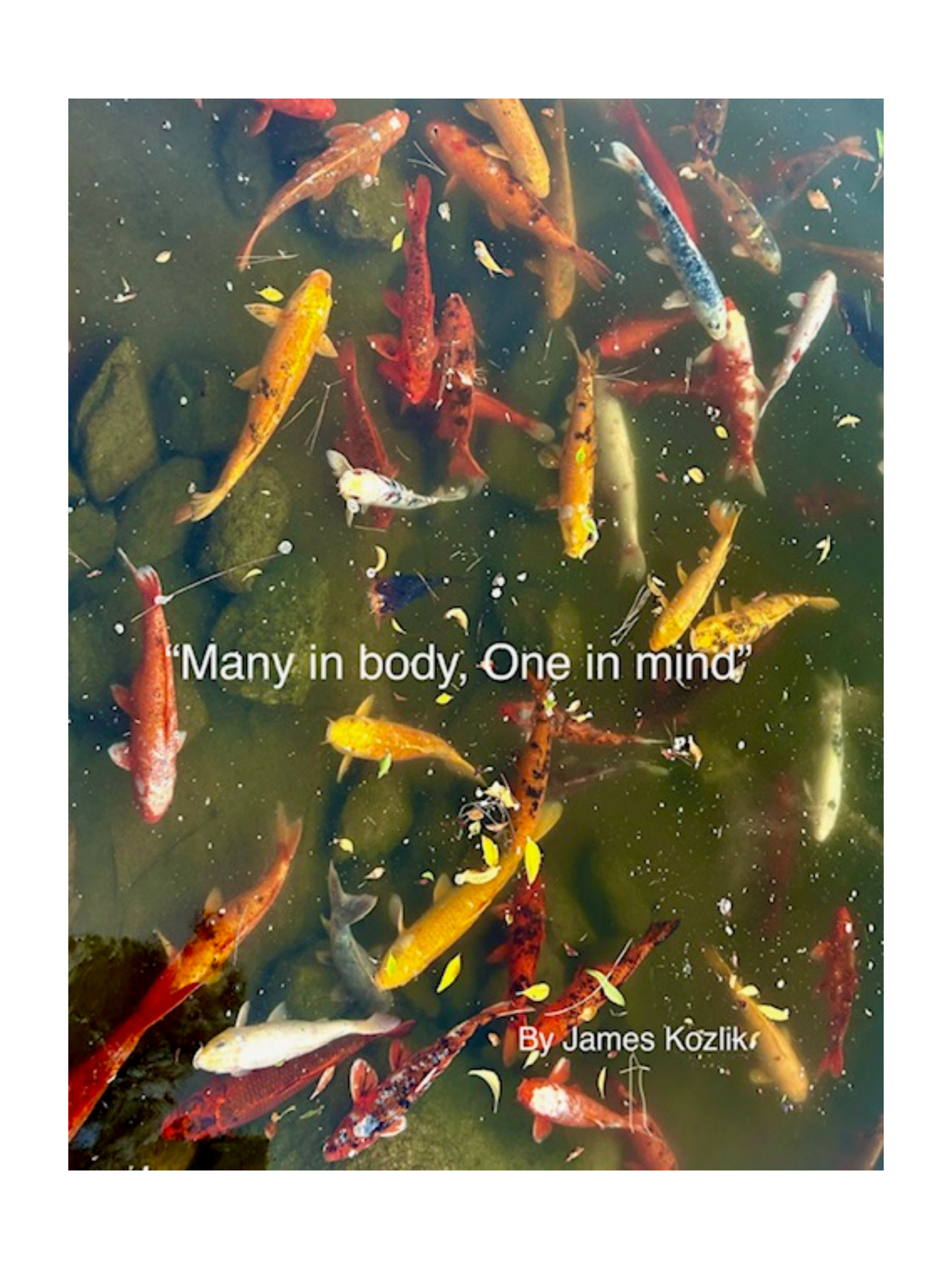


A large pond filled with many colorful koi fish swimming in greenish water. The fish are of various colors including orange, red, white, and blue. The water is murky green, and there are some rocks visible at the bottom. The text "Many in body, One in mind" is overlaid on the image.

"Many in body, One in mind"

By James Kozlik

Many in Body, One in Mind

By James Kozlik

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

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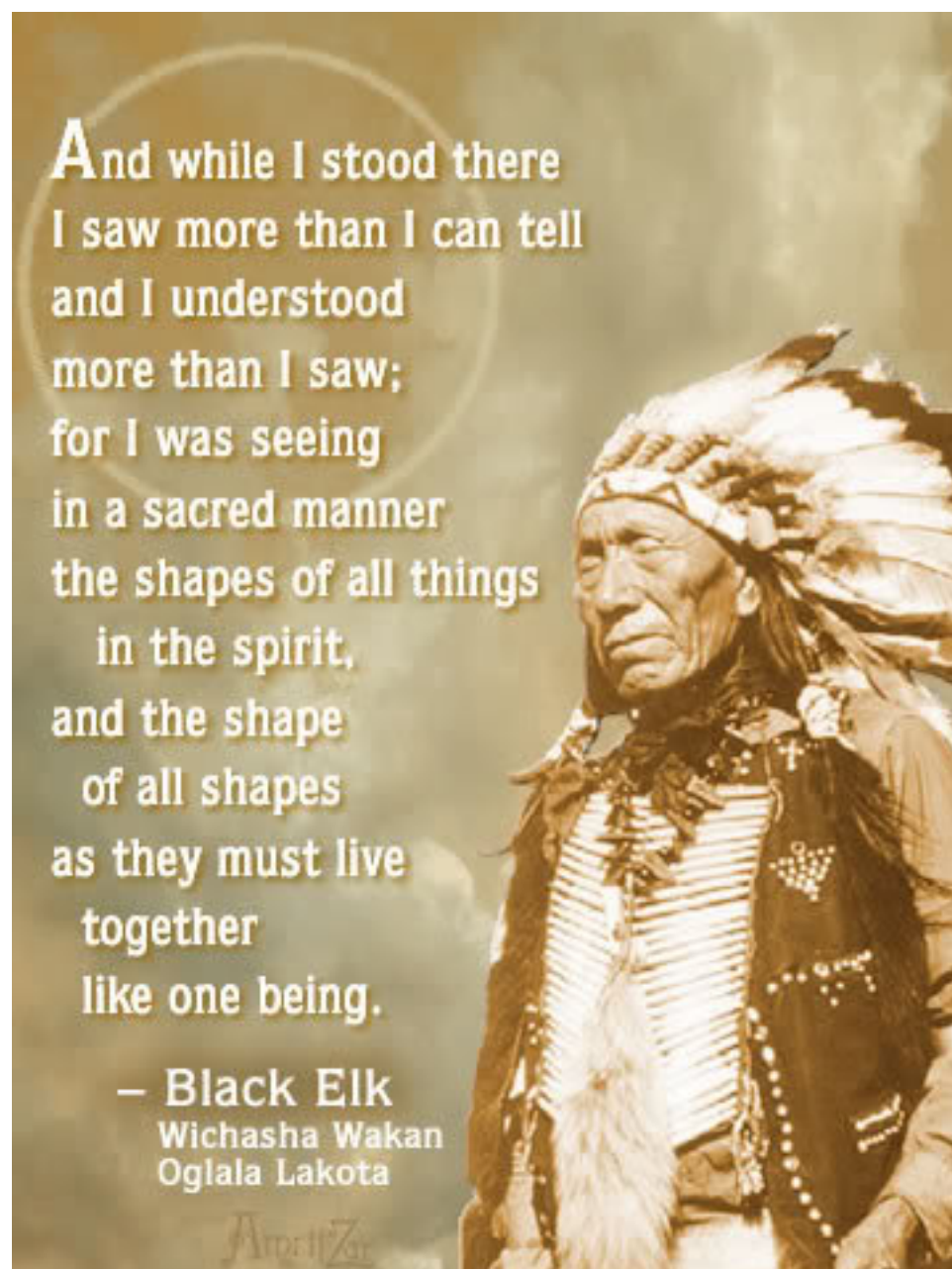
Border Crossing

Many in Body, One in Mind

By James Kozlik

“It was an ambitious and charming idea. The specialists did come, and contributed their work and skills - and then the problems started. All of them were dedicated to creating a better world, but none of them were able to really listen to each other, to give space for the other's voice, to create something together, to reach common decisions, to deal with different opinions in a constructive way, to deal with each other's moments of anger, jealousy, fear. The founders of the project had to learn: a bunch of geniuses doesn't make a community. Behind all the intelligent arguments they had, they felt ruled by the personal fears of being not accepted, not loved, separated. They had reached a point at which so many initiatives and communities fail and split. How can we hope to create a global alternative if we don't overcome this point?”

Leila Dregger - Communities, winter issue 173



Forward

It was back in the Bush presidency, somewhere around 2005, he was big on enforcement and border security. He also increased the opportunity for migrants to gain green cards. It was a strategy to increase the U.S. labor force, a desire that some republicans wanted. There was a proposal to send unauthorized migrants to “home communities, rather than sending them back across the border”. Despite all of Bush’s efforts, nothing was ever put into law.

There is a four thousand acre ranch near Presidio Texas. Presidio is a border town. The ranch is located along a Presidio county road, sitting along the Sierra Viega Rim with a wild mountain landscape. It is in a broad desert valley bordered on two sides by the Sierra Madre and Sierra Viega mountains. There’s a spring fed creek that runs through the ranch on a diagonal. It has several springs that feed into the creek which contribute to the irrigation.

The history in this part of the Texas border dates back to the Pancho Villa days of cross border raids. The Apache roamed this area of abundant springs and scouted for the U.S. Army during their battles with Pancho Villa.

The indigenous history indicates that the Apache practiced agriculture and had a mobile lifestyle. The Apache did not recognize a border and lived on both sides of what was considered the Texas/Mexico border.

Chad and Ellie Framer’s ranch was “pinned” by the cartel and coyotes, as a ranch that helps illegals. As border crossing became more frequent Chad and Ellie came up with a plan to both deter the smugglers from dropping people off anywhere along the southern fence line of the ranch. They came up with a plan that benefited the ranch and the migrants. They promised migrants a safe haven with the condition that they would work on the ranch, obtain a green card and apply to become U.S. citizens. They hired cooks, ranch hands and farmers. Some of the ranch hands were outfitted in Army Surplus uniforms, equipped with old army jeeps and rifles. They patrolled the perimeter fence line to keep vagrants off of the land. By 2016 they started seeing an influx of more migrants. And eventually came up with a plan to create small communities on two thousand acres of the ranch.

By the Author

Introduction

Ariel returned from her cooking stint on the Yacht that was rented for the Cuban festival at the Hyatt. It was there that she met Jenny and Christine whom she dubbed as her angels. They sponsored her as a participant at an event called Field of Awakening, which was being held at the Hyatt. Christine took over chef duties and Ariel attended the event where she processed events in her life that causes her to have high anxiety on the cusp of Borderline Personality Disorder.

Fifteen years prior to this time, Ariel had crossed the border illegally. She was approached by Perez a Mexican/American citizen who found her drinking from one of the springs located on the ranch. He took her to Chad and Ellie and they formed a relationship that could never be broken. Ariel, a native Brazilian, came with a prosthetic lower right arm with a claw as a hand replacement. Ariel became known as the bionic chef of the Framer Ranch.

Chad and Ellie helped Ariel to find her biological mother in Baltimore Maryland. They also assisted her to become a U.S. citizen. When Ariel parted ways with the Framers and their family, there was an underlying sense that Ariel's return was imminent. It took awhile, eventually Ariel realized that her destiny was to go back to her "home community".

By then her "home community" changed immensely. Chad Jr. and Elsie Framer were running the ranch. Chad and Ellie had passed away, the son and daughter kept the dream alive and vibrant. The four thousand acre ranch was split into three thousand plus acres of cattle ranching and five one-hundred sixty acre "home community ranches". These "home community ranches" became a haven for illegals, mostly from Mexico, South America, Africa, and Asia. The condition for entry was becoming a U.S. citizen, contributing to building community, and co-existing with the other multicultural communities.

The Framers had continued negotiations and diplomacy with local and Federal authorities. The folks in Washington and the Texas legislators recognized the Framer operation as an experiment that could benefit local border towns, and beyond. The ranch became a model of a new nation forming with Many in Body, One in Mind.

Prologue

Ariel - I am not sure what my biological mother expected, I lived with her and even cared for her these last fifteen years. Hell, she abandoned me at birth, and she knew what I had endured during a lifetime of suffering. Fostered, a runaway living on the streets, eventually being taken in by a sweet couple who had to become fugitives because of me. My harrowing experiences crossing the border to find her, my biological mother, she knew all the stories I told her, and she knew my erratic condition of high anxiety. She experienced my irrational thinking, and depression. Now I must get the calm courage to tell her of my departure so that I can fulfill what I think is my purpose and destiny.

“Mother, I am leaving. I am returning to the ranch in Texas. I have been told there is a man waiting for me. He has waited fifteen years. You never waited for me. Twenty years of my life, wondering as a lost soul looking for my mother that allowed me to come into this world only to abandon me because of your fear that you could not raise me properly.”

“Ariel, I will not make an excuse as to why I orphaned you. We have been over this many times. Did you not find a way to forgive during your ... processes, is that what you called them? Your ancestral lineage, wasn't that what you found as the root of your... problems.”

“Yes, I did find compassion and what I discovered was how much I resisted to the truth of my internal state as the root of my suffering. I am happy that we connected and that we have spent these contentious years together. However, hard as it was to love each other at least we made enough of an effort and commitment to know each other.”

“And now we both know ourselves better. And you my child, know your triggers better. Isn't that a term you used from therapy...what triggers you?”

“Ha, yeah momma, but sometimes I don't even know what triggers my emotions. I have been told it's the wiring in my brain. Maybe it's just what thoughts I choose to make as reality.”

Chapter 1

I am going home. Wow, somebody wants me! How excited Chad Jr. and Elsie were on the phone and Perez? Building a house for me? Us? What is that about, romance in my life? Now, at thirty-five, I get to live a more normal life. Maybe, we'll see. Ever since the FOA experience I seem to have some tools to settle my anxiety down when it seems to become unmanageable. Even the small ways I contextualize my words. Like just now instead of saying when my anxiety is unmanageable I used the phrase when it seems to...now I recognize that I have the power to change my state. With the Serene Mind meditation. Feeling wanted sure does make a difference. I can hardly wait to get to the ranch. Chad Jr., Elsie, and Perez are familiar with my old self, the past when I would act out of character and go off an emotional cliff.

So, today all I can do is imagine what the ranch must be like now. Chad senior and Ellie developed a small model of what people today call an eco village. They created a haven for migrants of various races and cultures to call community and eventually become U.S. citizens. They were big hearted people who understood that fear can be instilled because of one or two bad incidents. They came up with solutions to keep the bad hombres off the ranch. Gosh back then all they had was their ranch house, a bunkhouse for migrant workers, a food kitchen and the barns. It was amazing how they managed to negotiate with the locale courts and authorities to create a refuge for illegals, like me! When I left to find and reunite with my biological mother who abandoned me at birth, the ranch consisted of twelve migrants. Perez and Pedro came from Mexico in about 2005. They happened upon the Framer Ranch. One of the ranch hands found them at one of the springs and brought them over to Chad. At the time there was a need for a couple of ranch workers to help with the cattle operation. What Chad did was make them a deal. They could stay in the bunk house, get a wage, and earn employee status if they promised to become a U.S. citizen. Ellie helped them learn better English and study to become legal citizens. They eventually retained green cards and had a workers' status. Chad filed a petition to establish a basis for skilled labor. Most of the migrants that came onto the ranch were undocumented

and had to ask for forgiveness concerning illegal entry. There came a time starting around 2008, when more people started showing up along their ranch boundaries. With the help of Perez and Pedro as interpreters, Chad and Ellie would listen to the stories and became dedicated to helping migrants. That was the start of their intention to create sustainable/self reliant, small villages or communities. I asked Chad Jr. and Elsie what drove their mother and father to do what they did. Especially with me, I was considered a candidate for borderline personality disorder.

Chad Jr., “What my father struggled with as a dichotomy is having to identify with with one state, country or race and culture. He was a historian at heart. He recognized the cycles of war between people whether it was a religious, spiritual, or political disagreement. Governments tended to attack what was not in line with their way of thinking. And the leaders acted as if they spoke on behalf of all the people. His rebuttal was that most often the majority of people lived their lives estranged from the wishes of the few (authoritative figures that held public office, spearheaded religious and spiritual movements or special interest groups). When a country’s natural resources and economies are exploited, people tend to want to move on, ironically to the country/s that became wealthier after the taking. My father and mother had the fortitude to foster their idea of migrant communities as a place where immigrants could live, work and be as many in body and one in mind.”

I asked, “what about me? I was quite a handful at the time. They accepted me as if I was an older daughter who returned home, broken and defeated. Your mother did a lot of nurturing and made me feel like a woman.”

“Do you remember when dad had you watch a short documentary about the bionic chef? The guy, I think his name was Edward Garcia from a small town in Montana. He was electrocuted with a high voltage wire on a hunting trip. Crawled back to his truck and drove himself to get help. He survived and had a special prosthetic arm and became a bionic chef. After years of being a chef on a yacht he decided to go to high schools and tell his story of hope and inspiration. You understood then that it was not in your best interest to resist their love.”

“Yes, Chad, you have me tearing up here. Listen, I already made plane tickets to El Paso, can you pick me up at the airport?”

Elsie, “you know we will. We can’t wait to see our Brazilian sister. You will not recognize the ranch. A lot has changed over the years.”

“What has changed Elsie? What is the ranch like now?”

“Well, when mom and dad divided the four thousand acres into five one- hundred and sixty acre tracts, they had considered that each tract would be similar to small nationalistic communities. But then they realized that not all people who come from a particular country have the same beliefs or traditions of the identity that they were born into. So they decided to keep the tracts similar to Bolivia and Ecuador which are plurinational nations that empowers several indigenous populations living together and respecting that each community would adapt to the use of indigenous languages, traditional justice (of forgiveness and compassion) and self-governance.”

“How does it work with languages and cultural ancestral habits?”

“As more emigrants came to the ranch, mom and dad developed a screening system so that the skills required by Eligibility Proof (an approved petition), required by the immigration laws, included such things as language instructors, builders, farmers and cattle ranchers or previous ranch employment. They also included such skills as medical, governance, educators, and food service (cooks and chefs).”

“Oh, so that’s why you need me back?”

They all laugh at that remark.

“No, we missed you all these years. You were part of our growing years. You were more than a ranch cook to us, the love that our parents gave you was as much a connection that they gave to us.”

“Now get yourself down here where you belong,” demanded Chad jr., “ your yacht chef days are over. We are so glad you called!”

“I will send you my itinerary. Thank you for another opportunity to come home.”

Chapter 2

God is in everything you see. You can rest assured in that. You must retrain your mind to believe it, and you won't believe it at first. That's okay. The ego will say, "Surely God is not in that. God can't be in that." You must understand the consequence of dividing the world into good and bad. It means you are not safe. It means there is a force invisible but equal in power to that of God. You have no idea where it lurks, what it is, or why it's there. That induces deep fear in you. Understand that this lesson is a profoundly peace-inducing lesson. It stops you from walking around in fear, waiting for the devil's hammer to hit you on the head. It is not going to happen, so why behave as if it is? God is in everything you see, including you.

From A Year of Forgiveness-Tina Louise Spaulding

Ariel - During the flight to Presidio by way of El Paso, I read from some material that Jenny had printed and given me.

"Whatever your thoughts on the terminology, the most important thing to remember is that with an accurate diagnosis and proper treatment, BPD is very treatable and you can go on to live a healthy, productive life."

The time spent in Miami at the Field of Awakening event introduced me to some tools that directly affected the frontal lobe of the brain, the amygdala, and the neurotransmitters. I continued to read from *HealthGuide.org*;

"This may make it sound as if there's nothing you can do. But the truth is that you can change your brain. Every time you practice a new coping response or self-soothing technique you are creating new neural pathways. Some treatments, such as mindfulness meditation, can even grow your brain matter. And the more you practice, the stronger and more automatic these pathways will become. So don't give up! With time and dedication, you can change the way you think, feel, and act."

The two meditations I learned, Serene Mind and Soul Sync are the two tools that will have an impact as long as I continue to do them daily. Especially if I sense that something in me is about to change. Right now my emotion is anxiety. How will I fit into whatever it is that the ranch scene has changed into. Small Communities, more people mean more interaction with people than before. Luis at FOA helped me see that what seems normal is all an illusion. That threw me for a loop. I still

How Can You Buy or Sell the Earth?

The ancestral wisdom we need now more than ever.

by Chief Seattle (Seathl)

In 1854, the United States government offered to buy two million acres of Indian land in the Northwest. Below is a translation of Chief Seattle's reply to President Franklin Pierce in December of that year. It has been described as the most beautiful and prophetic statement on the environment ever made.

The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. The Great Chief also sends us words of friendship and goodwill. This is kind of him, since we know he has little need of our friendship in return. But we will consider your offer.

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing, and every humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man. So, when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us...

This we know: All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself. But we will consider your offer to go to the reservation you have for my people. We will live apart, and in peace.

One thing we know, which the white man may one day discover—our God is the same God. You may think now that you own him as you wish to own the land; but you cannot.



The Duwamish Chief, Sealth (Seattle)
(Courtesy of University of Washington)

He is the God of man; and his compassion is equal for the red man and the white. This earth is precious to Him and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator. The whites too shall pass; perhaps sooner than all other tribes. Continue to contaminate your bed, and you will soon suffocate in your own waste.

