were touched by a soft down that gave them a strange luminosity like the Antarctic ices. Against this whiteness, her lips were pale red, seeming to fade a little every day. She was still a young girl.

After telling me the story of the dog of Hasti-Napura, Papan spoke about the land where her City of Agharti was found, but the India she spoke of was not the one we know, but another that had been lost and of which no traces remain. She spoke of pre-Aryan India, which was governed by the man-god Siva.

All that we know today, [she said] even in your Circle, is but a pale reflection of a technique which all men once knew. Men were then Giants of the Moon, and Siva was but one of many such powerful beings. This technique allowed them to fly and to travel into other worlds; and in a sense, they lived everywhere at once. Moreover, they were able to fix the stars in their courses and to give form to the external universe. This knowledge has been lost, and only a few fragments remain to us today. Thus even a book of wisdom like the I Ching often appears puerile to us, something only for children or for snobs. The true key has been mislaid, and the results produced by this technique are now limited and even false. The full knowledge was probably lost in some great catastrophe, and our present condition is also probably a result of such an event. Today we are a race that has degenerated and lives without hope, having

lost touch with the vitality of the former race. Still, perhaps something can be found, even in your City. What is its name? Shampul-lah?

'No,' I said, 'it's the City of the Caesars.' I was somewhat disturbed to hear the name she used.

'My city of Agharti is something like it,' she said. 'But it is almost blasphemous for us to try to reach it, and dangerous too, for us and for those we know.'

I then asked Papan to tell me of the pre-Aryan world, and especially about Nandur. She recited a few fragments of lost poems and inscriptions which had been known in the ancient city of Nandur, which was also called the City of Crabs and was ruled over by a being known as the Three-Eyed Fish or the Sower of Crabs. One of Papan's inscriptions went as follows:

Nan rururu Tuku Karumugil
 Urueli orur Edu etu ru uyarel
 Ir ar ire per Kadavul.

This inscription may be translated as:

The green god who controls the two paths
 Of the high, resounding sun,
 Comes from the year of Orur
 To the land of the rain clouds
 In the same way as the thunder roars.

This cryptic inscription was explained by Papan, who said that the ancient cultists meditated upon various objects and attempted to establish a relationship between themselves and that object. Thus a number of seemingly allusive observations were published, such as 'One is the tree, and one is also the sun,' or 'In the House of the Great Fish, the Three-Eyed One meditates.' Others included statements like 'When the Fishes reaches the Crab, he meditates on the Three-Eyed One' and 'Adorned Three-Eyed One, in whom the Fourth Star is born.'

'I have searched for the City in the bodies of women,' I answered. 'I have penetrated them and gone over them as though they were a country. Once I knew a woman who was either mad or a saint. She was in the care of an old crone who wore paper leggings. Yet we never understood each other, and I believe that we

even harmed each other without knowing it, having given false indications to each other.'

'What was her name? Do you remember it?' asked Papan.

'I don't remember well, and in fact I know nothing, absolutely nothing at all, about the women I loved.'

That simply means that you have never loved. [answered Papan] You simply have no idea of love as an absolute concept. Loving is knowing. It is also like a crime since it involves death, burial and resurrection. For how otherwise can one possess the body of a woman? One cannot penetrate the walled city without first subduing its inhabitants. Thus, love is something that is very serious. Today it is completely forgotten, but once, in the city of Nandur it was known and understood. It involves the Three-Eyed One and the Green God, and also the year of Orur. The tiger lilies grow in silence on the white mountain peaks. Love in fact is a strange and secret chemistry, in which the androgynous is born. This is true and complete love; everything else is different. Have you ever noticed how impossible it was to fuse yourself with the person you thought you loved, even though sleeping in the same bed? There is always something separating you, a thread of air, a different dream. Can the lovers be truly united if each one dreams a different dream? If you ever begin to dream the same dream as your love, then you will be able to create the new star, the star of Him-Her.

Strangely, or perhaps through this suggestion, I began to have the same dreams as Papan, and to share her visions. Thus, when I came into her room I no longer spoke, but sat down in a wicker chair beside the window, and silently allowed her visions to pour over me, certain that hers and mine were the same, while all the time she looked through me as though I were a window.

From time to time she spoke:

You know the word fatigue when it is applied to metals? [she asked] It is the same with all substances, and the strength that each one contains moves to another when fatigue occurs, for the totality of energy is constant. The ownership of substances is never static. Thus I, for example, shall enter your body. This is no different from the close relationship that exists between the murderer and his victim. When the victim is buried, he takes with him something of the murderer's very being. Even physical love is not essential for this

transmigration. Or rather, as time goes on, it is less and less necessary for the realization of true love. The body becomes simply a resort in which the substances are mixed. But the love I speak of is different: it is a forbidden marriage; in it, physical contact does not produce children of the flesh in whose very birth some part of the parent dies. Rather, through death, it produces the children of life. Thus, such offspring as I should give you would be the Androgynous, the Star of Him-Her. The rite itself is actually fulfilled only upon that star. This star is Venus, the Morning Star whose light may be seen over our mountain peaks. There the wedding is fully celebrated, and the sacrifice performed.'

After that I understood what the Master had meant when he said that it would be impossible to enter the City without a Queen. But it seemed to me that even the Master was unaware of the frightening consequences of this undertaking. Papan then wrote me a letter which went as follows:

'He who loves, gives eternity to his lover; he renounces eternity only to gain it later on. . . . I write these lines at the witching hour. . . . I think the Wedding, the sacrifice, is rapidly approaching. Love is like a sphere: it cannot be seen or understood on all sides at once, as the Fish with the Three-Eyes saw everything in the city of Nandur. However, I will make it so that you will always be cold like the ices in Antarctic, because I will be buried within you. *You will no longer need an external sun because you will have the White Sun inside you.*

Come tomorrow so that we can arrange the Wedding. You will know the witnesses.'

One the following day, we met as she had asked. Our witnesses were three strange wooden figures, painted red, that had come from the island of Rapa Nui or Eastern Island. Papan had placed them on the floor and I was looking at them. She had got out of bed and was dressed in a robe whose gold thread made her seem more pale than usual. She sat down where I normally did by the window and signalled me to lie down on her bed. The three figures consisted of winged fish, a winged man, and a carved heart, to which wings were also attached. Papan had a name for each of these, but asked me not to remember them. Then she picked up the wooden heart and placed it on my chest.

‘This is our principal witness and sponsor,’ she said.

‘This morning,’ [she continued], ‘when I undressed myself in order to put this gown, I looked at myself in the mirror, and I am sure that I will not survive long. All that remains for me therefore is that other road of magical love which will deliver me over to you when I die. In this way, I will continue to live, preserved in your memory. Do you realize that in a sense you are a kind of cemetery? You carry so many others around in you, and give them life through your memory of them. You have carried Jason, and now you will carry me. This is a great responsibility, and you now must press on towards the end, for if you fail and do not find the City, and do not create a flower, you will not only have failed and died yourself, you will have killed everyone else as well.’

The next morning, I arrived at daybreak and found her lying dead upon the bed. She was covered with a white sheet, and her golden hair was combed down to her waist. In her hands was a Quetzal feather. . . .

Then I seemed to hear a voice which told me not to weep. ‘Do not upset her,’ it said; ‘do not impede her on her flight towards the star, which is really her journey towards yourself.’

Pavanne

I placed Papan's dead body on a wooden table in the centre of the room. It was covered only by a white sheet, so I put a veil on her face, for after all it was our wedding. I then went out to look for a blind musician, an old Araucanian, and I brought him back with his horn and drum. I then sat down in the chair that I had used so often and motioned him to a corner where he squatted in the traditional manner of his race.

I talked to him for a long time, I told him the story of the Aztec Princess, and explained her visions to him. I was certain that he would perfectly understand because of the subterranean bond that unites all pre-Columbian America, from the Toltecs and Mayas of Mexico to the Selenams of the far south.