But in your perishing you will shine brightly, fired by the strength of the God who brought you to this land and for some special purpose gave you dominion over this land and over the red man. That destiny is a mystery to us, for we do not understand when the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses are tamed, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires. Where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone. And what is it to say goodbye to the swift pony and the hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival. So we will consider your offer to buy the land.

If we agree, it will be to secure the reservation you have promised. There, perhaps, we may live out our brief days as we wish. When the last red man has vanished from the earth, and his memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, these shores and forests will still hold the spirits of my people. For they love this earth as a newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. So, if we sell our land, love it as we've loved it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you take it. And preserve it for your children; and love it... as God loves us all. One thing we know. Our God is the same God. This earth is precious to Him. Even the white man cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all.

We shall see... ①

haven't been able to understand what he was talking about. He assured me that any projections I make might be illusionary and not what is actually happening. And what I think might be an illusion is actually real time reality! Sounds like Zen to me.

So, I eventually arrived into El Paso and they were busy with cows at the ranch, so I was chauffeured by one of the ranch hands.

I have more time to contemplate. Actually I am checking my emotions right now. I have managed to go to Serene Mind mediation daily. I have learned to stretch it out more than three minutes. Like a "check-in" to myself. I take the time to really feel the emotion that is really present, right now! I find if I just go for any emotion that pops up in my mind, I might not actually feel it for real. I also discovered that if I watch how the emotion I am feeling was played out in the past. I might see a pattern of reference, why do I feel this way whenever...

We arrived and there are two men standing at the gate. I recognize Perez. Some of his features have changed, some grey hair, too. He is here, staring at me through the window. I roll it down and look at him, square in the eyes, and I say, "you gotta let me out Perez, so I can give you a hug!"

They laugh, and shape their lips into a kiss, they have reunited in a wonderfully humorous, excited, loving way. And they are not even married. Just best friends.

In Portuguese, Perez says, "we miss you so much. I missed you...look at you, you have filled out to be a beautiful woman."

"You my friend are aging in grace, you are trim and look fit. You are taking care of yourself."

"Come Ariel, let's go to the house. Elsie is there, Chad is out in the field. Oh, I am so sorry, my friend here, let me introduce you to Stalking Man."

Ariel is surprised, his features are striking and his demeanor all this time has been calm and quiet. "Hello... Stalking Man."

They just stare at each other making eye contact. (If you were watching them you'd have to be wondering what they were communicating to each other.)

They mutually turn to start a walk, to the main house. They all remain silent.

Ariel - At first, Stalking Man seemed intimidating. Then I felt a softness, and when he gave a slight smile, well, I wasn't sure what to do. That's when all I could do was stare. I wonder what he was thinking.

Stalking Man - Funny how we stare to connect wanting to say something, but say nothing. I wonder what she was feeling? The expression on her face humored me. Perez told me much about her early days on the ranch. Before I came here so right now all I have to go by is an impression based on Perez's story of Ariel. All I could think of was that we will get to know each other over the space of time spent here, on the ranch.

Elsie is waiting for them on the covered front porch, seated in a wicker chair, under a porch fan. There's a boy child keeping himself occupied with a set of learning blocks. *I wonder how Ariel is adjusting, what are her expectations. How will she relate to us. There's only a five year difference in age. Our lives have been drastically different, during the time we knew her, Chad, Taylor and myself where 12 to 16 years old back then. Me being the youngest. Let's see, that makes her about thirty-five. I wonder how she is managing now. What has changed in her life.*

Elsie stands to greet them. She descends the three stairs, and is on the pathway that comes up to the old ranch house. Everybody is still, the men step back so that Elsie and Ariel can share a hug. "Greetings big sister." Elsie merges into Ariels body and is wrapped into Ariels arms.

Ariel's head shifts back so she can look into Elsie's eyes. "You are not twelve anymore," she chuckles, "my oh my, here we are do you believe it?"

"Yes and no, I wasn't sure you would actually come back to the ranch. You know, I remember how many times you change your mind."

"Ha, yeah, I have been willing myself to manage my mental states better. I did a process involving family lineage and relived some of my trauma. Later I asked my biological mother about her past when I was conceived. That's when she finally told me her truth. She had several relationships with boys her age, and older men. I was the byproduct that is the negative label I gave myself all these years. A by-product of promiscuity. Her mental state was very similar to mine. Driven by anxiety and not able to differentiate between right action and harmful actions."

They have released each other and the little boy appears at Elsie's side gawking at Ariel. "Mommy... eat?"

Elsie gives him a loving touch to the back of his head, "Bud, this is Ariel, a friend."

He looks over at Ariel and gives a raised hand wave (of sorts).

Ariel notices the skin color and some features that indicated a mixed marriage?

Elsie senses Ariel's inquisitive expression, "speaking of family lineage, my husband Jacob, you'll meet him later, has lineage that goes back to someone who served as a Buffalo Soldier and fought against Poncho Villa back in the late eighteen hundreds. He answered an advertisement we had for a Permaculturist. He was managing a CSA inner city farm in Milwaukee Wisconsin."

Elsie is suddenly preoccupied with Bud. "Ariel, I need to tend to Buddy, let Stalking Man take you to where you will be staying. Perez, you might as well go back to the gate watch. Chad is expecting a new branding iron to be delivered. He can use it today. Thanks."

Elsie beckons Ariel for another hug, she whispers into Ariel's ear, "we are so glad to see you. Relax, you've had a long journey to get here, to be with us again."

Ariel squeezes Elsie a little harder and as they separate responds with, "thank you Elsie, will I see you, Taylor and Chad at dinner?"

"Yes, Stalking Man will show you the 'mess hall'. When you start cooking again, we'll have to rename it. How's Ariel's Kitchen sound?"

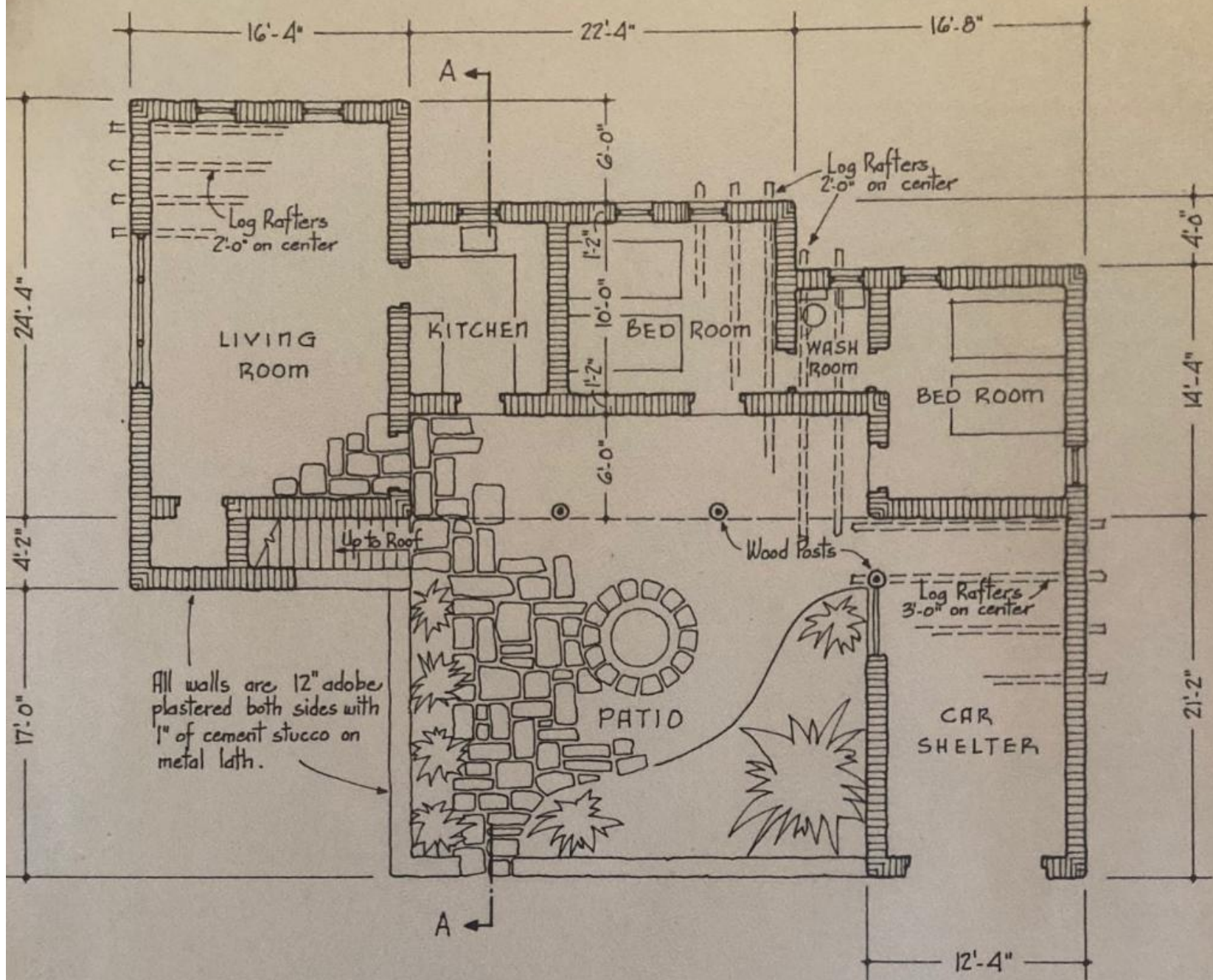
They laugh, Ariel has a twinkle in her eye.

Chapter 3

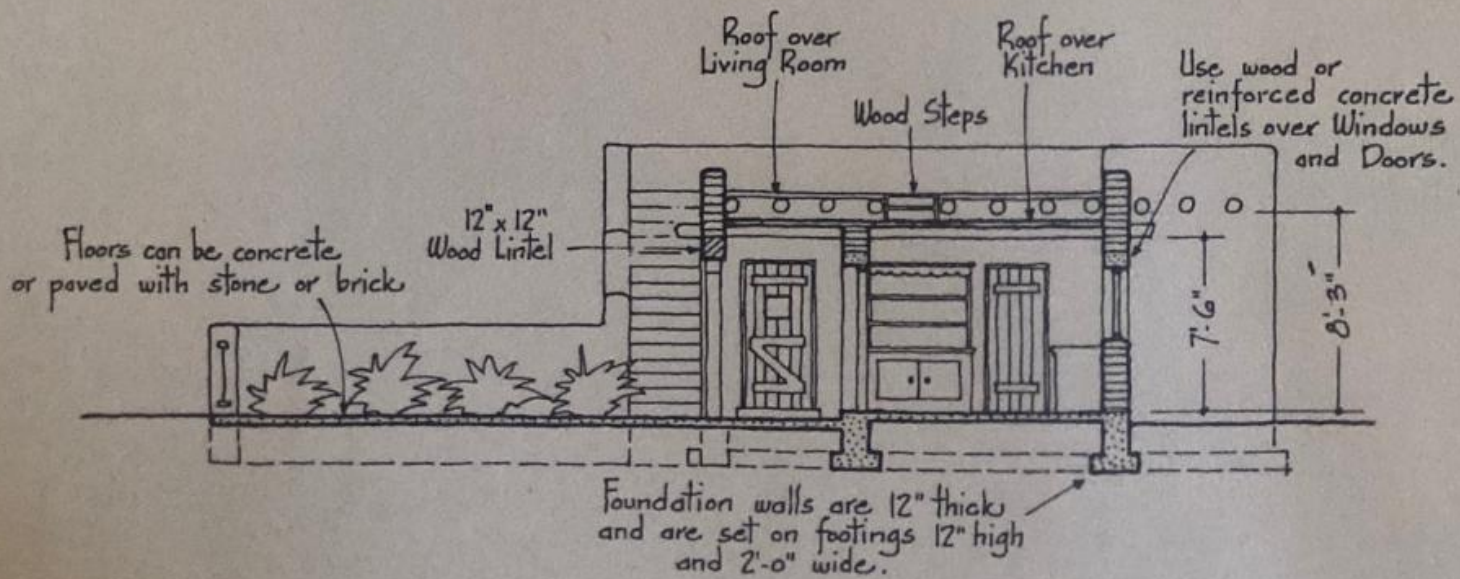
As they drive Perez back to the front gate Ariel asks, "Perez did you paint a room for me blue like the daytime sky?"

"Yes, of course, Chad had me paint all of the ceilings blue too. I need to tell you, all these years, little by little, I built this house with adobe block made from the earth. There are two bedrooms. I have been living in one of the rooms. This house will make a nice home for you and your mother, if you decide to ever invite her into our community."

Ariel is not responsive for a few minutes. "How long will you be living in the house?"



PLAN



SECTION "A-A"

“Not much longer. Just long enough to get you settled in, and until I find another house.”

They remain quiet until it's time to say goodbye for now.

“I will see you later tonight Ariel, we will talk.”

Ariel and Stalking Man arrive at the adobe home. Ariel is admiring the structure, the detail and warmth it emulates. Or is she? Stalking Man speaks, “your mind is troubled.”

Ariel turns and looks at him, “and how would you know what my mind is doing?”

“You wonder why you came back to this place in time, that has changed. You wonder why Elsie's little boy is not white. You wonder how you will live with Perez. And you wonder why he built this for you to invite your mother to live with you.”

“And I wonder why you have all these projections!”

There is a long silence before Stalking Man speaks again, “we will go now. I will take your bags inside.”

Ariel tentatively follows Stalking Man. She observes his quiet movement, even with her luggage. He places them at the entrance, opens the door and steps aside. “I will go now, Perez will come for you at dinner time.” And without further reference he departs.

Ariel - I am a little stunned. I feel overwhelmed thinking about what the expectations of me are by the others. Perez, Chad, Elsie, they want me to cook at the main house again. What if I don't want to do that? Perez...what is he thinking I might need support with? My mental states when I disconnect from socialization? Okay, your suffering Ariel stay present with right now, look at this space...my new place. Three deep breaths, yeah, okay right now what a is my emotion...I feel grateful for the welcome from Perez when he first saw me. Wow, yeah, he is my anchor...always was back then, like his daughter he never had. Okay, I just went to the past, but it felt delightful. The future? I am scared of the unknown, especially Stalking Man. The flame...I can visualize it between my eyes and moving to the middle of my brain. A warmth that settles me now. Now let's see the

rest of this wonderful little adobe. Looks like flagstone flooring throughout? At least in this living room. We'll see...I like the seating arrangement, ah a walk through kitchen like a galley kitchen on a yacht. Good, plenty of cabinets a rollout island with drawers and cutting board. Propane stove, nice looks like a mini commercial stove top. Wow, it exits right into a beautiful private court yard. These solid wooden plank doors, must be the bed rooms. What is this stairway up to the roof. Let's have a look. Oh my, what a view up here, the surrounding rugged mountains that border this narrow valley. I think I will sit on one of these recliners under the shaded pergola. It's time for a nap.

Time passes and it is late afternoon as Perez approaches the house. The front door is open and there is some luggage still at the entry way. He smiles, ah the señorita must be napping. He takes in the luggage and closes the screen door. He goes to see if Ariel found her bed room. He's about to knock, then decides not to wake her. He goes back to the kitchen and grabs a cold drink from the refrigerator and moves to the court yard to enjoy a Tecata. He enjoys the patio garden and watches a Humming bird flutter around the colorful flowers and the feeder he set up along the east wall of the court yard. He closes his eyes and drifts off into a light sleep, thinking about Ariel, hoping she likes the house and her sky blue room. Time passes when he feels a gentle tapping on his shoulder.

“Hello Perez, it is time for dinner.”

Perez opens one eye, then the other and is surprised to see Ariel peering down at him. “Ariel, my dear one, what time is it?”

“It's about five, do they still eat around six or did the schedule change after all these years?”

“No dinner time has been a constant around here. Did you nap or go for a walk? You left all your luggage at the front door.”

“I found the blue room, thank you for fixing it to be a lovely bed room. Perez, why will you be living in this house too? Do you not have your own house?”

“It will be temporary, I will support you while you get adjusted to your new surroundings. Your new place.”

“Do you mean that you will be keeping an eye on me in case I lose it? Just in case my wiring gets crossed and I move into erratic behavior? Like last time, maybe it hasn’t left me yet...this demonic curse.”

“When you say ‘demonic curse’ I think of a Voodoo curse that you think someone put on you. Like it is something outside of you that has caused you to act a certain way... sometimes.”

“Did I just scare you, Perez?”

“No, because I know you from before, I don’t need to create a perception of who you are now. Let us start new.”

“You are older than me, you have your life’s wisdom. You staying in the room that you have proposed will be my mothers, well now you are like the father figure I never had. I take that back, I had the benefit of living with Margarita and Joao in Belem, along the Amazon River. But now I have you again.”

Perez gives one approving nod and connects with Ariels eyes. Her dark brown eyes that say so much. That tell her story of injustice and grief.

“Who is Stalking Man, why is his name Stalking Man?”

“He is an Apache guide, whom was meant to be here, on this ranch. In this place of history. He is here to bring a way of life with this places’ natural environment. He is an indigenous survivor of America like all the indigenous tribes throughout the Americas’. He is here to help us change the old patterns of conflict between races and cultures that has occupied this land by way of invasion.”

“What do you mean...by way of invasion?”

“All of the Americas were once indigenous until the Europeans arrived. But beyond that the land, and the way of life was invaded and the white man declared ownership. But there is something else to consider, the invasion of thoughts that have influenced our minds. How we connect to nature, the earth and each other and ourself, has an impact on all that surrounds us.”

“You speak in broad terms. I zeroed in on how we connect with self. You are making reference to me?”

“I am referring to all of us. You have what some call a diagnosis. As you cross the various borders of your thinking, have you been able to recognize how you can make changes when you start feeling overwhelmed, or anxious. When you sense your personality reverting to a state of panic what you will eventually comprehend is that you can stop the procrastination to change the state. You, we, can stop connecting with thoughts of a unhealed consciousness, where we experience the aberrant and distorted ideas. By now you must be very weary and have had enough of what follows when you let your “diagnosed” condition take over your being.”

“Perez, you make it sound so simple, but I have been told that genetics might be involved in my condition. And when I just get lost in my crazy mind, and behave inappropriately it could be a neurobiological factor.”

“Like what, what have you been told?”

“It has something to do with the amygdala that causes an interaction dysfunction. Basically, that’s when I can’t relate to my surroundings and people. So are you going to keep an eye on me?”

Perez chuckles, clears his parched throat, he takes a sip of water and responds, “no, I will give you support if you ask for it. Let’s go eat.”

Authors note;

“This is not a place of love or connection. It is a place where you get to experience the aberrant, divisive, and distorted ideas in your unhealed consciousness. Remember, you have free will, and you can continue to choose unloving thoughts as often as you wish — until you are sick of yourself, you have had enough, or you are worn, weary, and tired.”

Taken from ‘The Year of Forgiveness’ by Tina Louise Spaulding

In Medicine, aberrant refers to something that deviates from the normal, typical, or expected structure, function, or path. It signifies an abnormality or anomaly, such as a tissue located in an unusual place, a nerve taking an irregular route, or a chemical signal behaving improperly.

Merriam Webster dictionary

Chapter 4

The temperature has dropped it feels refreshing after a long day. Ariel and Perez walk in silence. Ariel is admiring the rugged mountains that surround this valley. She has

forgotten how beautiful a desert can be. She recalls her first experience at the ranch, when she was drinking from one of the springs. It was an oasis for her back then, and became a refuge. Her thoughts switch suddenly as she wonders how she will fit in this time. Then she recalls Jenny's reassurance that she will have angels to watch over her.

They arrive at the ranch house complex and Perez leads them to the cafeteria. There's about twenty people already seated and eating. There's a few at the buffet serving themselves. Perez goes over to an empty table that seats six.

"We'll sit here Ariel and wait for Chad Jr. and Elsie. They should be here soon."

Once seated Ariel surveys the room, "Perez, if I remember correctly the people who eat here are ranch hands. I don't recall seeing many families. It was usually new migrants who worked out negotiations with Chad and Ellie."

"Yes, that is true for fifteen years ago. Now Chad Jr. and Elsie inquire about family left behind. They have found an alternative to the Catholic charities and other organizations that claim to help the illegals. There is a team of three people who find the families and operate outside of the cartels to reunite families that qualify for what the Framer's have set in motion."

"Is there a lot of turn over? Do people and families leave for cities or where they can find work? Like I did, of course I left for a different reason."

"Some do, however, you will visit the different communities that have been a haven for a new lifestyle here on the ranch. Oh, here comes Chad and Elsie now!"

Chad and Elsie are walking through the cafeteria with two children. They have smiles as they greet people on their way to the table. Ariel wonders where Taylor is. She has met Buddy, now she wonders who the girl's name is. She looks older than Buddy, as they get closer to the table Ariel notices something different about the girl. The face, and her interactions as her parents greet people seem out of the ordinary. Almost as if she is mimicking her parents, but in a shy way. She recognizes the obvious trait as a down syndrome child.

Ariel - I feel triggered by this child. As if I am identified as a person with BPD. A disorder...my identity as a victim of something outside of my control! God, I have resentment all of a sudden, I don't want to be here...

"Excuse me Perez, I need to use the bathroom."

Ariel nervously swivels her head to find the bathroom. Perez senses her panic and nods his head in the direction she needs to go.

“Thank you, I’ll be back soon, sorry.” She abruptly leaves the table.

Ariel - Well this is interesting, now I know that I sensed something going on with Elsie when we first meet at the house. She seemed rather distant even though she was cordial and happy to see me. I thought maybe she was pre-occupied with Bud, but this...the older daughter with Down Syndrome. Am I going to be expected to take part in some kind of caretaking? I don’t have the skills for that. How will their daughter react to my claw? What if she doesn’t like me? How will that be with Elsie’s and my relationship? Okay... the Serene Mind Meditation...let’s see where that takes me. Breathe Ariel - breathe...

Ariel takes three full, conscious breaths, filling up her diaphragm and lungs then slowly releasing her breath on the exhale. Trying to stay focused just on her breath, but her thoughts are racing and her true emotion is anxiety. She recalls all of her past rejection because of her condition. What did Jenny tell her during her FOA experience? Something about a limited consciousness. These thoughts of perceived rejection is what she needs to continue to work on and inquire if they are true or not. As she wills her mind to be present she gains some insight...

Is it absolutely true that I will be rejected by people because I have a diagnosis based on conditional behavior, similar to their daughter who has a condition that is very easy to know...to see? Who knows what is in the mind of that girl, who really knows what goes through my mind, right now? Only me and if a therapist were present then she/he would understand. Is it absolutely true that Perez, Chad, and Elsie treat me differently as a human being? And their daughter doesn’t know anything about me!

Ariel focuses on the small imagined flame between her eyes. (The third eye) and imagines it traveling to the middle of the brain where she imagines it burning off these thoughts of rejection, and abandonment. She walks out of the bathroom stall and back to the cafeteria. She quickly observes that nobody is really paying any attention to her. This calms her, she tells her self that there is nothing to project upon herself, the daughter, Chad, Elsie, Taylor (the youngest of the Framer offspring), and Perez. She comes to the table and suddenly all eyes are on her.

Breathe girl, breathe, smile, I must go to my heart and get out of my cluttered mind. I am of many bodies, and one mind. We are all strangers to each other and we are all here in this mass of confusion to connect with love in our hearts. That’s what my friends have...love for me and others.

With a cheerful voice of relief Ariel greets all present, “hello Chad, Elsie, and Taylor! Taylor gets up from his chair and comes around the table to give Ariel a long awaited hug. Ariel who is still standing is ready to receive his unconditional love.

“Gosh, Taylor look at how you have grown. From the little runt, to this massive hunk of brawn!!”

Taylor laughs, “it’s from all the hay bailing Chad makes me do! You look fabulous Ariel, thanks for coming back to the ranch. I hope, for good!!”

“At least for now, with all your loving vibes it will be hard to leave!”

Taylor gives a smile and steps back.

“And who do we have here? Taylor is she your niece? Are you an uncle?”

He nods yes.

Elsie, “this smiling face is Jacob’s and my daughter...”

“Samantha!” In a shrill voice. “You can call me Sammie, that’s what they call me.”

Without hesitation and embarrassment Ariel spontaneously extends her right hand... the bionic claw. She means to shake hands with Sammie. Then she realizes what she just did as Sammie has an inquisitive expression. They both freeze.

Perez, “Sammie, we call Ariel the bionic chef!”

Samantha laughs and reaches for the claw to shake hands.

What a relief...thank you Perez for such a quick distraction. The bionic chef huh? I guess I won't have to be a caretaker for Sammie.

With a smile on her face Ariel pinches the claw like a lobster uses it’s claws and gets a laugh from Sammie. All of a sudden there is an underlying connection between Ariel and Sammie. Chad and Elsie and the ever observant Perez sense the mutual connection.

Chad breaks the ice... “let’s eat the foods getting cold!”

As the dinner is proceeding Chad addresses Ariel, “Ariel, we are hoping that you might be one of our chefs at the ‘Cook House’.”

“What is the Cook House? Is it separate from the kitchen here?”

“Yes, it actually is one of the several restaurants located in various locations on the four thousand acres of the New World States.”

“Okay, slow down, ‘New World States’, did you succeed the ranch from Texas.”

Elsie laughs, “from the USA too!”

“Huh?”

“Just kidding, no Chad here likes to name this place as if we still have ownership.”

“Now you must be kidding, what do you mean ‘as if we still have ownership’ you do don’t you?”

There’s some noise at the end of the table. It’s Bud and Sammie doing some kind of food play. They catch Ariel’s attention. She briefly observes the interaction, and recalls when a dinner date went out of control. It had turned into a verbal fight when she perceived that she was being mocked.

Elsie holds Bud’s arm as he is attempting to throw a food particle at Sammie. The mashed potatoes dribbles down his arm and Sammie is laughing at Buddy. “Excuse us, please, I need to take care of Bud,” who has mashed potatoes all over his chest. Ariel looks at Sammie’s plate, the mashed potatoes are gone! She smiles and subtly shakes her head.

Chad looks at Ariel knowing that her attention has drifted. He decides to be still and ask Elsie, “can I help you with anything?”

“Yes please attend to Sammie. Make sure she finishes her food.”

“Sorry Ariel, where were we?”

“You mean where are we? Here, in the New World State!”

“Oh, yeah, so anyway that’s a whole other story. We can talk about that some other time. Back to being a chef. The Cook House is a Bar-B-Q and seafood restaurant. It’s located close to here, on the Northeast side of the ranch. You will have another cook to assist you. Stalking Man, I think you met him.”

Chad looks at Perez who nods yes.

Ariel is surprised and her expression exudes caution. Caution for what she might say. “Well, that might be interesting a one handed Brazilian and an Apache. He is Apache, I think you told me that Perez.” She realizes her sardonic tone.

Perez nods yes again.

“You don’t sound too enthusiastic.”

What am I supposed to say or do? Maybe I’ll jump up and down and Sammie will join me. HaHa. “Oh, no, we might be an intriguing duo at the ... Cook House did you say? A barbecue joint?” Ooo, be careful Ariel.

“Well, I haven’t seen the ‘New World States’ upon my return yet. I am wondering what a restaurant is doing someplace on the ranch. Is this a dude ranch now?”

“You’ll see, like I said there are several all over the ranch.”

Sammie is squirming and looks like she is finished eating, she is just playing with her food. “Hey, I need to get Sammie outa here. Let’s talk some more tomorrow. Perez, maybe you can give Ariel a tour of the ranch and the New World States. Thanks for joining us tonight Ariel. We are happy to have you back. It’s where you belong, at least I hope you think that too.”

“Yes Chad, and I am ready for surprises. We can get to know each other as adults now. Since we have all changed.”

There is a brief silence with the energy of agreement that the relationship has changed. A new relationship to form. Chad says his farewell and leaves Taylor, Perez and Ariel, alone at the table.

Taylor excuses himself, “good to see you again Ariel, I gotta feed a horse.”

Now it’s just Ariel and Perez. Ariel is sensing that she disrupted the energy field.

“Ariel, there is something you don’t know about me. I must tell you why you mocked me as the person ‘keeping an eye on you’. I left a daughter behind, in Mexico when I came across the border. She was like you in many ways. She was sixteen when I left Mexico. About your age when you first came to the ranch, and I caught you drinking from one of the springs. You are different now. I keep an eye on you because I don’t have my daughter to keep an eye on.”

“Okay Perez you keep an eye on me. You will be my angel of protection. Protect me from myself.”

“Stalking Man is your other angel. The relationships that you have recently had and whom ever you will meet from hence forth will be different. They will be more synchronistic and have meaning in your life as your support system. Your angels as you say...”

“Wow, Perez, you sound like a guru too!” She realizes that the energy has shifted.

“Soon you will not be so sardonic.”

They walk back to the house that Perez built, in silence. Ariel is confused and hurt, feeling abandoned. Perez is hurt from Ariel’s ungrateful response. What was he expecting? Compassion? The suffering state of hurt and pain is the energy field that their combined aura is emitting. Perez is slightly ahead of her, head bowed down. He feels a tug on his arm sleeve. Ariel stops abruptly and Perez feels the pull...he stops.

“Perez, I’m sorry. What you said before about synchronistic relationships, well, I don’t want to loose ours. I am so sorry how I behaved tonight.”

“There is no need for apology, what happened has past us. Now here we are.”

“Where is here?”

“Here is here, presently. Until we get home.”

“You’re a regular Zen Master, Perez!”

“Now that is a poke I can take. Thank you for the acknowledgement.”

“That’s funny, I guess you really think of yourself as a guru?”

“Ha, no, I was just being real polite.”

They both feel the mocking, cynical energy. Still they laugh and eyes meet, connected as a lesson is learned. They actually felt the other and felt safe to be in this state of sarcasm. Now they continue to walk in silence. There are a couple of soft lights on when they enter the house. Enough light to see down the short walkway and to their separate rooms.

Chapter 5

Ariel turns on the bed light. And starts to unpack a few things. There’s a book Christine had given her when they said their good-byes in Miami several weeks ago. She hadn’t dipped into it yet, so she places it on her night stand.

She finds her sundries and lightly taps on the shared bath room door that separates the two bedrooms. No response so she enters and locks the side that provides access to Perez’s room. Once she is done she unlocks that door and locks the one to her room. There is a fear that keeps resurfacing, the trauma of being accosted on one of the Amazon River guided tours when she went with Aomo. That’s when she lost her arm.

It's a huge distraction, and even though she is safe with Perez as a roommate, the past experience lingers in her sub conscious mind. (read *Border Crossing* by the author. Go to inspiredbookwriters.com)

Ariel has on her night wear and slips under the covers. She props herself up with pillows and takes the book 'The Year of Forgiveness' by Louise Tina Spaulding. She flips through the first several pages and stops to read.

"Do not allow yourself to be victimized by your beliefs. You are not a victim of the world you see. It is a reflection of your consciousness rushing toward you in order for you to understand what is going on inside of you. If it seems to attack you, look where you attack yourself or others. Examine where you attack principles, ideas, politicians, countries, creeds, or money. Whatever you attack, know that it will reflect back to you in a world that seems to attack you."

She flips back at the cover of the book then the statement she just read.

They seem to attack me...they being my thoughts. Even though I know that Perez will never attack me physically, why is the fear still in my mind when I am alone with one man. It is the initial fear I have when I look at Stalking Man. And even with six year old Sammie. This endeavor has nothing to do with beliefs, other than a choice to live in harmony with the human form, and thoughts in unison with the natural environment. Is that why I came here? To change my thought processes, like when Preethaji guided us at FOA. Any feeling of depression or even suicide separates me from truth. I am not alone as long as I don't alienate myself from these people. I am glad that Perez was able to inject some humor towards my cynical dialogue.

Ariel is sitting on a rock and observing Sammie down along a creek bed. She came here with Stalking Man who was showing her the ranch of the New World State. He was standing a short distance behind her when suddenly Sammie went head first into the shallow creek. She started to flail her arms in a swimming motion and banging them on the shallow rock bottom of the creek. Ariel screamed, save her, save her. She turned around and Stalking Man was gone. Ariel quickly ran down to where Sammie was laying on her back, still in the creek, laughing as she spit up some water. Ariel waded in and automatically reached out with her right hand. Sammie latched onto the claw, and Ariel pulled her up. She instinctively knelt down and hugged Sammie who said thank you between coughs.

They stepped out of the creek, "Sammie, you need to be careful. Which direction is your home?"

Sammie looks up, into Ariels eyes and after a short pause she points in a direction, “this way.” Still hanging onto Ariel’s clawed hand, she leads the way.

Ariel - How could Stalking Man leave me? I don’t know my way back to the ranch house. I have never been on this part of the ranch where he took me. And then leave me with... How brave of you Sammie, you act as if nothing has happened. You’re soaking wet, almost drowned, and yet you seem so confident that you will lead us back home. I wonder how different her ‘handicap’ is from mine. Oh, mine is a disorder, I guess that’s what makes us different? I don’t think so. Why do I continue to view myself as different than others. Comparison is so prevalent in our society. Wow, I can actually feel Sammie’s energy pulsating through my prosthetic hand and arm. Now how’s that? Am I making it up? I surely feel her tugging motion as we walk.

Ariel stops and Sammie feels the jerk of Ariel’s sudden halt. She looks up with an expression of concern. Ariel is staring at Sammie making eye contact with a thought. “Are you another one of my little angels?” She laughs at her own question. Sammie smiles, too. “You are aren’t you?” Ariel squats down and is at eye level with Sammie who doesn’t know what to do, so she hugs Ariel.”

Sammie - What is this lady doing? Maybe she thinks I don’t know my way back home, but soon we will be on the animal path. It’s a good thing she was here to get me out of the creek. But I could have swam to shore. It was a short distance. Mom will be mad at me for getting muddy and not telling her where I was going. Why do people think that I am so different. The way they talk to me or think they have to do things for me even watch over me. I liked this walk on my own and now I get to show a big person how to go home!

“Let’s go girl, lead the way.”

Samantha holding my claw as if it is just a regular appendage, I get this sense that she is experiencing that, we, are not the body. Maybe there is a message I am receiving now. With all the the detritus thoughts that float in and out of my mind, maybe I need to separate body and mind from consciousness? Is that it, is that a truth. Without the body and mind what is there? Just conscious and unconscious thought? So maybe the body is just created and I get to enliven it for now, until it dies. Then what happens, I suppose pure consciousness continues. I wonder what little Sammie is thinking right now. She seems to be looking for something, oh she has come to sudden halt. She is looking up at me.

“There is a path somewhere here.”

Ariel scans the area, “over there? By the bush, is that it?”

“Yes!” Sammie has a broad smile taking over her face. She excitedly tugs at Ariel’s hand and they are on their way.

Stalking Man has watched the scene from a bluff, he did not desert Ariel and Sammie. He knew that they had to form a relationship that will bond them together. He stays still and decides to name this place, where Ariel meets Sammie. He saw the hugging, a sign of gratitude and love for each other. He names the place to mark where Ariel and Sammie connected despite their perceived ‘handicaps’. As he looks down at the creek he says, “Tu ‘ Ahiyi ’ ee Nzjne’ (They Are Grateful For The Water; a small flat close to an arroyo) Wisdom Sits in Places by Keith H. Basso

Stalking Man circles and meets them on the path before they reach the ranch house.

“Well, here you are. Did you not see what happened? Why did you leave me?”

“You needed to meet your new teacher.” Stalking Man looks down at Samantha and they smile at each other.

“Oh, so you read minds? You know what thoughts were going on in my head?”

“No, I read signs. I observe the energy flow, like the flow of the water.”

Ariel pauses - (She revisits her most recent thought.) Wow, now this is a different way of connecting with people. We seem to be in a state of similar consciousness. That smile between Sammie and Stalking Man just now, it was as if they knew what I just witnessed.

“Okay, let’s get this girl back to her mother, I’m guessing Elsie is missing her!”

“I will meet you at the Cook House. We need to start prepping for dinner.”

Ariel is startled and awakened now. She sits up and reaches for the lamp light next to the bed. She turns it on. Looks around her and realizes that she is awakened from a dream.

What did I just dream, it was so real. There was Sammie, I saved her from drowning. Stalking Man was there...he spoke in Apache language. Sammie grabbed my bionic claw. There was some kind of energy flow happening. The fear of my constant thoughts that bounce around in my brain, I remember feeling that. Oh, the Cook House, I am supposed to cook with Stalking Man? Maybe I need to journal some of what I recall in this dream.

Ariel gets up from the bed and looks for her journal and a pen. When she finds it she slips back under the warmth of the bedding and begins to write.



Chapter 6

After Ariel jots down the essence of her dream she falls back to sleep wondering what changes have occurred physically to this ranch. On the drive in she noticed homes and what appeared to be a little town spread out with agriculture and still cattle grazing. As she drifted off to sleep again, the image of a partial map became a new dreamscape.

Upon awakening Ariel felt accepted by people she had yet to meet. And she felt grateful for Perez's compassion. The smell of strong coffee permeated the short open walkway to the kitchen. She looked out at the courtyard and saw Perez sitting with his back to her. A book and coffee on a little table and an empty chair next to it.

“Good morning Perez!”

“Ah, good morning my friend. There is some coffee and pastries waiting for you in the kitchen. Come join me please.”

“Yes, I will, is there cream?”

“Yes, yes, you will see it.”

Ariel comes out to the courtyard that is filled with the early morning sun warming the chill still lingering from the night air.

“My you have made a nice home here Perez. It is so open to the outside world.”

Perez smiles and responds, “Sit, Ariel. This home plan is open to the natural environment that surrounds us. It also reminds me to keep my heart open to whom all I meet and know. So how did you sleep? Did you here the coyotes?”

“The coyotes? No. I had a dream that seemed real. It woke me in the middle of the night.”

“Did your dream include Stalking Man?”

“Yes, how did you know?”

“I didn’t, I guessed, after all Chad mentioned you will cook with him. The Cook House will be different for you. Stalking Man will show you how to be a gatherer. He will show you where to find berries, shrubs and herbs for cooking. He is the hunter. You will learn to cook with wild things. As well as the beef from the cattle.”

“And I suppose the local fish he catches is the sea food part of the menu?”

Perez laughs, “yes, you are right! Listen, Stalking Man might turn up in many of your dreams, or you may think you are dreaming in Stalking Man’s presence. He holds a special place in my heart and on this ranch.”

“You are giving me a lot to digest. My head space is overflowing, especially after the dream.”

“Let’s be silent then. Have a bite out of your pastry, it is really good. Creamy, and flakey. And the coffee is from Guatemala, dark and rich. Just relax we’ll enjoy the morning sun.”

They are silent, enjoying the warmth and continental breakfast. Ariel is relieved to be out of her head space for awhile. She is licking her fingers..."Umm, this is so good Perez."

"Go, have another one, maybe bring one for me, too. Please, and the coffee pot."

When Ariel returns she ask, "so about Stalking Man...whom is he to you? Was he a friend, or maybe he knew the Framers? How did he end up here?"

"That is a good question. One day Taylor and his father Chad, Sr. were riding their horses looking for missing cattle. Chad saw some movement high up on a cliff in the northwest corner of the ranch. They had to circle around and come up a draw on the north side of the bluff. When they reached the flat plateau on top there was a domed structure with bear grass and hides for a covering. They dismounted their horses a ways from the structure and tied them to some tall brush. The story, the way Chad told it and Taylor remembers goes like this."

"Wait, Perez, what is the meaning of his name?"

"It is relevant to the story. They walked slowly towards the structure and as they came from behind it a man rose up, seemingly out of a bush. It had hid him from their view. He stepped from behind it and stood there with his hand raised as a greeting. When Taylor told me the story he said that he'd never seen his father with such an astonished expression. Later as Chad told it he said it felt euphoric as if he entered another realm from the past. They introduced themselves and Chad never asked "what are you doing here?" Rather he waited for Stalking Man to speak. Which he did after an extended silence.

"I have come to this place where my clan lineage once gathered. From here we can see the lower valley and it's waters. Where we grew our crops. After a time we were forced to a reservation, Cibecue. I have a small family clan and wish to bring them back here. I see much activity, is this where you have marked your place on the land?"

Of course Chad didn't quite know how to respond. Taylor gave the first response, "we own it!"

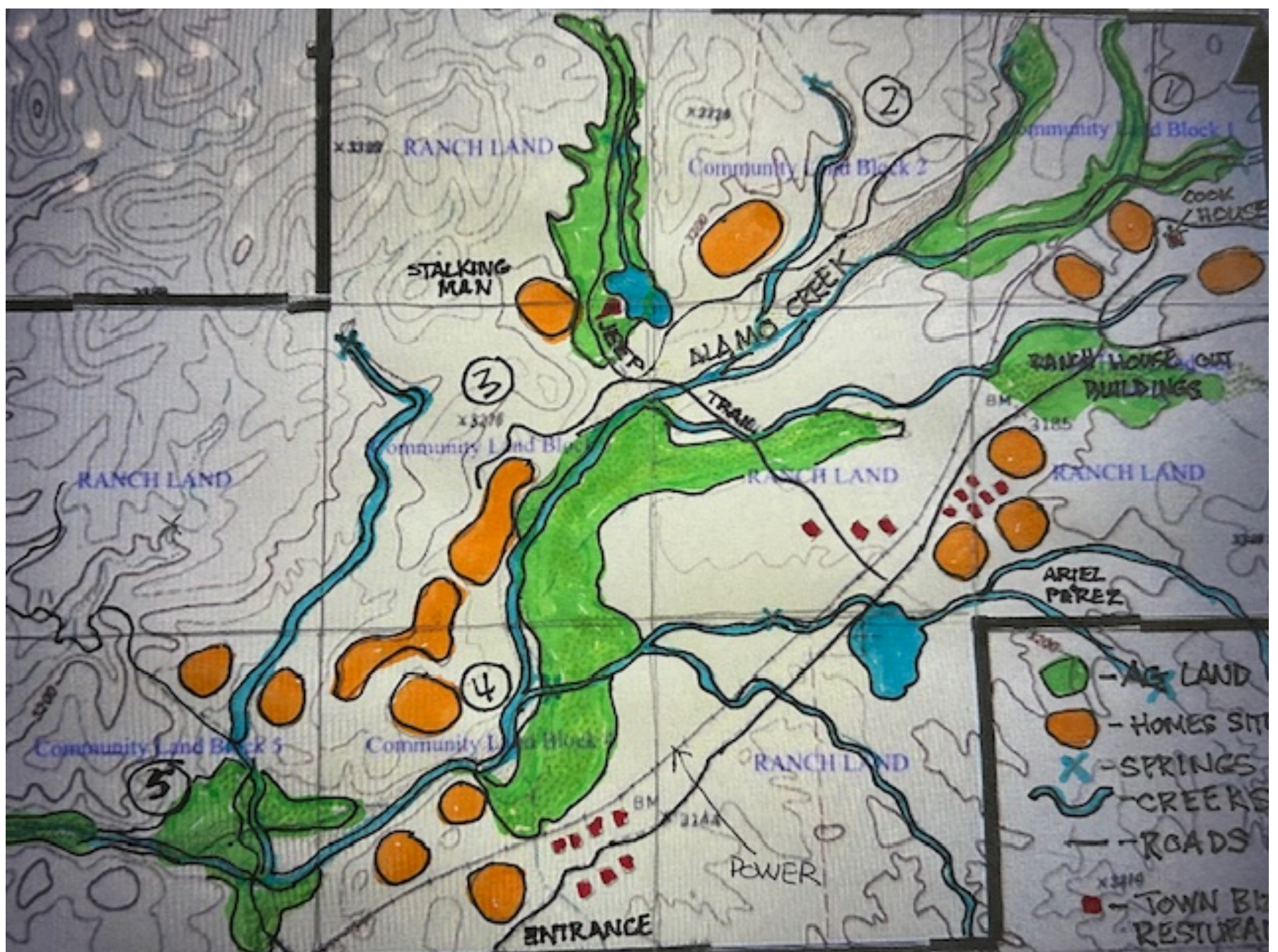
Stalking Man looked down at little-brave Taylor, "the Apache has been here before. Our spirits are still here."