As I spoke, the blind musician turned his old, dry face towards Papan's body, as if he were able to perceive some secret light emerging from her. Then for a long time we remained silent, he, squatting in his corner and I in the chair. At length the notes from the horn began to sound in the room, playing an ancient lament that seemed to come from a primordial forest or from one of the dead civilizations of the past. Then after a while he brought out his drums and began to sing in a tired and guttural voice a dirge that seemed to come from the depths of the American night. This is what he sang:

Princess Papan was cold; the cold penetrated to her bones and even her soul, for Princess Papan was dead. And then quite suddenly she returned to life.

Hearing of the miracle, her brother Moctezuma came to see her from far away Tenochtitlan, a city where the roofs of the houses are made of burnished gold. He stood near his sister but did not touch her for fear of the cold that was already passing into his heart. For when a princess dies, she passes wholly into her brother's soul, and

there she starts to live her death.

But Papan was not to return to life for long. She had come back, trembling with cold and chattering teeth, only to relate to her brother, the king, the visions she had seen while she was dead—visions which he had anticipated deep in his heart.

She opened her eyes and began to tell him about the plumed serpent and the return of Quetzalcoatl. 'Once upon a time, after the flood,' she said, 'the ancient Gods who lived in the Oasis of the Ices travelled over the waters and came to this world. . . .'

But what does all this matter? The only thing that counts is the oasis which each one carries in the centre of his heart—a warm oasis, surrounded by ice. It is there that the dead fall, like autumn leaves. There they live their death; there they are eternal. And why Papan could not continue to live after her resurrection. She discovered that the world was empty, and her place was in the heart of her brother, Moctezuma, who was king over all the golden roofs of Tenochtitlan. That is why Papan died again.

The old musician then paused, apparently no longer willing to sing. The only sounds remaining were the notes coming from his ancient horn, and so I began to take up the words and to sing in a faltering way:

At first, I could not believe it. I went to her dead body whose head was encircled by golden locks like the golden tiles of Tenochtitlan. I kissed her dead lips and was burnt by the cold. Her visions became mine, and then I knew about the ancient gods and the pains and horror of walking across the waters that come from the faraway paradise.

Papan, my sister, was covered with a bridal veil. She was wedded to her death.

Thus, it is that for some there cannot exist a union other than the sort established by my sister Papan. She had to die in order to be reborn in my heart. There she started to live, coursing through my veins. She descended wholly into my heart, like a fruit from paradise, like a golden leaf from the roofs of Tenochtitlan.

With her within myself, I started to go on a pilgrimage through the world, stirred by a strange anguish, but quiet in the depths of my heart. I looked at this world with her eyes and I saw for her what happens outside. And she looked inside for me. When I die, I

shall live in the visions of Papan.

And someone may then wait for me, just as they do for the white gods.

This is the ring of betrothal, which once existed in the Paradise. It is also the ring of solitude.

And the dialogues that are threaded in solitude are the dialogues of Papan. The being that is love in solitude is also Papan. Her invisible hand has encircled my heart and regulates the hours and days that I have left in the world. Weaving the cloth of loneliness between men, we might perhaps be able to stand the coldness of the eternal ice, which is nothing but the coldness in the visions of Papan.

These rites are simple. One only needs to empty the heart, burn it alive and leave it pure and dry so that it may be filled with the visions of Papan.

We must also learn how to rise up at dawn, look at the Morning Star, watch the flight of the dark birds that climb up from the earth and observe how the leaves that come from the sun also fall in the autumn.

Then one of the petals of the flowers of the morning light might descend upon our eyelids and close them, so that we no longer see the autumnal light. Then we can open our eyes to the summer of the ices.

A snow flute could narrate this story.

The Wedding

As her body was lowered into the grave, I felt that she was speaking to me and saying: 'Do not leave me alone, for our wedding is soon approaching.'