There was a rather long pause and as Taylor remembered a wind gust came up, the horses snickered and Chad simply said, "we will leave now and we will talk again. I am glad to have met you." They simply nodded their heads at each other as if to

approve of their connection. It was years later when Taylor was doing some historical research and he came across a question concerning how the Apache culture consisted of connection with objects and events that is their reality to the world around them.

“More specifically still, what is required to interpret Annie Peaches’s claim that the land occupied by the Western Apache is “always stalking people” and that because of this they know how to “live right?” Kieth H. Basso - Wisdom sits in Places]

“And that is the meaning of his name. What happened afterwards is how this part of the world evolved out of the chaos of separation. I have a map to show you. You can keep it so you will know your way around this New World State.



“Now I must go to the front gate. You look at peace Ariel. Is this true?”

Ariel clears her throat, “yes, ah yes, the story has a calming affect for me. I know better why I had so much gratitude for Chad and Ellie . I don’t fear Stalking Man. And maybe I found my place.”



Perez laughs, “you will find many places here on the ranch. Use your mind for remembering and cast out confusion. You are about to be healed as you will be shown many ways to cross borders.”

“There you go Perez, my Zen master who likes danish with his coffee.”

They laugh, he leaves and Ariel is in contemplation.

Humm, stay focused now, girl. Breathe deep, again, again until it's all I know to do right now. No other thoughts, let's stick with this time spent with Perez, my angel. Please be an angel. You are aren't you? Breathe, breathe...Oh God or whoever I am asking right now...the Divine...please don't let my wires start to cross...what did Perez say? Cast out all confusion. Breathe, breathe...

Ariel has managed to stay with her breath and settle down her racing mind. She slowly opens her eyes. And in front of her is the courtyard garden. The circular raised bed the plants so neatly in their place surrounded by an adobe brick wall with flagstone as a cap. She is feeling the warmth of the sun and takes a full conscious breath. A sigh of relief, something just happened that changed her frantic energy to a state of calm. She rises out of her chair and surveys the recent scene, crumbs in the plates that held the danishes

and empty cups of coffee. She picks them up and takes them into the kitchen and places them in the sink.

I'll wash these later. I wonder when I will meet up with Stalking Man. Maybe, I will go to the Ranch House first, see what it is I will be doing today.

She goes to her room and changes into a skirt and blouse. When she walks out into the front of the building she notices Stalking Man, sitting under a tree that is across the road. She smiles and walks over to him. He stands and greets her with a smile.

“Good morning, Stalking Man. I was wondering if you and I were going to meet up today.”

“Yes, we will go to the Cook House. We can walk there. I will show you some wild native plants that we will use for today's menu.”

“Perez told me a story about how you came to the ranch. He did not finish the story, about your relationship with Chad Sr.”

“I will let him tell the story first. Then you can ask me what is truth.” He chuckles and points out a row of Sumac, “let us go to these Sumac evergreens and bushes.”

The Sumac separates Perez's adobe from several buildings and homes. As they approach them Stalking Man makes a statement, “You called Perez and Sammie your angels. Does that make them different than a normal person for you?”

Ariel is startled, “did you hear me say that? How would you know?”

He just looks at her, then turns towards the rows of Sumac. “These plants were used properly by the people who lived here before. They still bare fruit.”

“You did not answer me.”

“I saw the way you connect with them. It is good. You honor Sammie just like you honor Perez. You fear me for now, that might be why you will cook with me. To overcome your fear. Did you fear Sammie because of her condition?”

“I feared her condition because I fear mine. I fear you because of the way you might see my soul and know my truth. Your stare... sometimes it is menacing to me.”

“We will use plants and fruits, wild things that grow. You will need to have gratitude for them. They are the abundance of the great creator of all things. If you fear them because you do not know them you will not have a connection with them and the food at The Cook House will be sour. You may honor Perez and Sammie as angels, you can honor

me as a rip fruit.” He smiles broadly, “we will make sweet food at The Cook House if you do!” He laughs and continues towards the Sumac.

When they stop at the Sumacs Ariel sarcastically remarks, “you will be my sweet lemon!”

He gives her a menacing look with furrowed brow and all. Enough to scare most people. Ariel just laughs and they both have a hardy laugh.

“Here I have a bag, we will pick off the clusters of deep red fruit. In your mind, in your memory, mark this place. It will have meaning for you” He watches from the corner of his eyes and sees how Ariel manages with the left hand and claw.

After they gather some clusters they walk in silence when pass a couple of the buildings Stalking Man stops and points to clumps of Sorrel leaf. “Let’s gather this for our salad. The younger shoots will be best to pick. We can pinch them off near the base of the plant.”

Ariel pinches her tong like claw together. Stalking Man is amused and is sensing her humor and appreciates the identity that Ariel gave him.

“What are these vacant buildings?”

“These are a few small businesses. There, that one is a shoemaker’s, over there is a blacksmith’s building with his outbuildings. There is a tannery in the far building. There is a market place and the rest are community houses.”

“Where is everybody, it seems so vacant here.”

“Beyond that field of cows, over the small rise, they are harvesting. It will be a busy evening at The Cook House. Are you ready to be a chef tonight?”

With alacrity Ariel shakes her head. They silently return to their harvesting of wild things.

What will this menu be? Who makes up the menu and I wonder how many other enclaves of houses are on this New World State as Chad Sr. liked to call it. What was his relationship like with Stalking Man? I have so many questions and all I can think of is what my future will be like. I wonder what my place will be here moving forward. Place, that seems to be some sort of Apache buzz word. Oh, he is signaling for us to continue down the road.

They move across the road and across the hay field until they come to a small orchard of Pecan trees. Stalking Man slowly kneels on the ground.

'In this unsettled age, when large portions of the earth's surface are being ravaged by industrialism...when on several continents indigenous peoples are being forcibly uprooted by wanton encroachments upon their homelands...when American Indian tribes are mounting major legal efforts to secure permanent protection for sacred sites now controlled by federal agencies...when philosophers and poets are asserting attachments to geographical localities contribute fundamentally to the formation of person and social identities...when new forms of "environmental awareness" are being more radically charted and urgently advocated than ever in the past - in these disordered times, when contrasting ways of living in the world are generating unprecedented attention on a worldwide scale, it is unfortunate that anthropologists seldom study what people make of places.' Kieth H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits In Places* 1996

Ariel remains standing not sure what to do. She just quietly observes, while she feels reverence for this time and place. There is a sense of gratitude as she watches Stalking Man raise his arms and hands to the sky, he looks up to the heavens and says, "ni' Ashoog" "thank you for this land. "Ahehee igoyai, bini gonldzi!"

(Authors note: I have tried my best to mark this 'place of wisdom' for this story. I apologize if my understanding and Apache dialect is not correct. Here Stalking Man is thanking Chad Sr. for his wisdom of place. Above this Burkett Pecan Orchard, on a hillock, was once a sacred burial ground. This is where Chad Sr. and Stalking Man would meet to discuss this land that was here before ranch fences, before borders. It is relative to the story and it's essence will be revealed as the story progresses.)

Ariel remains silent, not sure what to do. After awhile Stalking Man stands and moves into the orchard to collect pecans. Ariel follows and starts collecting handfuls of pecans and places them in the bag.

"We will make a pie crust for our Sumac cream pie. Come let us go."

They follow a creek bed to its end where a spring leaves the ground. There is a fence around it to keep cattle away from the spring where watercress is abundant. They gather cress for the dinner. "Tu Nchaa Haline, much water flows up and out," Stalking Man looks at Ariel, "remember this place."

Ariel nods and they move on in silence. They arrive at the Cook House. It's nothing fancy, which is somewhat a relief to her.

Maybe there's no expectations of me. Chef...who gave me that monicker anyway? I'm not no chef, anyway I'm in training to cook like an Apache, haha. Come on girl give yourself more credit than that. Whoa, watch where your thoughts take you, how rude for me to have that thought of Stalking Man. Now what, how do I get back to my normal mind? There's nothing normal about it...

shit, there I go again. Give yourself some credit girl, you made it back here to the New World or whatever the hell this is called. Ugh, why am I so cynical? Perez has me pegged. All these people think they are helping me, I feel so victimized by their projections. Is that what they're really thinking? Oh, he's waiting for me on the front deck of this galvanized and rough cedar sided building. Looks like something made with old recycled building stuff! More like a smoke shack than a cook house!

She nods at Stalking Man who nods and enters the building before she even reaches the stairs that lead up to the entrance. She enters and surveys the dinning area of old missed matched tables and chairs. Each with a red and white checkered table cloth. She looks towards the back and notices the pass through where orders are handed in and dishes are served. Then she spots a familiar head...

She enters the kitchen and Stalking Man and Sammie turn to look at her.

“Oh what a surprise, are you...”

“Dishwasher, just for you Ariel, I will wash your dishes!” Sammie is smiling and Stalking Man has a pleasant smirk.

“Oh-kay, I have a master chef and a super fast dishwasher at my disposal.”

“You make it so much about you Ariel. I am a cook and you are a cook. Sammie is a dishwasher here, together we are three bodies here to serve whomever comes for dinner. Let's leave it at that, without the superlatives.”

“Sorry, I get it. Sometimes my tongue gets in the way of my thoughts.”

“Your thoughts get in the way of your truth. Your truth is in your heart. Perez and the Framers know that about you. I take their word, so I listen to your heart. That is what speaks to me.”

There's a stillness now. Ariel looks at the collection of wilds on the large central butcher block island in the middle of the kitchen. Sammie goes back to washing pots and pans. Stalking Man waits patiently knowing the energy will change. He reaches under the table and grabs a bundle of sage wrapped in sweet grass. He lights it and lets it smoke awhile. Then he slowly walks the kitchen and smudges the room. He is doing some chants to cleanse the room of any negative energy.

Ariel walks back out onto the front deck, deep in thought. *How does one change perceptions about themselves if all they consider is what state they are in? States of mind dissolve like rain drops. They come and go, I am aware of them, I witness them, I pray, or decree, or meditate to escape them - still I try*

to conform to social expectations or community values, or groupthink and I feel limited in the collective consciousness. I saw a moose on the loose in my dream. It was me, feeling finished with being told what to do, even though I consciously thought I was doing right action. They might not have fulfilled the needs of another's expectations. I hear criticism though it might not be the intention of another. Sure that's external energy and I am supposed to look at my internal thoughts. It doesn't work that way with me, blame becomes my shame. What is the Zen saying? Chop wood, carry water, to stay focused on what is present. A metaphor, and I observe Stalking Man going about his business, chopping wood so to speak, and Sammie, carrying water as she is focused on washing pots and pans. And I cook with my clawed pinchers. I seethe like boiling water and sizzling bacon. All my energy is in the sauce, the spice, the cream - my place in time is the kitchen where I create - free from someone's recipe! I am a moose on the loose, and I get diagnosed with an identity. Did I say the wrong thing, do something differently? What's different about me when I think you're different than me. So leave me alone unless you have words filled with love, gentle like a soft wind that whispers a stillness in my ears and fills my mind with the emptiness of bliss.

She comes back into the building and enters the kitchen. Stalking Man studies Ariel for a short time. "Ariel, these recipes are for what we have gathered. They are yours to change. My friend, you have shown me your troubled mind. When the time is right I will share my troubled mind with you."

He looks over at Sammie and Ariel's eyes follow his. "Let our little sister be our guide, for she lives in bliss. It is our collective thoughts that think she is slighted. You did right action to let her lead you home from the creek that she swam in. Remember that place, it is part of your own history with her and it is her history with you."

He leaves and Ariel reviews some of the recipes. Salad Dressing 1 cup Olive oil and 1/2 cup lemon juice and 3 Tbsp Sumac with added salt (not too much) and blended with a few ice cubes. Poured over a salad of the sorrel, watercress and garden lettuce.

Then she sees a Sumac Buttermilk pie - Sumac, pomegranate, melted butter, Vanilla Extract, sweetener (glycerine or Stevia), and eggs. She's thinking that a whip cream made from a thick cream will add to the flavor.

Both sound good and they picked plenty of Sumac to work with.

She plans on using the juniper berries to make a fermented sauerkraut as a condiment.

There's wild Turkey that has been processed, and a bunch of currents that they picked. So she is thinking of a slow cook, maybe a Dutch oven if the kitchen has one. Add the herbs and berries during the cooking, see what comes of it. Maybe a beefy flavor?

She's ready to get started when she senses a set of eyes on her. She looks over towards the dishwasher and Sammie is watching her. "Can I help you?"

Ariel is in thought...*this ought to be interesting. How do I manage this? I just can't say no, I wonder how she might respond if I do, or try to distract her to do something else. Maybe sweep and mop the floor.*

She looks at the floor and it seems spotless. "Okay, maybe you can cut vegetables? You good with a knife?"

Sammie shakes her head yes.

Ariel notices that her expression is pretty serious, she realizes this might be a big event for her. She sets her up with her own station at the food prep island in the middle of the kitchen.

"Be careful, I'll show you how to cut them." Ariel cuts several thin slices. "Here you go girl, have at it."

Sammie looks up at Ariel with a mixed expression of a smile and apprehension. She's not sure if she can cut thin slices like Ariel showed her.

Ariel looks for flour and salt to use for the pie crust. When she returns to the table she sees that Sammie is chopping the carrots rather haphazardly. It's not what she expected. She observes how focused Sammie is and decides not to correct her. She becomes aware of the fact that Sammie is doing the best that her ability allows. She mixes the flour with a pinch of salt and goes to the walk-in scouting for butter to cut in with the flour. While she is doing that she sees fresh string beans and decides that the chopped carrot bits can be steamed with the beans and sautéed in butter with thin slices of almonds for the vegetable. She hears laughter coming from the kitchen. Sammie is dumping pecan pieces into the bowl of flour which is creating a dust cloud of flour! Sammie's face is painted white. She looks at Ariel with a shocked expression as if she did something wrong.

"I like pecans..."

Ariel, with mouth wide open and an exasperated expression circles the table and places her left arm around Sammie's shoulders in a nurturing, motherly manner that

sends a message that all is good. With her pinchers she gently takes Sammie's hands out of the bowl.

The fear of losing Sammie's trust is just an illusion. There is only change. *We can change the presentation of the carrot dish, and we will make a pecan nut crust for the Sumac pies.*

"You like pecans, huh?"

"Yes, I like pecans."

"Okay," she looks around and spots a nut grinder, sternly she instructs Sammie, "okay Sammie, you need to chop these pecan pieces smaller. Wait here, don't do anything, just wait."

Sammie - I hope she's not mad. I cut the carrots and mom makes the best pecan pie!

Ariel comes back with a sifter, another bowl, and a spoon. After sifting the flour she demonstrates how the pecans will be chopped smaller and let's Sammie grind away.

With more assistance from Sammie, Ariel completes the cooking and baking and everything is ready for dinner. They walk outside where they find Stalking Man who is smoking brisket and preparing barbecue sauce. He looks at them and starts to laugh, "my little one, you are ready for a pow wow!" He wets his finger and makes a few lines over each of Sammie's cheeks. "Ariel, will you take Sammie to his mother? Then come back so we can serve dinner."

"Yes, of course. The recipes changed to include Sammie's creative style."

They all laugh.

"I can cook now Stalking Man!"

Chapter 7

They are sitting on the porch, enjoying the end of the day. A late sunset, with a distant rainbow...somewhere out there, was a rain shower spraying the desert so plants can survive.

As Ariel and Sammie approach the front steps a male voice says, oh look our girl has turned white! Sammie hurries up the steps, Ariel stays a few steps behind.

“Thank you Ariel, for bringing Sammie home. Hey, meet my man...Jacob.” Elsie continues, “Jacob, meet Ariel.”

Jacob greets Ariel, “ola Ariel, bem-vinda ao rancho.”

Ariel has an amused expression, “ola, Jacob. You know, when I met Buddy and Sammie I had an inclination that Elsie was keeping a surprise from me.”

Elsie and Jacob have a short laugh. Elsie looks at Jacob, then replies, “I never out grew my fascination with Brazil while we had you on the ranch. This guy came along as an, how do you say it? O gaúcho! And after my initial infatuation, we got to know each other, and well, here we are with two children and a marriage!”

“Sammie, did Stalking Man paint you for a Pow Wow?”

Sammie touches her face and looks at the flour on her fingers. “I make pecan pie, just like mom!”

There’s some laughter.

“She had a hand in cooking the meal at the Cook House. I don’t suppose you’ll be coming to diner there?”

“No we’ll eat here. Go over some strategies with our ranch managers. Then we have a meeting with one of the community reps.”

“Yeah? I have been meaning to ask what gives with this New World State ranch?”

Jacob nods in the direction of the rainbow. “You see the blue sky, above the clouds, and the rainbow that is the result of light meeting moisture?”

Ariel turns and observes.

“Does that not make you experience feelings of ecstasy, joy and bliss? We...” Jacob looks at Elsie, “Chad senior had the vision when he quieted his mind, silenced all the noise of the collective consciousness and listened to his higher self.”

Elsie chips in, “dad understood energy. He used to call it white light energy. Pure consciousness, not distorted by human thinking. He envisioned a great evolutionary plan. He aligned himself with it’s purpose and eased into developing his new plan for this ranch. He surrendered and became a conduit for creative energy to flow.”

Jacob, “I have heard a little about your struggles with the mind. You are about to go on a journey. Be aware of the great calming effect that this land and this space in time will have on your being. We have all been where you are mentally.”

“Hum, wow, thank you Sammie for your help. Uh, I have to get back to serve dinner. Obrigada.”

Wait awhile nobody knows what I go through. And these people, they all ‘heard about me’ huh. Gosh, thanks Elsie... who else “knows about me”? Well Perez and Chad and Taylor. Then there’s Stalking Man...I wonder what he’ll tell me about his troubled mind. Is that my journey, to hear the wisdom of an Indian...oops, Apache, better watch my manners around here. I wonder who comes to dinner at the Cook House. What a name, sounds like a halfway house for crooks. There I go, off on a tangent. ‘We’ve all been there...’ isn’t that what my new friend the O gaucho said. And where have we all been in our minds? How can he or anyone for that matter relate to me?

Ariel arrives at the Cook House and see’s that it is already starting to fill up. Looks like some people are already eating.

Stalking Man motions to Ariel to come front and center! “Ariel, I am serving the meat, and you will dress the plates with what you have prepared. And of course your special Sumac/Pecan Pie not like the one Elsie makes.” He has a wry smile.

“Who’s serving the meals?”

“There is Susan and Lozen. Susan comes from the Permaculture community. Lozen is from my clan - the hunters and Susan is from the ‘wild growers’. That’s what I call them, they are good forgers like us.”

“You mean you Apaches?”

“I mean like you and me.” Stalking Man has piercing brown eyes, fixated on Ariel.

“I think I may have misspoken with the tone I used. Sorry, Stalking Man. I appreciate what you showed me today.”

He nods and turns to face the next person/s coming to the counter to order their dinner. The venue tonight is outdoors, with picnic tables set up under a pergola. The women are running orders to tables and there is a young boy taking dirty plates to wash.

(Authors note: Lozen was a Cheyenne Chiricahua Apache warrior. She was considered a prophet and with her power, lead others into battle. “These names are highly regarded in Native American history, representing women who defied traditional gender roles to fight against the loss of their lands.” Mescaleroapachetribe.com)

Dinner ends around 8 pm. Kitchen maintenance ends around nine. It’s dark out and Perez is there to pick up Stalking Man, Lozen, and Ariel.

“I will drop you off near our home, Ariel. Then take our friends to their homes. It is past ours, up the old jeep trail.”

Everybody remains quiet. It is somewhat disarming for Ariel. However, she is relieved to not be talking. Her day feels complete, or is it? The thoughts of this day feel overwhelming. A lot transpired in terms of interrelating.

Perez stops near one of the little town buildings. There is light inside, a fire and an anvil can be seen through a window opening.

“You can find your way back to our home?”

“Yes, thank you. And thank you Stalking Man and Lozen. Will I see you tomorrow?”

“Yes.” Is all that Stalking Man says. Lozen nods her head and her dark eyes penetrate Ariel’s forcefield. As if she sees Ariel’s aura and is taking in some information.

They move on, Perez in the jeep and Ariel on foot. She cups her hands and looks through the window that has glowing light. There is an older man blacksmithing. She finds the door, which is open and decides to walk in, curious to see what is being formed.

“Hello? Do you mind if I watch?”

He looks up a bit startled, “I did not see you come in. Yes, you can watch but don’t get to close. You the gal that is living with Perez now?”

“Yes, Ariel.”

“I’m Amos, good to meet you. Excuse me, I have to pound this into shape right now the temperature is just right.”

Ariel just observes, fascinated by what is taking form. It looks like a branding iron. She looks at the ground and notices two laying there. NWS - New World State - easy enough to figure out.

He is finished with the branding iron. Amos, looks over towards Ariel, “did you want to talk now? Do you have some time?”

Ariel suddenly feels on overload. Her mental capacity burdened with so much coming at her. “I have to go now. Good to meet you, I will see you again.”

Ariel moves on and eventually walks into the courtyard. Perez has a fire going in the fire pit. Off to the side is a pot of coffee and two cups. She takes it as a signal that Perez wants to spend some time with her.

How much more do I have left in the tank? I'm not sure I am up for conversation. My mind is about to explode, so many projections and expectations. I just need some space.

Her intuition tells her to get ready for bed, and return to the fire pit. So she does just that. She puts her lamp on in the bedroom and starts to journal what her day was like. Most of her writing is about her time spent with Sammie. She closes the journal and goes to tend the fire. She pours herself a small cup of coffee and sits, waiting for Perez.

There is a door creaking open, then shut again. Before Ariel can greet Perez someone is standing by the other chair, and it is not Perez.

“Christine?, what...how...say something before I scream!”

“How about a hug, I didn't come all of the way here not to get a hug from you!!”

Ariel quickly stands, and like a sea of joy, tears flow! The hug is long and heartfelt. She doesn't want to let go. Christine and Jenny were life lines for her. “Whoa, tell me you're here to stay!”

“No, sorry, I have to get back to the cruise ship. I have a three day furlough while it is at port in Galveston. Two days driving and tonight with you.”

“How did you know to come here, and what are you doing on the cruise ship?”

“I Googled the ranch location and was greeted by Perez at the gate. When I asked for you he said you were staying with him. He let me rest in his room and here we are. When the cook job ended at that FOA you took part in, the company took me on part time during spring break and for that Cuban festival. After awhile they found me jobs on cruise ships since they liked the creative ways I discovered to entertain people. When I got this job I remembered your description of the Framer Ranch. And I just had to check you out. So how are you doing?”

“Oh my, hey you still in contact with Jenny?”

“Yes, sometimes we get together, at least once a year. Depending on our schedules we make a week vacation of it and enjoy a new location to visit.”

“Nice, I want to see the both of you sometime. Let's arrange that, okay?”

“Absolutely, So Perez said you just got here a few days ago. What's it been like?”

“Seems like everyone I meet has heard something about me. That is a little unnerving. Like, what have they heard and what projections might they have about me. Then there's Stalking Man, what a name, he's Apache and I have been assigned to cook with

him at one of the eateries. I haven't seen the whole ranch, but I'm sure you saw that they changed the name to the New World State ranch. I don't think they even call it a ranch anymore. And Perez told me I remind him of his daughter whom he abandoned many years ago. Seems like my "right hand" girl (pun intended) will be Elsie's daughter with down syndrome. So that's a trip, she is enthralled with my claw! As for Perez and Stalking Man, they are a mystery to me, just like you and Jenny were at the Hyatt in Miami!"

Christine laughs, "tell me about your mental state."

"I have my moments of suffering when the thoughts are racing and my projections are strong. It's still not easy to dissolve the fears. Stalking Man says I have a troubled mind and he will share his troubled mind with me when the time is right. My short time spent with Sammie, she's Elsie's daughter, has been heartwarming and to witness her being so present with whatever happens has been a good insight for me. Now if I can get out of my own way and tame my troubled mind..."

"Do you recall Preethaji's process when you looked at your past and old patterns?"

"The whole thing about oneness and being one with the other or others, well that is still a bit mind boggling. Especially since I still look at others being different than me. I mean, look, you, Perez, Stalking Man...the others around here, I am not connecting with people as a unified consciousness."

"What is it then, is everything some sort of illusion for you? Your of the world but then again you're not or don't want to be?"

Ariel takes a deep breath, "of the world and not wanting to be in the world. It's not that drastic, like I don't plan on suicide if that's what you're getting at. It's more like confusion of what is unified consciousness."

"Okay, see if you can follow my train of thought. All there is, is consciousness. The rest is just energy turned into form. Form is created from consciousness and dissolved back into light from a unified or collective consciousness there evolves change. What we think might happen from past patterns will not happen. The only thing that will happen is change. Now to become form, thoughts arise and the form is created. Divine Will plays a role, for it is through Divine Will that form can become a negative emotion or a positive emotion. The structure of the form has an existence that becomes a space in time. It may be a human form, an animal form or a material form (vegetative or non-vegetative). What ever it is does not matter. What matters is the emotion of sadness or joy, hate or love, conflict or peace. We see those types of emotions carried out in human form or nature form. Conscious thought changes like

the weather. It impacts the form of existence. Life becomes a state of bliss or a state of confusion. Once form has that self realization, then choice becomes right action or non-constructive action. The existence of the form dwells in collective consciousness or in super consciousness. It becomes a pattern of recurring Karmic happenings, and part of the collective consciousness. Like recurring events where nothing changes just the circumstance might be different. If the Divine Will chooses to change the circumstance, the consequences are altered. The altered state becomes an evolutionary existence of matter, or energy. Observe light as it transforms into color when it passes through a prism. Or when it makes connection with moisture released from a cloud. A rainbow is formed. Light energy changes form. Our connections with interpersonal relationships whether with human or non-human form has an impact on life. The state of consciousness has an impact on everything in this realm or whatever dimension life exists. All there is to do is witness every moment. Gain some insight...before you continue in the flow of existence.

Maybe explore the pattern that keeps recurring, and causes suffering? Can you recall something in the past that you default to every time you get anxious when you allow the external circumstance to conflict with your inner being?"

"I get into states of bliss, enjoying the transcendental state of mind. Then having to adjust and connect, as you say, with the human element. And the human element doesn't make sense. Just a lot of blah, blah, blah. Trying to fit in with what everybody else is committed to, even though, I bet most of them don't know what that is. It's like we're all just doing. My short time so far, with Sammie, Stalking Man and Perez. They all seem to be on another level than me. Whereas I am trying to cope."

"And there's no joy in that. Do you have an on/off switch?"

"What do you mean?"

"Can you just plug into an energy where you witness somebody in a joyful state?"

Ariel Laughs, "yeah my time with Sammie. She doesn't know any better than to enjoy what she is doing at the moment."

"I think you have not been with her long enough. I'm sure she also suffers, just like anybody else. You have connected with her joy, when you connect with her confusion, or frustration, or even sadness, then you will witness that her world is no different than yours or mine. Stalking Man said he will share his troubled mind with you. Perez has shared a past regret with you."

“Christine, I love you, but what are you doing here? Checking to see if I have changed since my Field of Awakening experience?”

“No, I really don’t know, other than I had fun filling in for you in Miami. And I was attracted to your being and willingness to attend FOA and trust that I could fill in for you as chef. What am I doing here? I want to know you as a friend. I like your depth of consciousness. You may think it’s borderline, that’s how you identify with the same anxiety that I have at times. I remember after the first day of chaos on the yacht screaming ‘I love this shit’. From then on I made it fun, my life became a joy. So maybe that’s why we connected. That’s why I am here - confusing, huh?”

Ariel laughs and looks at Christine’s sparkling eyes. “Miss Christine, you are a wonder woman.”

Just then Perez comes into the court yard. “Did I just miss a good joke?”

Ariel turns, chuckles and says, “yeah, like why am I here.”

“To learn about unified consciousness.”

Chapter 8

It’s early morning dawn. The sun hasn’t risen over the mountains yet, the sky is yawning as the color scheme begins to change from the dark of night towards a sky of blue. Christine gently slips off the side of the bed, trying to not awaken Ariel. Ariel feels the warmth of Christine’s body leave her. She turns on her back and opens her eyes. Christines back is to her. She is dressing while she packs her bag.

“Miss Christine, you must leave now? No breakfast?”

She turns, “Galveston is a long drive and I have to be back to port by five this evening.”

“I will miss you. This was a special night for me. Thank you for thinking of me. I will never forget my time spent with you and Jenny. Listen, you know I am destined to stay here, so you two angels keep that in mind next time you have a vacation.” She swings her legs over the side of the bed and groggy as she is, rises to place a hand on Christines heart. Christine doesn’t hesitate to do the same. They have eye contact that says all that needs to be said. Finally, Christine removes her hand, they hug and kiss, until next time.

“It seems like you are where you need to be, Ariel. I am grateful that you returned to this New World State Ranch. Isn’t that what it’s called now?”

“Yes, there must be some significance to it’s name. You gave me a new state of mind to consider. Thanks, you drive safe and be safe.”

Perez and Ariel sit by the morning fire in the courtyard, with their coffee and an egg scramble that Ariel put together. The sun is up now and as the fire dwindles and the plants along the west wall receive some light, a question is asked...”So my dear, you have been here a very short time, how are you feeling?”

Ariel considers how to respond, “I feel overwhelmed, my state is calm.”

“How can that be?”

“When you came home last night, at the end of our conversation, what you missed was not a joke. You would need to know the story behind our laughter. That’s not necessary for me to explain my feeling as opposed to my state. Miss Christine was with me in Miami, she became the yacht chef for me while I was participating in an event. Her feeling of overwhelm became joy when she blurted out with a scream ‘I love this shit’. She somehow released the emotion so it dissolved into fun and joy as she cooked for a hundred guest of a Cuban festival. So now my reply of feeling overwhelmed has dissolved into calm, just enjoying our early morning coffee and breakfast. And also appreciating your interest in my state of mind. Checking in with me, about my unified consciousness? Or us just being present...everything else is just thought. Feeling overwhelmed was just a past thought, feeling calm was a present emotion.”

“Beautiful, keep that thought. The unified part of consciousness might be how you perceive the energy flow of this new world state that you are entering.”

Ariel chuckles, “you make it so mystical. I guess I am on a path of self discovery towards changing my identity.”

“Keep that thought, too!”

“Now I’m not calm, I am anxious anticipating my next encounter of the day.”

“Change the word encounter, make your next connection feel like a gift.”

“Haha, next surprise...maybe Jenny will show up.”

“Who?”

“My other angel, like you.”

Perez gets a big smile as Ariel reaches over to clasp his hand, unconsciously with her claw. They laugh, “we must part ways now dear one. I have to get to the front gate, enjoy your day. Maybe go explore the ranch a little.”

“Will do, señor. I’ll clean up the dishes.”

“Gracias.”

Ariel isn’t quite sure if Stalking Man will come for her today to gather edibles for the Cook House. There was never a discussion how this day would evolve. There seems to be no menu, other than a daily special. While she has another coffee, she decides to sweep the house and water plants in the court yard. There is a cistern that catches rain water for storage. Most of the plants are drought tolerant so watering is minimal. There’s a few she wants to water. After that a decision is made to follow Perez’s suggestion and explore some of the ranch. As she is walking through the residential area she notices a man who looks similar to the one she saw in the blacksmith shop. He is fixing a decorative iron gate.

“Hello, excuse me, Amos...sir?”

“Yes ‘em,” a head turns, “oh, you the one living with Perez. You his daughter?”

“That’s me, staying at Perez’s house, not his daughter.”

“Oh, he say his daughter would be here one day. How can I hep you?”

“I want to walk the old jeep trail. Do you know which way I need to go?”

“Yes ‘em...”

“My name is Ariel, you can call me by name. Yes ‘em reminds me of slavery. Like you are responding to a boss man or madame.”

“Hi, I’m Amos, that better?”

“Did you make this gate? It’s very pretty the way the iron is twisted.”

“This is what I was working on last night, when you saw me. Blacksmithing is in my family lineage. Way back to my great granddad. He was brought over to this continent by the Spanish as a slave. Great grandma had the privilege to be a house slave. She chose to think of the slavery as a service to assist in the house hold. They became separated and many years later found each other in a camp on a Louisiana plantation. They had my grandma who became a house maid, then my mother eventually came along and was forced into a different kind of slavery because she was black. Her freedom was a slave to the times of bigotry . She was influenced by her mother and chose to keep her emotions on higher ground. When she raised me she insisted that I always do work with gratitude and as a service to others. She called it Bhakti Yoga, or Sava. This she said, was a sure way towards Divine Will. I was fortunate to learn the ancient art of blacksmithing. ‘Yes ‘em’ keeps my thoughts connected to a story or a place

with names as Stalking Man might say. I can be a slave to my emotions or a friend with uplifting spirits. This family who lives here will feel joy every time they open this gate.”

“Wow, so Amos, how did you end up here?”

“I saw an advertisement in a magazine about communities. Living in Philadelphia wasn’t very conducive for making an income blacksmithing. I would get commissioned to do artistic things, mostly metal art. I saw the ad and read about Chad Sr. and his vision. I was attracted to this lifestyle. Now I’m commissioned to work on horseshoes!” He laughs and shakes his head. “The jeep trail is that way.” He points past some homes and Ariel notices a road intersecting with the main road.

“Amos, are all of the little communities mostly emigrants?”

“Yes and no, Many people like me came to live here to be in a place of no borders. To intermingle with cultures and other ways of living. A new world state as the Framers call it.”

“Thank you for talking with me, I will see you again?”

“Yes, I hear you cook at the Cook House. That is good, we consider that as a kitchen with no borders.” He laughs, “many different recipes and surprises. Like Sumac pie, I bet that was Stalking Man’s idea.”

“It surely wasn’t mine. I’ll let you get back to your service.”

“Yes ‘em.”

Ariel starts her walk towards the Jeep Trail. She crosses the main road and starts to walk across grasslands where she notices some cattle out in the field. There’s a hay barn and a corral with a horse barn and a smaller building that serves as a tack room, for saddles and other horse related equipment. She peeks inside, nobody there, she smiles as she notices a stack of Amos’s forged horse shoes. She continues up the trail, crosses a creek and finds a rock to sit on, under some cottonwood trees. As she looks out towards the west she observes people out in a field. Looks like they are doing agricultural work. Some harvesting, some working the soil. They are dressed in clothes that seem to identify their cultural country. There’s people in typical western wear, some ladies in long Saris, there’s some with western wear and colorful turbines on their heads. The migrants is her first thought.

Migrants...but maybe I shouldn’t consider them as migrants. It brings up old identities from the past. Like I was one of them and now I’m not? Because I am a USA citizen? Humph, I sure don’t feel superior to anybody out there. That’s

my past history from many years ago. It got me to where I am today. I can connect with what Amos said, about service. Makes me feel free, I have no boss, I have no slave mentality, I have no illegal alien or otherwise identity. I am beginning to have a better sense of self.

There's someone coming down the trail from the opposite direction that Ariel came from. As the figure gets closer Ariel sees that it is a woman in what appears to be a plain blue house dress and a reddish blouse. There is a headband holding the thick black hair in place. She has a large basket. She approaches and stops in front of Ariel.

"You must be Ariel."

"Yes, how did you know?"

The woman glances at Ariel's prostheses, then into Ariel's eyes.

"Of course, everyone is getting to know me by this." She raises her clawed hand. "You were looking for me?"

"Yes, Stalking Man sent me. Here are some dried tomatoes and herbs that he wants you to put in the recipe for tonight's dinner. There's beans in there for a side dish. The recipe is here too."

"What is your name?"

"Lozen, I am Stalking Man's wife. Our clan lives up there." She turns her head in the direction of a distant high bluff.

"Lozen... what does your name mean?"

"It is from the name of an Apache woman warrior and prophet. I guess my parents had high expectations for me. Lucky for me, there is no one to fight, except my husband, sometimes. I can predict when he is ready for battle, but I am no push over. Maybe that's why my parents gave me that name. To protect me and intuit what's coming. I have learned how to defuse Stalking Man's anger." She smiles, and looks over her shoulder up towards the bluff. "Today, he says you will do most of the cooking. It's an Afghanistan recipe. I have to defuse his male energy. With a name like Stalking Man he thinks everything is his." She laughs, I have to remind him he is mine, too. We don't own anything but our truth."

"Said like a prophet, Lozen! I hope we can be friends."

"Yes, we will be friends over time. It takes awhile, many people live here, but not too many. My small clan of Apaches live up the trail." She motions towards the bluff. We grow traditional native foods, like our ancestors. You will eventually find different

varieties of food come through your kitchen for all of the traditional recipes from the many cultures that ended up in this place.”

“Is there a language barrier, or are we all expected to learn English?”

“There are classes to learn a universal language - how to communicate with jesters, emotion, and visually. I am sure that Stalking Man is talking some Apache wisdom to you about places. Like this place where we meet, I could say it in Apache but I don’t need to, just mark it and sit here when you want to meet me. Here we can become friends, this ‘Tsee’ under the Tiis Bitl’ah. Rock under the cottonwood tree. Or I can say, T’itis Bitl’ah Tu ‘Oljne’ - water flows inward under a cottonwood tree. Or I could say nothing and our intuition will lead us to this place to see each other again.”

There is a stillness, a slight breeze rustles the leaves of the trees. The gurgle of the slow moving creek can be detected. A few bird chirps chime in. They look into eyes of longing to know each other as friends. As sisters destined to silence the chaos within.

“You are more than a prophet, you are a regular Buddha!”

“Ha,” Lozen giggles, “I have heard about him. Did he have a wife as his equal?”

They both have a good laugh. Ariel responds, “you go tame your man, sista’ I have to work with him. I don’t want to work with a Sulking Man.!”

More laughter. “Go now Ariel, I will soothe his desires. When you see him he will be tamed.”

Ariel stands and takes the basket from Lozen. They connect with their eyes and hearts. A friendship is forming. Lozen turns and starts her walk up the Jeep trail. Ariel watches her and wonders how much further her community is up the road. She wonders how many Apaches live there. Family? Relatives? Is that what a clan consist of? *Can I just go there or do I need to be invited. Maybe I can ask Stalking Man and find out what is the protocol to visit their tribe. I wonder if there are any mixed communities. I saw five locations on the map. If they are mixed what language do the speak. I sure have a lot of questions to ask. I will sit with Chad and Elsie one day soon. I better get to the Cook House, see if Sammie will be there today. I guess there must be some Afghan refugees here with this recipe. Maybe I can walk with a still mind, at least part of the way.*

Ariel recalls from the map that by following the creek she can still get to the cook house. It’s a long walk, Ariel’s train of thought goes wild at times, and focus on breath brings her back to stillness. The sound of the creek helps her to quiet the mind. She is paying attention to the sounds of the nature that surrounds her. She is able to not think about the events of day ahead of her or the time she just spent with Lozen.

Thought does arise to tell her, this is good. *Where does that thought come from Divine will? Is that what Christine meant. I get to choose my consciousness behavior, create a new pattern to store in my subconscious mind. A place to go too when the mind starts to default to old patterns that don't serve me well.*

She finally makes it to the cook house. She enters and realizes that she is alone. No Sammie yet, it must be early. She places the basket on the kitchen island and looks for the coffee beans, pot, and grinder. *I think I will have a relaxing cup of java and look at this recipe. Afghan...huh, I wonder who I will see at dinner tonight. Let's see what we got here...Chicken Karahi - Chicken stewed in turmeric, garlic, and tomato sauce. Hum, cumin, salt, onion, coriander, turmeric, masala, black pepper ginger and tomatoes. Okay, coffee time, out on the deck, yeah.*

Ariel gets a comfy camp chair and has a view of the ranch. The familiar ranch house, distant fields of green sandwiched between dry grass and rock formations. There's a slight breeze and some solar energy that runs overhead porch fans. She is just being still, even her mind isn't racing. After a few sips from her mug, she places it down and closes her eyes. It's so quiet and peaceful. Her mind is drifting...

I am so glad to be here, at this moment in time and also sad. The old memories, when I first came to this place. I was just in a state of survival, not just physically, mentally too. Even now my joy can quickly turn to melancholy. Why is that? Is it the history of this land? All the conflict that I feel internally, what is the connection to the conflict of this land's conflict. The survival of the Apache tribe that once was here and then had to abandon this land. My Margareta and Aomo, became fugitives on the run when Aomo saved me from becoming a victim of rape, after the crock snapped off my arm. My biological mother and father abandoning me at birth, because they were too young and not in love. It is so hard for me to love because I don't love myself. What causes me not to love myself, what am I here for anyway. Why am I here? They said there's only two states, I get that, the beautiful state or the suffering. Why does it change so drastically? A wonderful surprise with Christine's visit, meeting Amos and Lozen, this walk through the fields. All of the wisdom these people share with me, like I need help or something. I guess I do, and I'll admit that, so why do I want to push them all away. Who am I conversing with here? My ego? The Divine? God? Damn I just want to be free of this ever changing mind. All these gurus, and therapist, and teachers, and those who seem to have all these words of wisdom. Do they ever have their moments of suffering. I'll bet they do, or how else would they have the answers

to live a “beautiful” life. I want to know about their suffering, like the blues the venerable artist singing and moaning, the audience cheering and dancing, celebrating the suffering of someone else. Because they can connect to their suffering? Gosh, Christine took the time to find me and come see me for one night. She loves me. Jenny, she loves me. My mother, when I left her, she loved me. “Grievances darken your mind, and you look out on a darkened world. Forgiveness lifts the darkness, reasserts your will, and lets you look upon a world of light.” She whispered that to me in bed... “Do you really want to be in hell? Do you really want to suffer and weep and die?” (A Course in Miracles)

Ariel is staring now at the scene of her thoughts. What has she created about herself that suddenly put her in this melancholy mood? Her senses come back to present moment as she watches a man approach with six chickens that he is holding by their tied feet, without a neck. Fresh blood still dripping a path behind him. He looks like a farmer by the clothes he is wearing. As he gets closer, the hat on his head, and lightly browned, whitish skin indicate he is from another land, not from here. He does not appear to have the features of an Apache. He is at the bottom of the stairs and looks up.