As I remained alone beside the open grave, I felt the waves were vibrating upwards from her body. It seemed to enter my body in silent pulsations, and I felt the essence of her being penetrating me. As this occurred, I felt an unnatural coldness take hold of me, and I remained absolutely still until the celebration of this ancient and now forgotten rite was concluded. I then knew that the wedding had been consummated and that she had buried herself within me, and I was now a catafalque, a church, indeed a whole world inhabited by the dead.

Since that time, I have remained completely cold. I have become her.

The other Dorsal Spine

I spent nearly ten years travelling in the Himalayas in search of the City of Agharti. This voyage was absolutely essential, since those mountains constitute the other dorsal spine of earth, the first being the Andes. We must investigate and examine both in order that the third eye may open and allow us to see the flower even before it is created.

Of the City of Agharti it is forbidden to speak, and therefore all I can say is that I visited the Valley of Flowers, which is also located in the Himalayas.

There one finds the most marvellous primulas, geraniums, anemones and violets. I reached this place by following the footsteps of the Abominable Snowman, who is also known as Yeti by the Nepalese and King Admi or Mirka by the Tibetans. I went along repeating the traditional Tibetan prayer, 'Om mani padme hum.' The footsteps of the Yeti were like those of one of the Giants of the Moon living at Shampullah, for their toes faced backwards. Similar tracks have been seen in Patagonia and on the island of Chiloe. There they are made by the *Imbunche*.

I lived in the Valley of the Flowers for some time, and had as a companion a man whose skin was the colour blue, and who constructed me in a dance called the Raslila, which has movements similar to those of the Circle I had traced long ago with my friend, it consists of dancing with various women in a circle, while at the same time concentrating on one in the centre. The one most preferred by my blue companion, was called Radha. As they whirled about in their dance, he seemed to fuse with her in such a way that I never knew if she really existed or whether she was something brought forth from his own being in the violence of the dance. As for me, my favourite dancing partner was the Princess Papan.

While not otherwise occupied by the dance, I spent my time gazing at the flowers, especially the violets, since they were familiar to me from the gardens I had known in my childhood. Moreover, I had begun to realize that the time had come for me to create a Flower—there was no other remedy. I therefore wished to learn as much as I could from the violets. My blue companion surprised me in this undertaking and laughed at me, since he believed that it was enough to dance and that every movement of the dance created a flower.

THREE

*The Creation of
the Flower*

Back to the Beginning

Now I am back in my own country, walking through the streets of Santiago. As cities go, it is not a notable one, but it is open to the sky and in full sight of the *cordillera* of the Andes; nevertheless, it is also pregnant with the ideals of my own. Its old streets have preserved memories of Jason, the visions of Papan and my shadowy memories. In its invisible archives, are still kept the records of those who have searched for the mystical City and of those who are still anxiously pushing on.

It has not been easy for me to wander through these old streets, re-creating memories of the past, and especially of my own youth. Nevertheless, in my moments, I have allowed myself to be guided by my intuition and instinct, and consequently in the old section, I began to discover things I had never seen before.

* * *

Walking through the old centre of Santiago, whose old mansions are now converted into boarding-houses inhabited by modest people, I suddenly found myself amongst monumental buildings covered by what seemed to be a green patina. They were decorated with balconies of wrought iron and with heavy cornices of carved stone. The pavements were a mosaic of hand-cut stone, and as I walked along, I delighted in the magnificence of this quarter. At the end of the street, I stopped beside a lordly gate which began to open. I noticed that the number of the house was 544—five is the number of destiny, the fours form a square.

* * *

Next, walking along a downtown street called Ahumada. I suddenly turned to the right and found myself in a place wholly ignored and neglected by others. There I discovered a palace which

seemed to be devoted to public services. It was entirely gilded with gold and decorated with statues that seemed almost alive. It was built in the shape of a square, and I walked around it from left to right as one always does when visiting the temple of orient. The building seemed to have no entrance; nevertheless, in some way I was able to climb up on the outside to the roof and from there was able to look down over the entire structure. When I came down, I realized that I must have been on a mountain.