In halted English he ask, “Are you the chef? I was told to bring you some chickens.”

“Sort of, who told you? Stalking Man?”

“No, Khan.”

“Who is Khan? What is your name?”

“Khan is my father, I am Farhad, from Afghanistan. We farm. I will dress out these chickens for your recipe tonight. May I come into your kitchen?”

“Yes, of course, Far-Had? Did I say that right?”

“Close enough.”

“I am Ariel, I lived here once before. Where do you live?”

“We have a small village across Alamo Creek. We share it with some Persians and Desi Indians.” Farhad walks up the steps, “May I enter now, you will need these soon.”

Ariel opens the door and realizes that she has been here for quite sometime, it's getting late. She goes to get her cup, and she sees Sammie walking towards the Cook House. She waits for Sammie, “hello Sammie, I was hoping you would be here today.”

Sammie has a big smile, “I help. I wash dishes and cook with you. But my name is Samantha, Sammie is a boy name.”

Ariel laughs and responds, “Yes of course, everyone calls you Sammie! Samantha, there will be a lot of vegetables to chop. I will show you how to do it today.”

“I did that yesterday, I know how.”

“Yes you do, tonight we will chop them a special way. You will learn a new recipe. Okay?”

Samantha has a pensive look and nods her head.

“Smile, it won’t be hard.”

Ariel looks at the recipe again and notes that it is pretty simple with not a lot of flare.

“Samantha, you can get four onions from the basket over there,” she points to it, “and bring them here, please.”

She looks over at Farhad, he is very handsome and is intrigued by his light skin color. She never realized that Afghans, tended to have a lighter skin color. “Farhad, where can I find some tomatoes?”

“Ah, yes, behind the Cook House, you haven’t been there. Let me take you.”

“Samantha, Farhad is taking me to a garden?”

Farhad nods yes.

“Please peel the dry onion skin off. We’ll be right back.”

“Yes!”

Farhad leads Ariel from the kitchen, out a back entrance. they walk a narrow path and open a gate. They walk through a rather wide hedge grove that is a mix of Caragana, Allthorn (crown of thorns), and Rosa multiflora. When they get through the hedges they are greeted to a large garden plot with all sorts of vegetables, including a large bed with a variety of tomatoes.

“I am the keeper of this garden,” Farhad says with pride. A big smile on his face. “The thorny bushes keep the deer and cows out.”

“Wow, Farhad, this I am glad to know about. I will come again, after the food is prepared and see all it has to offer.”

“I will be here, too. I can show you.”

“Yes, a garden tour, that will be lovely. Thank you. We better get back to the kitchen, can you help me pick some tomatoes? A little variety will do.”

They return to the kitchen and Samantha has the dry onion skins peeled off. She is standing there staring at the onions waiting patiently. Ariel places the tomatoes on the kitchen island counter. She gets two sharp knives. She has Samantha's attention so she takes her hands and turns them to look at her finger nails. They are trimmed short.

“Hmmm, look at my finger nails, they are long enough so I can grip the onion so I can slice thin rings. Maybe I will have you cut the tomatoes.”

Samantha looks around, doesn't see what she is looking for so she motions as if she is slicing the onion, not with a knife, rather a slicer of some sort.

Farhad looks up from the other end of the counter, “she means the mandolin slicer. It's in that cabinet,” he points.

“Oh, thank you Farhad, over there Samantha, in the cabinet.”

Expressionless, Samantha retrieves the mandolin slicer, and brings it to the counter. Ariel adjusts the thickness, looks at her, “you know how to use this?”

“Yes, I will be careful,” she raises her hand with the finger tips curled so just her knuckles are showing.

This produces a laugh from Ariel. Sammie is giggling... “I like your sense of humor Samannnntha!”

Samantha smiles, “yeah, I like to joke.”

Farhad is smiling too, it warms his heart to see how they are relating. He is done with the chickens, cleans up the remains, puts them in a bucket for lord knows what...maybe feed them to another animal? The black birds and ravens? “Ariel, I will be working in the garden. When you finish here, come see me...the chef needs to know the farmer and plants so you can tell me what you need, just like Stalking Man.”

Ariel nods, “Ok farmer man, mind if I call you Farmer Man? Sounds nicer than Stalking Man.”

“Are you afraid of Stalking Man?”

“Just his name, I’m just joking. So far I like the men in my life...I just need to find a name for Perez.”

“Guard Man...that’s what some of us emigrants call him.”

Ariel smiles, and nods, “I like that, after all he does watch over me...all of us.”

Farhad leaves while shaking his head yes. Ariel notices a very light limp on his left side. Maybe because of the bucket he is holding.

Ariel shows Samantha how she wants the tomatoes sliced and let’s her have at it! Meanwhile she is sautéing the onion rings and garlic in a thick buttered pan. She gets out a large, cast iron dutch oven and some bacon fat, chicken broth and soup stock. When it is all combined and merged into a liquid, she adds the chicken that she cut up then the sautéed onions and tomatoes. She finds a can of Hatch Green chilies, chopped and adds that to the mix. She decides to make up chickpea dosas to go along with the stew.

“Samantha, can you clean this counter top and wash all of these utensils?”

“Yes,” is her only response.

Ariel makes her way to the garden, eager to see the garden, and Farhad. He is sitting on a bench, with a cup of coffee or tea, eyes closed head up towards the fading sun. Not sure what to do, she decides to start walking the garden.

Just as she turns and starts her garden walk Farhad senses her presence, “Ariel, come sit. I have some hot tea.”

“Ah, I thought you were meditating or napping.” She hesitates, thinking she should get back to the kitchen. She also is feeling an attraction to his energy, so she joins him on the bench.

“Here, let me pour you some cardamon tea.”

“I should probably get back to the kitchen, I left Samantha alone.”

“No, no, Sammie will be alright. You are here, with me now. We must get to know each other. I am your gardener. You call her by her full, sir name now?”

Ariel sits and waits for Farhad to pour her a cup of hot tea. “Yes, she asked me too.”

“Where I was raised, when I was older, the men would sit against the outside wall in the early morning. We would drink this hot tea and warm our insides in the cool mornings. The sun would heat our body. It was always a way to be still before starting the day. Sometimes we would discuss our work or family life, but there was always a time for silence. As we sit now, let us sit in silence.”

Ariel nods her head. She raises the cup to her lips but realizes it is too hot to drink. Farhad is aware of her reaction, “you can blow or suck in some air and take just a small sip.”

“You mean slurp...”

“I do not know slurp. What is that?”

“Never mind, I don’t have any explanation except that it makes a lot of noise and we want stillness now.”

Farhad laughs, then slurps, “like this?”

“Yeah, and it doesn’t sound like soft music.” She smiles and looks into his eyes. They connect. Then turn their eyes toward the garden.

“It is getting close to dinner, maybe you need to check on Sammie - Samantha, and finish your prep work.”

Ariel looks down and notices that with his trouser leg raised, he has a prosthesis on his left leg. When she raises up to leave Farhad is looking at her. “It was a land mine. Many, probably half of the districts in Afghanistan are mined. That is why we left.” He gently reaches for Ariel’s prosthesis, “you do well with this. Samantha does well with her handicap. We three live to be happy.”

Ariel places her left hand over Farhad’s and gently strokes it once then lifts it off the claw. “A crocodile did it. I must go now. And in the Cook House we will call Samantha by her proper name.” She leaves and they both have an expression of uncertainty.

Okay, that was an awkward exit. What was that whole scene about. I mean I feel an attraction. But what, are we handicaps supposed to take care of, each other? Now why am I being so cynical. God, I am warming up to Samantha, I love her already, and Farhad? It’s been a long time since a man has shown any interest in me. Was he, or am I fooling myself?

She enters the kitchen. Samantha is stirring the stew and looks over at her. “I cook for you. Watching the chicken so it doesn’t burn.”

“You are a lifesaver Samantha.”

“That’s for swimming!”

Ariel laughs, “yeah swimming, just like I found you swimming in the creek, without a life preserver.”

“I like swimming.”

Ariel mumbles to her self, “yeah, my mind is swimming right now.” Then quickly, with a full voice, “okay Samantha we better finish making the Dosas. You can go get the chickpea flour, you know which one that is?”

“Yes, it is in the jar. I will get it for you.”

Chapter 9

When Ariel returns to the home Perez built, there is a fire burning in the fire pit. A pot of coffee sits along the edge of the pit on a small grate. There are two camp chairs waiting for an occupant. Nobody is present, she looks in the kitchen and living room, nobody. Ariel decides to have a shower, when she enters the shared bathroom the door to Perez’s room is slightly ajar. She realizes that she is the only one in the house. After her shower she dresses into a house dress and goes out into the court yard. Stalking Man is seated in one of the camp chairs.

“Stalking Man?”

“Come sit, it is time to know me.”

Ariel pours herself a cup of coffee and motions to Stalking Man with a nod and a raise of her cup to offer him coffee. He smiles and responds, “no, sit, ‘Shil na’aash’.”

Ariel sits, looks at Stalking Man who’s stare is into the flames of the fire. “What did you just mean?”

“You are with me.”

The fire crackles, Ariel sits still...*what’s next, what is expected of me?*

There is a quite commotion behind them, foot steps approach. Ariel sits with a feeling of fear. She is recalling the men at Aomo's Amazon wilderness camp many years ago. To her relief it's Chad positioning a tree stump next to her and then sitting. He nods and smiles, "good evening Ariel." Along side Stalking Man, Perez sits on a chair from the kitchen.

"Western Apache conceptions of language and thought are cast in pervasively visual terms. Every occasion of 'speaking' (yalyi) provides tangible evidence of 'thinking' (natsikees), and thinking occurs in the form of 'pictures' (be'elzaahi) that persons 'see' (yo' ii) in their minds. Prompted by a desire to 'display thinking' (nil'ii natsikees), speaking involves the use of language to 'depict' (e'ele') and 'convey' (yo' all) these images to the members of an audience, such that they, on "hearing" (yidits' ag) and 'holding' (yot'a') the speakers words, can 'view' (y'inez'ii) the images in their own minds." Wisdom Sits In Places - Kieth H. Basso

Stalking Man begins, "There was a time when my people lived these lands, free of conflict and disease. The Creator gave us this place in the harsh desert to keep beautiful and to provide abundance with our right actions. First the Spaniards came to own this land, we fought in battle. The 'India' (white man) came to battle the Mexicans. We played the white man to defeat Pancho Villa , but then they wanted to own this land too. Soon we had no land to live so the 'Indaa's let us own land away from here, Cibecue, in Arizona with other Apache tribes and clans. There was a sacred burial ground, our link to our ancestors, our culture, land, and spirit. In Presidio Cementerio del Barrio da los Libanés, the Lipan tribe was granted historical protection for their burial ground. The day that Chad Sr. and Taylor found my camp was the creation of this New World Ranch. When I met him at the Pecan Orchard, he knew that my clans burial ground sat above the orchard on a bluff. It was then that he understood he did not own the land. He was it's keeper, to assist my clan with right action of it's use."

The 'bringing together' (dalahazhi ch' indiil) of cattle and horses from scattered locations to a central place where other animals have been previously gathered. Basso

Stalking Man turns his attention towards Chad Jr., "dad came home that day and it was difficult for us to get his full attention. It was as if he became an island in his mind. Thoughts floating in such a way that seemed incoherent to us but very clear to him. We were at the dinner table when mom finally asked him about his day. He seemed to wake up from his dream state. That is when he shared his meeting with Stalking Man. The vision was revealed of the New World State Ranch."

"Sorry, for interrupting, but why are you all gathered here telling me this?" ask Ariel.

Perez speaks, “there is much separation in our lives and on this earth plane. We all tend to have ideas that all of our “problems” or differences are outside of us. At some point we all need to look at our thoughts and how they might distort our minds. Our way of thinking that separates us from each other.”

“And so you all recognize that I have a problem to be solved.”

Chad responds, “no, you are connecting with solutions that are not rational thought. Your conscious mind is being expanded.” Chad looks at Stalking Man, then Perez, “we have done nothing to influence your perceptions of self.”

Stalking Man, “I told you that soon I would share my troubled mind with you. The communication between Chad Sr. and myself was visionary with little influence other than a higher frequency between us.”

“So what is your troubled mind?” ask Ariel.

“Resentment, stories in my mind that the white men are all the same. That the past behavior of some, the one’s who wanted domination over all other cultures, was inherently part of all other peoples of the same color, beliefs, and religions. That the relationships we have with someone must include their way of life. We Apaches that have kept the old ways of nagoldi’e (narrative story) that may include godiyihogo nagoldie (myth), ‘agodzaahi (historical tale), nlt’eego nagoldi’e (saga) and ch’idii (gossip) might not be understood. For instance I was told of tales that took place long ago, that Apaches emerged from below the surface of the earth. Our customs and how we hunt and gather are culturally different than your’s, Chad’s or Perez. Here we accept who we are with honor and respect.”

“So you have quieted you troubled mind?”

Stalking Man laughs, “I have a wife, and sometimes my troubled mind arise as my own ch’idii (gossip) about Lozen’s ways and manners don’t meet my expectations. Most often when,” he looks at Chad and winks, “biniibaa nagoldi’e” (seduction or sexual desires) don’t occupy the same space in time.”

Ariel looks at Chad for interpretation. “I think we will let that comment go for now, Ariel. It’s personal between my friend and his wife.”

There’s a long silence.

There is something that I feel bothered about right now concerning Perez. I don’t want to address it right now. Not now with Chad and Stalking Man, I can only imagine what Stalking Man was referencing concerning his

relationship with Lozen. Maybe someday soon I will ask her. Men seem to give it away, their sexual desires, when they acknowledge each other with laughter, winks, and secrecy. But Perez, what's he holding back from me? How are we different as emigrants - Portuguese and Mexican, 'your like a daughter'? His seventeen year old he abandoned long ago?"

The evening has ended, Chad and Stalking Man give us their good-byes and depart. Ariel and Perez are left starrng at the long shadows from the full moon's presence. Both are thinking of their shadows of the past.

Chapter 10

It's late morning after a late night. Perez is already gone and she feels relieved. She retreats to the courtyard and considers doing a Soul Sync meditation that she learned while at FOA in Miami. During the second phase of the meditation when she is to observe the slight pause between the inhalation and exhalation, she has a sense of why the pause. Her breath is an action, the pause is like waiting for something to happen, and the long exhale is the sensation of stillness before the next breath or action.

Now I take full breaths and hum on the exhale feeling the vibration, or am I connecting to a frequency. I know vibration is an action. Frequency like 384Hz relates to something that helps calm one down. The sound of a tuning fork creating harmony. That pause has meaning for me, like pausing before saying something, or reacting. Even considering the way I respond to someone, it can be with anger, or cynicism, or kind and gentle. My tone of voice can be a frequency that the other person relates to either with joy or sadness, love or resentment, peace or conflict.

After her breakfast Ariel decides to check out a small village near the main entrance. It's a relatively long walk, about two miles. She comes into another small 'business district'. She is smelling baking and notices a small sign on a porch post that says Bakery. She enters and is greeted by two bakers, Gloria and Thomas. They look up from whatever it is that they are kneading...like bread dough!



“Hello, good morning...”

“Hello, I’m Ariel, new to the area. Well not really, I was through here about fifteen years ago.”

“I’m Gloria, this here is Thomas.”

“Hi, Ariel, hope you don’t mind us doing some kneading while we get to know each other. You have some time?”

“If you want some bread, that’s what we specialize in, Essene sprouted bread, lightly baked...mana from heaven...”

“Or baked sprouted, gluten free loafs,” adds Thomas, “where you from...or what village are you living in?”

Ariel smiles, “I don’t know the name of the village. I’m staying with Perez, the Guard Man. You know him?”

“Sure, he is a good ‘guard man’ as you say. He is pretty consistent about checking out the villages, making sure all is good,” Gloria confirms, then ask, “how long have you been back?”

“A couple of weeks now. I am the chef, slash, cook at the Cook House. I knew Chad Sr. and Ellie, they helped turn my life around...sort of. I still have a lot to discover about my self and also this New World State Ranch. So what is your village?”

“We are with the Essene’s, some people refer to us as a sect or ideal. You’d have to research the history which goes way back prior to 500 B.C.. There’s books you can read from channels, like the book of Anna. It gives a historical account of Jesus,

Mary, Joseph and their family linages. The lifestyle that the early Essene's adhered too."

"Yeah, we are vegan's, plant sourced, no animal products in our diet and we strive towards a higher state of consciousness and enlightenment," adds Thomas.

"Sounds a little egotistical it's just a practice or path some of us follow and enjoy being part of. There's about fifteen adults and six children."

"Oh," muses Ariel, "I am discovering that there sure is a cross section of society at the ranch now. Before we were illegals crossing the border into the U.S.. I am begging to learn more of this place, Chad and Elsie are pretty much letting me discover things on my own. Of course I have Stalking Man as my chef mate and Perez...well I have known him from a long time ago."

Gloria invites Ariel, "Listen, Ariel, why don't you stick around, help us knead some of these loaves of Mana bread. We have some other bread loaves in the oven. Maybe you can serve them at the Cook House tonight."

"Yeah, and we can give you a bunch of power greens to add as a salad. That's unless you have a menu already planned out," suggests Thomas.

"Sure, I don't have a menu, and this meeting you two, seems heaven sent." Ariel giggles and ponders what she just said, 'heaven sent'.

And so she gets a white baker's apron and starts kneading. All three are smiling, Ariel watches a short time, follows instructions and the kneading continues in silence. After awhile Gloria makes a suggestion, "there's some loaves almost ready to come out of the oven. Thomas, do you want to take Ariel over to the grow house and get a few trays of power greens to take with her to the Cook House?"

"Sure, let's wash up and head on over it's the building behind this one."

"I'm guessing that these power greens are sprouted seeds? Like Alfalfa and what you see in the grocery stores?"

"Yep, I'll get you a variety, people like them around here."

"So, Thomas, how did your community come over here? It doesn't seem like you came across any border illegally."

"Actually, some people did migrate from Syria during that war time. The pressure of radical Islam was a scary situation. When our group of mostly Jewish decent heard about this place as a refuge we decided to approach Chad and Ellie. They

considered our proposal and understood that we are not a cult, just free thinkers who follow a certain discipline, if you want to call it that. Some of us had distant relatives from Israel, Syria and Palestine who did not want to end up in Israel. This place is safe, safety from a world we choose not to indulge in. So here we are, many stories, many in bodies... and one in mind. Sounds like the utopian fantasy. Take out the thought of it being a fantasy, and we live in a real paradise.”

“You make it seem so romantic...uhh, are you and Gloria together, partners?”

“No, I definitely have an attraction. There’s a paradox that I haven’t quite figured out while living in an austere spiritual community. You know, I might have, in the past, make a move (in guy terms) not now. I used to think that enlightenment was unachievable until I started to understand how the disciplines, a harsh word back then, keep me focused. I thought I’d gone crazy hooking up with the Essenes. And now, it has been a journey to never forget. Especially the studies and discussions of how the Christians lived even before Christ. It is like being part of a whole other realm of existence. However, this fear of how to approach a spiritual woman and still have the respect of connection that goes beyond friendship. You know, sexual... Divine sex...I mean Divine Love. Us guys discuss some of the readings about partnerships that aren’t revealed in the Bible. The bible mentions that women were created for man’s pleasure. The book of Anna by a channel I read has a whole different context about sexual attraction.”

“Whew, Thomas, I was going to try to get feedback from you on how to approach a man, not Essene, different culture and country. So now that you laid all that spiritual law stuff on me... well, let’s get the micro greens and maybe talk later. I mean, I don’t even know if this guy is religious or what.”

“Look for a sign. I should talk...maybe we both start looking for signs and meet once a week to see if either of us have a sign we want as confirmation. Then let each other share some signs we recognize that might give us some courage.”

“Some courage to approach our fear of rejection? Sounds like we are predators on the prowl.”

Thomas gives Ariel a look of concern, “gosh I really didn’t mean it to sound as such.”

Ariel laughs, “I must be hungry! Yeah, let’s do it. I’ll come by for some bread to serve at the Cook House once a week.”

When the trays of micro greens are picked and taken outside, Thomas has Ariel wait, while he goes to get a two seater, with storage. A three wheel electric recon bike.

Whew, I sure didn't expect this kind of day. Farhad, funny I would be attracted to a guy with an identity as a handicap person. Maybe that's a sign. It's been a longtime. A longtime just to overcome the fears. Geez, just the other night that small recall of three men, in the Amazon wilds...freaked me out when Stalking Man, Perez, and Chad entered the courtyard. Okay, that's behind me...a past that already happened. OH, here he comes with a cute little, looks like a Volkswagen Bug bike.

They load up in silence, take seats, with Thomas steering, "we both will be peddling. It keeps from using up the battery charge so quickly."

"Ah, this is going to take some coordination...Thomas. How..."

"We'll start out slow feel each others rhythm and see if we can compromise our different energy into one rhythm."

"OH KAY..."

And off they go starting slow, then about a mile down the road they get into a rhythm. A disciplined stroke like the pistons of an engine.