* * *

After that I knew I would have to find a place to live. I did not want to share rooms; what I wanted was a simple quiet room, where I could go over my memories and peacefully plan future voyages.

Off the Alameda de las Delicias, there is a short dead-end street, and there I found a house. I crossed the patio and climbed up to the second storey. The stairway was of carved marble, so elaborate that it reminded me of the Linderhof built by Ludwig of Bavaria. The owner of the house finally came out and directed me to an empty room at one end of a corridor and indicated that it would be available for me. I bowed formally to the owner and went back down into the patio where I noticed a fountain, and a small girl carving statues. She did not see me, but her carvings were of white figures in repose, as on tombstones. The whole patio seemed to be enveloped in a cold white mist.

* * *

I then went along the Alameda, once again tracing my steps. At length I found myself at our national monument, the Church of San Francisco. It was enclosed by a wall, but I found the entrance and walked up the great nave. At the far end stood the pulpit, with a broad and elaborately carved stairway leading up into it. I began to climb up, and it seemed to transform itself into a tower. Finally, I reached the top, and from there I could see over wide terraces which seemed to be connected to one another by bridges. All the whole city glimmering at night was laid out before me. I was not alone but was aware of others with me. I also sensed that they had

faced difficulties, but that not all who wanted to had been allowed to climb up the staircase. The thing that had impeded them was within themselves, for they had not seen the staircases and did not know enough to climb it. Finally, I went down again to pray in the temple and sat down in the lotus position next to some ancient moth-eaten hangings of brocade. Gradually a calmness overcame me, and I began to feel happy.

* * *

In the early evening I went out of the city into the fields that surround it. The sea was nearby, but it seemed to have risen and to have encroached the land, since dikes had had to be built. The water roared by violently, and I stood watching its beauty. Then after some time had passed I saw an automobile pass, dragged along by the current. Lying on the roof of this car and tied there by ropes, was a woman. One of her arms dangled in water. Alongside the car swam a group of uniformed sailors who from time to time reverently touched her hand, as they guided the car towards the dock.

* * *

Outside of Santiago are two hills, one called the Queen and the other *Eagle's Nest*. These in fact are foothills which lead up to the Andes. I stood on top of one of these, at the edge of a ravine, and realized that the only way I could return would be to climb out on the branches of a tree that hung over the abyss, and to let myself down from there by a rope. That I finally did, and after great difficulty, I reached the ground when I found myself beside a broken statue.

* * *

At last I entered a secret chamber in a house which I seemed always to have owned and which had never been seen by anyone else. There I lived a completely private existence, sleeping alone on couches covered with fur and rich linen. On the walls hung shields and swords, while lances and suits of armour stood in the corner. A stream of water crossed the floor beside me playing a restful music.

Only at night did I leave this place and climb up a spiral staircase to a loft garret where there was a small windowless room. Once there, I piled the chairs onto the table and climbed up over them to the ceiling, where I pushed one of the roof-boards aside. I then pulled myself up through this narrow entrance, scrambling along on all fours, until finally I found myself outside, free and safe, beyond time and space. Where that place was, I have never been able to discover; all I can say is that I believe it was in the City of the Caesars.

The Criminal Doubt

Through all these experiences I have always and constantly been troubled by a feeling of guilt. Indeed, this feeling has been a burden to me ever since adolescence. It is particularized by a conviction that I am guilty of the death of many people. This notion has become increasingly strong as I have tried to create the Flower with the only elements that I possess, the memories of my past.

This sensation is not a generalized one but is specified to the extent that I feel that I have been a murderer. I dream of a woman pointing at me and shouting, 'Murderer! Assassin!' Somewhere, I know, there is a corpse buried in a cellar or incarcerated alive in a country riverbank. This feeling is so strong that it almost draws me to new murders and crimes with which to dull the effect of earlier ones.