"Thomas, it's different, a woman approaching a man. The only thing the same is the attraction."

"I disagree, the obsession, the desire, the anticipation and courage to at least let your feeling be known, are similar."

"Yeah, yeah I get what you're saying. Thank you."

They arrive, off load and simply say good-bye, 'see you next week'.

When Ariel comes through the kitchen door she is greeted by Elsie. "Hi Ariel, Sam's not feeling too good today. I'll fill in for her. It'll give us a chance to catch up."

"Ms. Elsie, what cultural meal are we cooking up tonight?"

Elsie laughs, your the chef, your call. Looks like some vegan stuff for sure."

"Mana from heaven. I guess this ranch is heaven to some."

“Yes, a different haven for many, too. How are you doing with that? A little different than what you are used too?”

“Yes, and not knowing what little village I might stumble into. How to communicate when I eventually meet someone who doesn’t speak English. Then there is the issue of cultural traditions in romance...”

Elsie starts laughing for several seconds, face turns red and then she blurts, “you and the garden man...? Huh?”

Ariel is embarrassed, “the Garden Man, is that what you called Farhad? THE GARDEN MAN? Okay, yeah, he is handsome and handi...I mean forget that identity. He is handsome and well, gosh the garden he has developed says something about him that has me feeling good. He asked me to relax and join him for tea like he was accustomed too in Afghanistan. Elsie, I didn’t notice his foot until the end of our tea break. He was very ho-hum about it. Like he wasn’t carrying any grievance, just moved on with his life as his journey.”

“So you are attracted to Farhad, is that what I hear you say?”

“Yeah, it’s been a longtime without a lover. I have forgotten to accept that all men are different. I finally dissolved the perception and projections of men as an object to fear.”

“Wow, you are going deep on me Ariel. You sure you want to keep that OCD identity. Hey, what are you serving? We better get prep going.”

“I don’t know, we have garbanzo beans? We can start boiling them to the right softness. Then you can start trimming the micro greens. I’ll get some sorrel from the garden, and see what else I dig up.”

Ariel goes to the garden gate. It is closed, she enters and realizes that Farhad is gone. There is disappoint in her racing heart. She scours the garden for kale and spinach, a few tomatoes and potatoes. She starts back to the kitchen and creates the dish...garbanzo beans with cube potatoes, tomato and greens in a sauce made from the garbanzo bean water. Mana from heaven, and a side of micro greens on a bed of lettuce with a chive and tarragon vinegar dressing. A raw peach tart with a raw pecan/coconut butter crust. The peaches sitting in an agar/agar - cinnamon gel that is poured over the peaches.

The gals get to cooking, yakking, having fun being with each other.

As some laughter diminishes, Ariel mentions, “Samantha, has asked to use her formal name. Has she asked you to stop with the Sammie.”

“No, she sure talks about her duties in the kitchen with you. I think she has such respect for you since you honor her by just being with her in a most natural, unpretentious manner.”

Humm, unpretentious, that's what Farhad exhibited. Never even made a big deal about my arm. His look when I said it got chomped by a crock was kind of humorous. Like he did not want to believe my sarcasm but he didn't want to hear the real story either. And I felt his honor to be working with the chef and producing the crops to feed hungry stomachs.

Elsie is aware that Ariel is in a state of reverie. She quietly finishes up the prep work and the meal is ready to be cooked and served.

At the end of the busy night, Elsie says, “this was a fun night Ariel. Get to know this New World State Ranch. There is a lot happening here. Just so you know, the village where you are is English speaking and a mix...kind of like you'd find in a city. And there is a group teaching Esperanto which is supposedly easy to learn and can help bridge the gap between cultural language barriers. It is a new project that we just started. There's classes just check the kiosk up by the ranch house, if you are interested.”

They hug good night and Ariel is left alone in the Cook House. She grabs a chair on the front deck and sits, stargazing at the distant night sky.

I am beginning to understand more and more why being aware of my state is such a go to for self inquiry. It diminishes the anxiety and puts the focus directly on my internal thought process. Earlier when I was looking for feedback from Thomas, I realize he was actually doing some self inquiry. If I would have let him complete his train of thought, I wonder if he would have reversed the role and considered how Gloria might be feeling. Yeah, that was one of those meditations we did with Preethaji, compassion, feeling the other. What Elsie mentioned about Samantha feeling honored, and Farhad concerning his blown off foot...we all can feel the other in ways that most people don't relate to each other. Oh God, what a glorious night, look at those stars. I missed the night sky in Baltimore. Mom's room is ready for when I invite her to come live with me again. Isn't that what Perez mentioned? He built the room for 'your mother'.

Chapter II

No Ariel tonight. I wonder where my sweet daughter is. Maybe with Chad and Elsie? I could call them, maybe not, it's late. Maybe she is experiencing a nice quiet night. I should do the same. Ah, Bonita, my little Bonita what have you been doing all these years. Do you still have the beauty, retained by grace. The aging mother of our own folk lore. Illegals and now citizens, our secret. What is the desire energy that is so great that makes us want to leave country, family, loved ones behind. What were we running from...a relationship that wasn't working because of all our judgements and perceptions? When I was young I had no mentor, or friend that could talk to me. I needed guidance back then. And now as I am older and have seen so many people come through here, it was such a transit outpost. Now, there is such an movement towards inclusion, that this New World State has truly become a place like no other. My friend Stalking Man has showed me that with his stories of ancestral knowledge that this place was destined to be of many in body, one in mind. That some day a new order of people gathering and sharing will end all struggle. The struggle within our personal troubled minds, so that we can feel inclusive in each other's life. All sense of personal achievement, relationship focused on finding a partner or friends, creating an impact by a personal passionate pursuit all end when there is no separation one from the other. I understand that now and this New World State continues to progress towards a state where we are all interconnected with each other and our physical environment.

Ariel sees the silhouette of two bodies walking up the road. The moon light casting long shadows. They are walking towards the front of the Cook House. She stays quietly in her chair, wondering if they see her yet, or if there is enough shadow cast that hides her presence. They come up the steps and strain to see her as she is sitting about ten feet from the stairs.

“Ariel, is that you, still here tonight?”

She recognizes Farhad's voice, “yes, it is I, hello Stalking Man...and Farhad.”

“You are spending the night away from Perez?”

“I will return to my home, for now I was in the moon's embrace. I was admiring the stars. And I was thinking of Thomas from the Essene group.”

“We will let you be in your quiet time Ariel,” Stalking Man speaks, “we are here to gather some potatoes for tomorrow morning. The potato is best picked in the dark.”

Ariel remains quiet, not sure what to say. She wishes that it was only Farhad prowling in the garden. She would want to be by his side and know more of his ways.

Stalking Man goes in through the Cook House entrance and turns on a light. Farhad hesitates and appears to want to say something, instead he nods and continues on to follow Stalking Man.

Thomas - she was thinking about Thomas while I was thinking about her all day. How do I approach her now. How can we connect in an organic way? Maybe I should have stayed at the garden today, would I have seen her. I will deliver her garden vegetables tomorrow, and the next day and invite her out to the garden for tea again and again. I want to know her, I want to be more than a friend. How did Thomas convince her to prepare a vegan meal? That's what I heard from some of my people, my little tribe. I have no family here to approve of a marriage. Besides I just want to know if we are compatible, maybe she will not be compatible with Thomas.

“You have Ariel on your mind my friend, is this true?”

“You feel the energy, very good Stalking Man. Yes, but she thinks about Thomas.”

“Why should that bother you? You will know her, you are her gardener. Let your relationship be as organic as your garden. Now let us harvest potatoes.”

Ariel is walking down the road now, going home. She is enjoying the cool desert air of night. It is refreshing. *How do I approach an Afghan man? What is their custom? I wonder if he has family here? Was our meeting tonight a sign? That wasn't so swift to mention that I was thinking of Thomas, I wonder how that affected him.*

Lights are out, embers from the night fire are still glowing. The house is dark. She takes off her shoes and quietly makes her way to her room. She takes her tooth brush to the kitchen so she doesn't wake Perez. She finally settles into her bed and creates a dream state that includes Farhad. Connection becomes the theme of her dream. And soon her dream takes on images of Samantha, Farhad, her mother in

Baltimore ... the days that she has been here flash into the dream. Her time with Christine, everything feels so real. Her mind is tricking her, are these thoughts and scenes real or is she in a transcendent state. It's a restless sleep, in and out of a Theta state and Delta state. She is awake and slips out of bed. She goes to the kitchen, the clock indicates that it is three thirty in the early morning. There is a chill in the open kitchen. She drifts into front of the house, into the living room and closes the door behind her. There is a fire place molded into one corner of the room with some firewood in a box.

There she sits, alone on the couch. Here she can start her inquiry...*what is it that I want, I desire? Samantha seems to be free of the mind that wants to analyze and come to conclusions. At least that what appears to be her state beyond the mind...somehow connected to her experiences? Like when she helps in the kitchen..."I cook too!" Maybe she excels in visual memory, or her constant routines can act as an experience of growth. If I give her more to do and show her how I want her to cut carrots for example, then every time I need carrots cut in a specific shape, she will learn by experiencing a routine. And how am I living my life experientially if I am concerned about how what I do or say is perceived. I follow the laws of societal perception and projections. I wonder if Samantha's self awareness includes knowing that she is different than others. Yeah so her self awareness might develop slower, and mine is also slower because I might be stuck in one form of behavior that becomes a way of interrelating. Hummm, so what is it that I fear about being ballast with my feelings towards Farhad, and mother and Perez. Interesting that my birth name is the same as my mother's. So now what state am I experiencing? In my serene mind what is my emotion? Not being accepted? Anxious about my interaction with Farhad. With everyone for that matter. I want to belong to have peer respect. I would rather feel empowered, free from suffering. Yeah I am who I am just experience life, girl. At whatever speed I experience life, it doesn't matter. Enjoying the moment is more fun than the alternative of suffering.*

Ariel falls off to sleep, in the nice warmed room, on the couch, she rest her head and dreams a dream of a restored state of non-suffering, she feels encouraged that she recognizes the difference of managing the mind versus being free of ego. She is imbued with a feeling of resilience.

Consciousness Beyond the Mind...isn't that what the FOA was about?
Zzzzzzz...

Ariel awakens to Perez's gentle touch. She slowly opens first one eye, then the other. She squints, it's daylight.

"My dear Ariel, you had a hard time sleeping last night? I didn't notice you coming into the house. I was sleeping, I waited for you by the fire."

Groggily she responds, as she sits up, "I was at the Cook House just enjoying the night sky, with my thoughts. Some were grievances about my past, myself, and my fears of the future."

Perez wants to tell her. He refrains, it is not a good time. "I read something a longtime ago, when I asked God for forgiveness of what I had done in my past. 'Forgiveness means you have understood that nothing that is external is real; what is external is of time and therefore not real.'"

"Then why are we expected to forgive?"

"We are taught about sin. Here is what else I recall daily when I wake up to start my day. I have it memorized.

'Forgiveness recognizes what you thought your brother did to you has not occurred. It does not pardon sins and make them real. It sees there was no sin. If you could really know that, that whatever is external is unreal - as truth - then for the rest of your life, could the external ever upset you? And if it upsets you, have you really understood forgiveness?' My sweet daughter, I must go now, to keep guard. Stalking Man will be here today. He wants to show you another part of the ranch."

'You have given me a lot to ponder. Will Stalking Man be with you first, this morning? I wanted to go to the Cook House garden, to gather some produce for tonight's dinner."

"Yes, I will tell him to find you there."

"Perez, I am glad that you see me as your daughter. I never had a father."

"Someday soon you can invite your mother to be with you. When have you called her last?"

"It has been a few weeks, thanks for prodding me to take action." She didn't call right away. She decided to give it a few more days, not sure why she was procrastinating.

When Ariel finally arrived at the Cook House she circled the building to get to the garden. She came through the gate near the greenhouse and alongside the south side she saw Farhad...and Samantha! *Samantha! What's she doing here? Maybe this is a good thing, it might ease my tension since I don't know how to approach Farhad with my initial feelings of attraction. I wonder how Thomas is doing with Gloria. Our first check-in with each other revealed our fears of rejection. We promised each other to commit towards approaching our respected heart throbs. Although Farhad isn't exactly a heart throb yet.*

"Good morning Ariel, I have made some cardamon tea, get a cup and join us in this warm morning sun, soon it will be too hot to sit here."

Samantha didn't say anything. *No greeting, what's going on with that? She's not even looking at me, no acknowledgement.* "Hi Samantha, how are you doing today? Feeling better?"

She looks up in Ariel's direction, "yes, better. I can work today."

"Good, I will get some tea and join you two."

She comes back and squats down on the low bench feeling the warmth of the wall on her back. She blows on the tea and with a slurp like Farhad showed her, she swallows and is aware of the warm liquid warming her entire esophagus and upper belly.

There's a brief silence, then Farhad speaks. "We have been discussing our bodies, Samantha is sad because she is different than others. She doesn't understand why she has been born this way...with down syndrome."

Ariel stretches her neck to look past Farhad and at Samantha who is looking straight ahead. It's as if she didn't even hear Farhad's commentary. Without thinking what she is doing, she claws Farhad's clog with her bionic pincher and pulls it off his foot. Farhad jerks and splashes his tea..."what!..." Samantha looks and laughs, pointing at the clog as it goes sailing in the air and lands in a patch of collards!

"Bodies...all so different and they only serve us to preform the actions that we create in our minds!" She suddenly kisses Farhad's startled face, then leans across him to kiss Samantha who seemed to anticipate, with hope, for affection.

Ariel rolls off of Farhad's body, down his legs, and unto the ground! Samantha is in hysterics, Farhad doesn't know what to do, and Ariel sits crosslegged, looking at them.

"It took me a long time to love my body. This claw, when I was able to use my pincher to grab live lobsters out of water, when I was a chef in Baltimore, I loved this part of my body more than ever before." She raises her hand and Farhad spontaneously raises his exposed prothesis. Ariel smiles and looks at Samantha. You are beautiful Samantha, and a big help in the kitchen."

"You are funny Ms. Ariel. I like to cook with you. My mom said she had fun with you, too."

"Thanks Samantha. Farhad, in my mind I call you Garden Man, my heart wants to call you My Man."

Farhad's expression seems noncommittal. "My Man, My woman, sounds so primitive. When us Afghan men come to another country, a western country, we feel freed from the customs of courtship and our traditional ubiquitous ways to express our endearment. If I were to say to you 'Eshqem' my love, or 'Hame kasam' my everything, that is my heart wanting to express my affection for you."

There is stillness now. Ariel is caught off guard. *What is the sign I am looking for. Was I so blatant and silly that he does not know my kiss was real?*

"How would you say, oh I don't know how to express my feeling for you...my mind is racing..."

"I might say Janam (Joonam) 'my life, my soul'. I would call you Ariel Jan or Jigar-em, 'my liver' which indicates deep affection."

"I'm sorry that I acted so unromantic just now. I did not know how to express my attraction for you. I don't even know who you are and yet I have an allure for you. The way you seem to connect so easily with others."

"Ariel, the first time we meet, I was excited to know that The Garden Man was going to supply you with the best crops for your recipes. I invite you to have tea in the garden so I can show my affection for you. Let us get to know each other and see how our relationship might evolve."

Ariel looks over at Samantha, "I want to know your soul too, Samantha."

Samantha is unsure of all that has been spoken, she can feel Ariel's sincerity and she smiles and shakes her head. "I love you too Ariel."

Chapter 12

Stalking Man stops at the garden gate and witnesses the three souls in a hug, arms over shoulders and foreheads touching. He remains standing and observing until the embrace has ended.

As the three separate from the hug, and Ariel retrieves Farhad's shoe, Samantha looks over Farhad's shoulder, "hello Stalk Man!" And she adds, "Stalk Man is here..."

He smiles, "one of these days you will call me by my full name Samantha, Stalking Man."

"Stalk-ing Man"

"There thank you Samantha. Well, it appears that the Cook House has a loving kitchen crew."

"There's some tea in the greenhouse if you want some. Join us, we are deciding what to pick for the menu tonight."

"I will, get some tea first, then join your discussion. Tonight you might have a lot of the planters and harvesters come. They have been working hard all week. I have some Venison butchered in chunks in the freezer. Maybe a chunk roast with your produce picks, and whatever else you decide on Ariel."

She's standing with a shoe in her hand. She raises the shoe, "shoestring green beans sautéed in bacon fat, simmered in chicken broth and garlic."

They are all looking at her as if it is something unheard of. "I do have long thin green string beans," says Farhad.

"Southern recipe, there isn't an heirloom variety of such if that's what you are thinking, is there?"

"Yes, a French couple gave me some seeds. They live with the Permaculture community."

“How about corn on the cob, too. My clan sister’s have a large harvest of corn they picked today.” Adds Stalking Man.

Ariel looks over at Samantha, “our baker can make some corn bread.”

“I can make the cron bread,” Samantha says with the utmost excitement.

“Good the menu is settled. I will tell Lozen. Ariel, I want to take you to the Permaculturist today. Their village is close to this place. You will see their farming method and learn much more, how they contribute to this ranch.”

“Maybe you and Ariel can go now, Samantha and I will harvest the beans and get the Chunk Roast out of the freezer.”

And so that is what is agreed upon. Stalking Man can feel some of Ariel’s disappointment. He makes a mental note of it as they walk in silence. They approach the village made with many unique homes , some with earth materials, and some with reclaimed materials, a real mix.

“Who will we meet there?” ask Ariel.

“Joseph and Magdalen, they have introduced a lot of people here, to this ranch.”

They come to an area where there is a bunkhouse, a community building, a gift shop and a couple of homes. The village has some activity with children playing, some cob buildings being constructed (by a crew of neighbors) a few people doing some garden work. There is a large garage/work shop Stalking Man informs Ariel that they build specialized equipment for gardening...everything from a contraption that loosens the soil without turning it - to plows and tractors. They eventually come to a building at the end of the village, it’s quite quaint - stick framed with large timbers as visual supports is the main structure of the home that everything revolves around. Chimes send out frequencies as the light breeze plays musical tones.

Magdalen greets them at the door, “greetings Stalking Man...and Ariel? You’re the new chef at the Cook House?”

“Yes, I’m getting to know this New World State. I knew Chad and Elsie since they were young. I have lived here before...when it was just a cattle ranch, that temporarily housed immigrants.”

“I see, that was a long time ago. Then you knew the dad and mom, that must have been special. Did Chad Senior always have this vision of what it is now?”

“I honestly don’t know. I do know that they both worked diligently to secure a safe transition for illegals to become citizens. I’m not sure what they had to go through, I do know we were all so grateful for what they accomplished.”

“Come in, I’ll get Joseph, he’s out back. Stalking Man, why don’t you take Ariel into the conference room I’ll get some coffee brewing, or do you prefer tea Ariel?”

“Coffee will be good right now, thanks.”

They go down a short hallway and turn into a mid sized room with a long table. It also serves as the family dinning area. The surrounding shelves hold condiments and eating utensils. Stalking Man motions for them to be seated. It’s just a minute until Joseph enters.

Joseph nods as he takes off his hat, “Stalking Man...Ariel, good to meet you. What brings you here today Stalking Man?”

“I have been taking Ariel for a tour of the new ranch. It is a new matrix for her.”

“Yeah, I understand that you lived here many years ago.”

“Yes, I am beginning to know the layout. The several villages that have specific groups of people. I have been to the Essene’s, and where I am staying, is a mix of skin color and cultures. One of these days, soon, I will visit Stalking Man’s clan. I am familiar with the ranch house headquarters. Farhad has invited me to visit, what he calls the Mideast part of ‘Paradise’. He has never witnessed the different religious sects of the Mideast, getting along like they do out here. No conflicts, and homes that have been constructed similar to the desert homes and high mountain homes similar to where Farhad came from. And this is the Permaculture section of the ranch?”

Joseph smiles as Magdalen comes in with the coffee. She grabs cups from a shelf and places some cream and honey on the table. Maple syrup Stalking Man?”

He nods his head, “I appreciate your offer. Did you get it from the Cherokees in Oklahoma?”

“Yep, just came in yesterday. Some of the men and women did a road trip, visited some other communities, then helped harvest the maple syrup. They couldn’t stop

talking about spending time around the fire pit drinking shots of maple syrup and listening to stories.”

Stalking Man smiles, “I am happy for them. How are the other communities surviving?”

Joseph, “Good reports, they are pretty much left alone to live their lifestyle. After all this is still the good old USA, land of the free.”

“For some it is land of the free, for others, my blood brothers and sisters, the reservation is a small compromise since we use to live with no fences.”

“Yeah well that’s a whole other topic. Word has it that ICE is on the loose again, so we might have some government visitors.”

Ariel speaks up and shares, “that is one thing that the Framers made sure of, a strong relationship of understanding with the locale government. And Chad was a master negotiator when it came to the Federals.”

“Chad Jr. and Elsie have continued with the same pattern as their father and mother.”

Magdalen adds, “they also saw the need to regenerate this land. They saw the importance of recreating a natural eco system. Their wisdom saw how being strictly a cattle ranch wasn’t a very sustainable practice. Especially considering the human density growth that Chad Sr. and Ellie was supporting.”

Joseph, “yeah we managed to bring in some of our own ‘tribe’ and worked closely with other cultures towards regenerative agriculture. We all managed the abundant water resources, springs, creeks and existing wells and figured out ways to utilize them to produce domestic and native crops. Thanks to Stalking Man and his clan we were able to bring back eco systems that laid dormant for many years.”