And it is at this point that I have to descend from the highest point to the roots of the Tree, for another corpse lies there. Four men approach: they are four wise men, and I confess to them and ask their help. I am confident that they will not betray me. They then stand around in the form of a square and begin to read from a book bound in parchment. I am overwhelmed by a feeling of relief.

The Trial

For days I sat alone in the room, contemplating the Flower and comparing it to those I had known in the garden in my childhood and in the Valley of the Flowers. The more I studied it, the more I realized that there was no comparison at all.

At length there was a knock at the door. I went to see who it was, strongly conscious that the visitor had been there for some time. He looked like a debt collector, but then I noticed that his feet were reversed and that his toes pointed backwards. I asked him his name and he handed me a number of calling cards, each one bearing a different name. These are the words I read on the cards: *Abominable Snowman*, *Spectrum of Umbral*, *Imbunche*.

The visitor then spoke:

'I am Secretary-General of the Party, and it is my duty to call you to order and bring you back to reality.'

'From what Party?' I asked. 'I don't belong to any Party.'

'So much the worse,' he replied. 'You are a last romantic. You are living a life of pure fantasy. Therefore, I can tell you that the guilt you feel is nothing more than a realization that you have lived on the margin of existence and that you are wholly mistaken in your fantasy.'

'That's not true,' I answered, 'that's not true at all. . . . No one will take my Flower away from me. It is mine, I made it. . . .'

The visitor burst out laughing, 'You see? You shout like a little boy. That's what you are; you're nothing but a child.'

I pulled myself together and spoke more calmly: 'What you say has not convinced me,' I said.

He then became more severe. 'Come with me,' he ordered.

I obeyed, for I knew that I would have to follow through to the end. There was no escape, so we went down the stairs and out into the street.

‘And now you must take me to those beautiful houses which you claim to have discovered in the city. Where are they?’ I nodded, and we walked along Vergara Street and the Alameda, along Ahumada, and we also investigated the Church of San Francisco. Nowhere did we find the Renaissance houses, the palace or the tower, and at each frustration my companion sarcastically nodded his head.

‘You see,’ he said, ‘all this is nothing but fantasy, mere dreams. Reality is quite another matter, even though you have never wanted to accept it. Nevertheless, it exists, and now you must recognize it. Santiago is poor and modest. It is a simple city, and we who live here must work in it and accept it for what it is. And as for your “Circle” and your “Master”, where are they now? And what of your friend, Jason? Have you considered what he really was—a dreamer who was unable to pass beyond adolescence and who was murdered. And what about your Queen, your Papan? You were carried away by the feverish dreams produced by a poor consumptive girl. Don’t you know that these hallucinations are merely the product of the Koch bacillus?’

‘Shut up!’ I shouted. ‘If you don’t be quiet, you’ll turn me into a real murderer!’

This outburst did not affect him; rather, in a lower more confidential voice, he went on: ‘For something which does not exist, you have sacrificed everything—your own life, your happiness. None of these things has any value to you now; you have abandoned all for something which you call your *flower*. And so now you had better follow me, and I will show you someone who anticipated all of the madmen of this world, including yourself!’

Together we walked along, side by side, he with his twisted feet, through many streets and country districts which I recognized. We crossed over canals and lakes and travelled through mountain districts until we finally arrived at a primitive town surrounded by a stockade. I recognized it immediately: it was Puerto Hambre, the ancient Ciudad del Rey Felipe, which had been established by Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa.

We walked into the small central square, and I thought of Sarmiento’s betrayal of his followers and of the terrible doubt and despair they must have felt. We then stopped before the Tree of Justice,

and there I saw a naked figure hanging from the tree.

'Move closer', my companion said. 'Look at his face'.

It was night time and difficult to see clearly. The position of the figure was familiar and symbolic, but it was impossible to identify him precisely as one of Sarmiento's deserted companions or as some other of greater significance. But just then, in the midst of these thoughts, he opened his mouth and hurled forth a great shout: 'Pedro! Why hast thou forsaken me?'

BERSERKER

BOOKS