“I am learning a lot with Stalking Man and Farhad’s contributions and suggestions for a variation menu that serves all cultures. When you mentioned about other villages, are they based on the same concepts?”

“Pretty much, with some differences. The main philosophy is that we can all take care of each other, the earth and share our talents without the the distraction of making money and ‘get rich quick’ schemes. It’s knowing that we have all the talent and man power to live an ethical lifestyle and all be moving in the same direction. The other world that lives with the conflicts as a result of misconstrued values, don’t recognize the value of what the pioneers and indigenous cultures once had.

Somewhere down the linages the worth of connection with people and forming relationships with the earth and nature disappeared as money, gold and silver became idolized as being more valuable.”

“When you appreciate more what nature and the movement of energy comes from, then nothing really matters. Matter doesn’t matter anymore...the creation becomes an experience of awe.” Stalking Man continues, “the Sun becomes a source of energy...more than just light and heat. It becomes an idol of the Great Creator.”

“Permaculture is about preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.” Magdalen explains, “We move forward to see the earth as it is, returning it to what it was, preparing it for modern use, still keep it somewhat preserved, and attempt to complete the rebuild to match what was.”

Joseph adds, “we do the same as what mindful considerations must be when restoring a historical building or site...this ranch land for instance.”

“I did not expect this discussion, I thought I was just going to find another food source for the Cook House!”

“The Cook House is a major contributor to this whole collaboration of preservation...preserving healthy bodies. Welcome to our think tank Ariel, you have created wonderful daily menus since you started.” Magdalen responds with a grateful heart (and stomach).

“Thank you friends, we must go now, Ariel, you will meet with Chad, Elsie and Taylor at the Ranch cafeteria for lunch, I must relieve Perez. Let us go now.”

They leave after hugs are shared. They walk in silence.

Chapter 13

Ariel meanders over to the cafeteria. She is very aware of the way the old ranch house and buildings have been kept up in the tradition and style that they were originally built. Even some of the newer buildings mimic the older, restored buildings. The dinner bell rings...it’s Samantha yanking the chain, with a big smile on her face. She approaches the cafeteria and finds the trio of Framers seated at their usual table. They wave her over and she takes a seat.

“Greetings Ariel, thanks for having lunch with us today,” Elsie says with much gratitude.

There is one more chair open, next to Elsie. Ariel is expecting that Samantha will occupy it. “Where’s the kids? Do they eat at another table?”

Chad points across the room, “with friends, we are expecting Perez to join us. How did your morning go?”

“Well, quiet good, I meet with Farhad, in the Cook House garden and Samantha was there. We had fun and laughter about our bodies being different then other people. I didn’t feel any resentment. Being around both of my kitchen mates has been very comfortable for my well being.”

“Are you noticing any changes...you know, anxiety?” ask Taylor.

“You know, there is...”

Ariel sees Perez coming over to the table. She never finishes her thought as everybody is acknowledging Perez’s presence. The food is served, it is a one menu meal, just like dinner at the Cook House. Today is Mexican cuisine, Perez is smiling, “this looks good enough to eat.”

“You eat anything that is sent your way Perez,” chides Chad.

“Hey, watch it, or I’ll start going to the Cook House and have my little daughter cook me gourmet!”

Ariel smiles, “I’m not your little daughter anymore, Perez.” It is meant to be a jest, the expression on Perez’s face says otherwise. “Just joking...”

Perez puts his attention on his food and digs in. Everybody does the same.

Oh man, what was that look about. I mean when Perez last saw me I was what...twenty-two? Little daughter, like the one he never had. Something feels creepy right now.

Elsie ask, “when’s the last time you talked to your mother since you have been here?”

Testily Ariel responds, “oh, I don’t know, maybe a few weeks ago? Why do you ask?”

Chad looks up and then over to Perez. Perez puts down his fork and knife. He looks at Ariel. “There is something you need to know. Why I built the house and why I am still in the bedroom meant for your mother.” There’s a long pause. Ariel is squinting with a contorted face. Lips pursed, “what, what are you going to tell me?”

“I am your father. Your biological father. You found me! When Chad and Ellie helped you track down Ariel, they unwittingly found my girl friend whom I impregnated. You are the daughter we were too young and scared to raise as our own.”

“Whoa, no way, why are you telling me this. Is that why you all wanted me to come back here. To find what...find my true father after I had a few other father figures in my life. No, I left that idea way behind me. I don't need you to be a father now. You're too late, Perez.” Ariel abruptly stands and swiftly walks out of the building with a scowl on her face.

Elsie stands, Chad puts up his hand and motions Elsie to stay. “Let her be with her thoughts. Just let it be right now. I'm sorry Perez, this didn't quite work out the way we thought it might.”

“Si, I need to tell her my story. Not now, I will go back to be with Stalking Man at the gate.” He gets up and leaves.

“Taylor, maybe you can go down to the corral by the jeep trail and just kind of keep an eye on Ariel... see if she goes somewhere.”

Ariel is walking in a fast pace and in a fit of anger. She is not sure what to do with her emotions right now. *I had my suspicions some of the things Perez had said since I have been back. Just the way he spoke it was as if he was leading me on, like I should have anticipated this moment, and rejoice! Hell, I wasn't rejoicing when I found my biological mom. Biological mother, even the sound of that gives me the creeps. Like I was created in a laboratory of unrequited love. I would have loved my real parents, they just weren't there to accept me. A mistake, a rejection and I didn't even know it. And who named me Ariel, the nurse to have a record? A name same as the one who bore this child. How unthinkable, and what in the hell are they going to do live as if they love each other...now? I wonder how long they have be in communication with each other. Did they discuss a plan of when they would tell me. Why did they wait? Maybe Ariel gave Perez reports, our initial connection sure wasn't easy. All of the resentment I laid on Ariel. Amazing how she took it, just let me unload on her. Was that her way of forgiveness, forgiving herself for her sin?*

Ariel didn't even realize that she was talking out load, shouting at times as if she was talking to GOD!

“ARIEL, my dear child, you are in a state of delirium!”

She is startled and looks around, she had walked or ran like a maniac and ended up in front of the blacksmith's shop. Amos is sitting on his bench alongside of his shop. Smoking a pipe, and was enjoying a moment of peace.

She looks at him with a scowl, "you heard me?"

"Enough to guess that you were orphaned. From birth? Come sit here, let me be your whipping post."

Ariel is emotionally exhausted and plops down next to Amos. "I wouldn't dare make you a whipping post. That will be Perez's punishment."

Amos looks at her, "Perez? How is that, was he part of your anger?"

"You didn't hear that he is what they call my biological father! What a thing to realize...he's not even Brazilian."

"Maybe, you need to hear his story, we all have a story to tell. We all have grievances and a past that isn't always pretty. There comes a time when we need to accept our part in God's plan for salvation."

"And who is this God that forgives our sins. Isn't that what salvation is all about?"

"Maybe God is a symbol of our source energy. Maybe salvation is meant to restore our spirit, our Divine self. A connection with our relationship to all of life. Maybe this body, this mind that we relate to is meant just so our consciousness can complete what it needs too. Maybe, this mortal life is just for receiving the lessons we need so we can live in bliss eternal. If we choose, it's up to our consciousness anyway you slice it. Live in darkness or live as light energy...dissolve into light."

Ariel takes a deep breath, "how come you started each sentence with maybe?"

Amos smiles, "maybe, you have a different way you look at your life challenges. Maybe you have beliefs that are based on knowledge that influence your life. Maybe you need to know compassion..."

Ariel is smiling now, "okay, you can maybe stop?"

They both see a couple of people walking with a small cart behind them. As they get closer it appears to be two women.

"Looks like they are pulling a cart of corn, you serving corn cobs tonight?"

“I forgot what we’re serving, that’s the last thing on my...Jenny, is that Jenny with Lozen?”

“Who? You know someone, the other woman with Lozen?”

Before Amos can ask anything else Ariel is bolting towards the two woman. As she approaches she slows down to catch her breath. She sees the big smile on her face. Lozen looks bewildered as Ariel approaches. She looks over at Jenny, “you know Ariel?”

“Yes, of course, a good friend,” she screams ARIEL yahoo it’s you!!”

Ariel is laughing now as she gets close, “hey Jenny, what are you doing here?” She has no hesitation as she pulls Jenny into her for a big loving hug. She pulls her head back, and releases Jenny then asks, “how long have you been here?”

Jenny responds, “I am so glad to see you. I figured it would just be a matter of time. I came here after I meet you at the FOA event. I had nothing going on and was looking for an intentional community. Then I remembered about your past and landed here. I live with the permaculturist community.”

Ariel is shaking her head in disbelief. There is a pause and Lozen is just letting these two women reunite. She watches as they hug again, felling that they have a special friendship. Finally she says, “we need to get this corn to the Cook House. Let’s walk and you two can talk.”

“So how are you doing right now Ariel?”

“Humm, well right now I am happy to see you. I have had a shocking discovery of my past. The abandonment when I was born has come full circle and left me with a feeling of rumination.”

“How so? I thought you looked forward to rekindling your old friendships here.”

“Yeah, well it’s complicated. Perez, an old friend built this home for me and built a spare room for my mother,” her voice cracks, “turns out Perez is my biological father.”

Jenny remains quiet, she just wants to listen now. That is if Ariel is willing to share more. She looks over at Ariel who is shedding some tears. She takes Ariel’s hand as they continue to walk in silence.

Lozen has heard the conversation and also remains silent. She waves at Amos as they pass his blacksmith shop. She groks the place where new things are forged

from metal. In her wisdom, metal represents Mother Earth's power to connect, protect, and heal.

You experience the results via the effects of your thinking, belief system, and values. There is no point to argue with reality, because it is the result of much rumination. It is like having a mold that produces a candle. You examine the candle and see a fault. You try to fix the candle. You shape it, you sand it, and you smooth it until the fault is gone. Then you make another candle, but it has the same error in it. So you must do the work again. You must shape it, sand it, and smooth it until the error is gone. This is what you consider problem-solving in your daily life. When you use the mold to make another candle, lo and behold, you have another faulty candle.

This is what most of you do. Every day you encounter problems that are distortions of the one mind of which you are a part, but you do not change the mold. The mold is what we work on here. That is why your life gets easier and easier when you choose forgiveness. Forgiveness changes the mold. In forgiveness, you no longer choose separation. *A Year of Forgiveness by Tina Louis Spaulding*

"I have a lot of blame towards Perez and my mother again. I blame them for my past, how could they just leave a new born baby, their baby to be abandoned and left to fend for herself. And to think that they named me after my mother! What was that about? Some sort of identity to connect with her troubled past. It took years for us to reconcile, and now Perez suddenly decides that we should all be together, one big happy family. And he knew I, we Chad and Ellie, found Ariel. So he knew all this time and didn't have the courage to tell me then!"

"My dear sister, let us all stop and turn towards the black smith and name this place. For it is a place of connection."

"What? What do you mean Lozen?"

"Did you find any wisdom there? Where metal is forged into something new, and solid, to last a long time. Maybe for eternity, like the rusted horseshoe found along a trail from one hundred years ago."

They are all looking at Amos's shop. They listen to him ponding out hot metal on the anvil. "What am I supposed to do Lozen?"

"Name this place, it will tell a story for you to remember."

"Maybe Amos pounds metal with a soft heart. Where the fire burns in the house."

There is a long silence. Jenny squeezes Ariel's hand.

Lozen repeats the name of the place where this story takes place, "Maybe Amos pounds metal with a soft heart. Where the fire burns in the house."

"I think we need to get this corn to the Cook House, there is a lot of shucking to do unless you plan to cook them on a fire?"

Lozen and Ariel look at Jenny, as if they have been rudely awakened from a trance.

Softly Jenny apologizes, "Sorry, I didn't mean to be so abrupt. Maybe we can walk the rest of the way in silence if that helps."

"Yes," is the only reply from both Ariel and Lozen.

Compassion, wasn't that the last utterance of a maybe from Amos. I have lived with bitterness for so long, it's a wonder that I even attempted to find my biological mother. I wonder how long they kept their secret from me. Perez must have told Ariel when he found out. Maybe neither of us found a way towards love as the way to heal broken hearts. I wonder how hard it was for them whenever they thought of how my life might of ended up. What brings us together now, at this borderline ranch. Borderline...how ironic, even though it supposedly has something to do with my brain cross wiring. Mayyyybee I have the ability to change my condition, if I so choose too. 'Maybe Amos pounds metal with a soft heart. Where the fire burns in the house.'

As they approach the Cook House Ariel breaks the silence, "Jenny, do you think that maybe you can cook the menu tonight? I think Stalking Man will be there, he knows the menu that he suggested. I need to find Perez."

"Yes, certainly," is her readied response, "Lozen, perhaps you can stay and help?"

"Yes, I will do the corn by roasting them over a fire. That will eliminate the shucking so you can help Stalking Man with the menu."

"By the way, Samantha can do some cooking or prepping too. She loves to help out, she's one of the new chefs in the kitchen!" With a smile and nod Ariel thanks them, "I appreciate both of you. Truly, you are my sisters."

Chapter 14





Mother and Daughter



Family

Ariel finds Perez sitting by an early night fire. Even though there is a couple of hours before sunset, he has started a fire, cooking an outdoor meal over hot coals. Some ribs and the sweet smell of a special barbecue sauce. He turns as he hears someone enter the court yard. He is surprised to see Ariel.

“Ariel! How is it that you are here and not at the Chop House?”

“I came to see you. I am ready to hear your story.”

“I am cooking a special meal, and there is enough for both of us. Can we eat first then I will tell you my story.”

“Yes, I think maybe we can call it a celebration.”

“There are some onion and cheese enchiladas in the oven. I have some corn cobs from Stalking Man’s clan on the coals, and beans, too, in a slow cook on the stove in the kitchen. There is a squash with the enchiladas, you can bring them out. We will let them stay warm by the fire.”

“Okay, I will wash up and bring them out.”

When Ariel returns with the platter of food from the kitchen, Perez has a cool Noche Buena waiting for her. The dinner is ready.

“Thanks for cooking Perez. It feels good to be served for a change.”

“I had an intuition, I should say I prayed that you will come tonight. That we could be together. I seek my salvation with you.”

“Something miraculous happened today. I feel different than before, at lunch when you told me. In my mind I want to make you accountable for all that has happened to me. I realize now what we both perceive as sin doesn’t exist, not now anyway. So why do we think a debt has to be paid? I know now that I have to release all of my emotional ties to resentment, and anger in order to be liberated from how I react to the world and people around me. Even those that want to help me. I resent their compassion because my perception or projection is that they are sorry for me, but they don’t feel my pain.”

Perez listens and shakes his head, “yes we illegals cross the border, and some people want to help, they don’t understand what it is we are running from. It might be our own fears brought upon ourselves by circumstances that we perceive, and we have a heart full of vengeance so we can’t even feel the compassion of another.”

“Ummm, Perez, you make the best ribs,” Ariel giggles, “ maybe you can cook in my kitchen someday?”

“Si there are a lot of Spanish here, ask me when it is Spanish cuisine and I will be at your service.”

The rest of the dinner is void of serious discussion. There’s more compliments from one chef to another. They are settled into a happy space together. The night has

descended and the staves are out, the flames rise from the coals as a log or two are placed upon the coals. It's time for Perez to tell his story.

"I talked to Ariel after lunch. I told her of your initial response. Please don't hold it against me. I reacted in a hopeless way. I didn't trust that we would meet on these pleasant terms."

"I spent fifteen years with my mother and it was not easy for either one of us. We finally resolved a lot of issues and in the end I received her blessing for this move. Did she... I guess both of you knew that I was coming."

"Yes, we conversed. She knew I had to tell my story. You see, my father worked in shipping, in Veracruz, Mexico. He was transferred to Ponta da Madeira in Brazil. That is where my family settled and I went to school. I met Ariel and we were with a group of peers. Just trying to fit in. We became boy friend and girl friend, that's what we called it back then. There was an attraction, mostly because there was an underlying expectation to have a steady partner. And sex was also a given expectation. Always comparing...the boys and girls, 'how was she', 'what did he do to you?' All of that was our world, our experience at the time. And we got pregnant. At that age it was 'she got pregnant' and I mastered the blame game. So you want to hold me accountable? At sixteen I felt no accountability to anyone. My parents never knew. Ariel was too embarrassed. She quit school and left home. She told you her story?"

"Yes, yes I understand now. The age factor and how that played a big role in your fear. That's what Ariel told me, her fear of raising a child on her own. And you wanting no part in it. You left too. Before the birth."

Perez is tearing up now, shaking his head. "Yes, I'm so sorry. Please forgive me."

"It is not easy...forgiveness as we are expected to do, to forgive thy sin. That doesn't make sense to me, it is forgiving a past action that doesn't exist anymore. It is such an easy word to say, to ask for, and expect everything to be settled. I can understand now how absolution doesn't really free one from the deed that was committed. The guilt and remorse stays for a long time, like a stain on a garment. It does not disappear unless the garment disappears from the wardrobe."

"Chad Senior confided in me that he had to learn how to be compassionate for those of us that he took in. Compassion is more than doing a good deed for another. What eventually happened, when he first met Stalking Man, is that he finally understood what compassion was. The fact that he planted the pecan orchard and honored the Apache burial ground was significant. He must have felt

the spirit of the dead. It is when he knew that he did not own the land. That to fight over land, beliefs, relationships, religion, and honor served no purpose for human kind. He changed, the children of Chad and Ellie will tell you that. Both men knew, as they sat and discussed this New World State, that there is a greater purpose to live compatible with nature and each other. Ariel, that is the conclusion of my story. My purpose is seeking salvation with you, your mother, and my self. How I will do that is beyond me. There is an energy source that illuminates at a higher frequency than my human self. I just need to let it have dominion over me, to let it empower me towards the enlightenment of what is present now.”

“So now I am ready to call you father, papa if you don’t mind. It is a sweeter sound for me to call you papa. I might still have my crazy moments when my wires get crossed, at least I am more aware than I have ever been, of what is going on and what choice I can make to correct the disfunction.”

“Let us not be victims of our perceptions or projections. I’m not sure what you think about consciousness. For me the field of consciousness is a vast field of knowledge. All thought is out there to become part of. In my mind what I choose to do is only a mirror derived from the sub-conscious mind or derived from a teaching of knowledge. I much rather create from Spirit. I created this house as an action to reunite family, our family Ariel. I did not know how the energy between us might be, that does not matter anymore. My experience today is the wisdom I have gained by creating truth.”

“So you are saying that consciousness or collective consciousness, it’s source is gained knowledge. You say creating something from will, is known wisdom?”

“Yes, I get joy from seeing this world through the eyes of a little child. Everything evolves around discovery. When I create I AM the teacher, and the doer as I AM. If I am the knower then I think I know who I am based on knowledge. That leaves me open to attack others or myself. I become a victim.”

“I understand what you are saying,” Ariel raises her bionic arm, “this can become a wound of the past or a wonderful creation...an addition to the body.”

Perez smiles, “the choice is yours, Si? You connect to gratitude or rejection. No?”

“Oh yeah, I have operated from a projection of rejection,” she giggles, “maybe I will change that stinking thinking!”

“Eliminate the word maybe, and replace it with create. ‘Create, I will change my thought... I will create my wisdom. What I discovered long ago was to focus on

creating experiences that I enjoy. When I came here I was suffering just like you when you first arrived. Hell, this world is not supposed to be about suffering. It can lead to suicide attempts. No matter how we come into this world, or what terrible thing happened to us, we are here to create the world we want. It's all theater a vast stage to play on, laugh, have fun, enjoy who you are. No comparing, no desire to be like some other image that isn't who you are. We create separation with our 'stinking thinking' as you said."

"Okay, papa, how long did it take you to not feel guilt about me?"

"OH, you surprise me with that question. A long time, remember I was young. It was years later when the real guilt and shame surfaced in my life. Especially when Chad and Ellie discovered you were my daughter."

"Thanks for not using the term biological."

"Yes, I do not like that word to describe you. I went into depression when you left. I was ashamed that I did not have the courage to tell you who I was."

"Thank you for sharing how you suffered, too. When did you let mother know?"

"It was weeks, maybe months when I connected with her. It did not go well, and you still hadn't stopped blaming her for your..."

"Hello!"

They turn towards the entry into the courtyard. Perez asks, "who is it? Come here by the fire so we can see you."

"Hello, it's me Jenny, "I wanted to give you a report. Then I will go."

"Come, come Jenny, I did not recognize your voice. Perez meet Jenny, my other angel. Christine's friend."

"Christine was here? I thought she was on a cruise ship." ask Jenny.

"Yeah, yeah she was here for a night and a day. It was a sweet visit. And now you are here to live! I am over joyed that we get to be together again."

"Someone is waiting for me to take me back to my place. The feast went well. Joseph and Magdalen brought the butchered pork ribs, Samantha and Farhad made the barbecue sauce. Lozen and Stalking Man tended to the corn. Elsie brought steamed veggies left over from the ranch kitchen and then there was a lot of wild things in a salad from our community."

Ariel replies, “we ate Mexican and I reunited with my PaPa! Perez is my father! We are in bliss.”

“Oh, I am so glad, that is the report I was hoping to hear. Let me have a hug, then I have to go.”

Do not allow yourself to be victimized by your beliefs. You are not a victim of the world you see. It is a reflection of your consciousness rushing toward you in order for you to understand what is going on inside of you. If it seems to attack you, look where you attack yourself or others. *The Year of Forgiveness by Tina Louise Spaulding*

Chapter 15

Ariel dreams...

I am not form anymore. There are clouds that I surf. I have no body, just mind. At least I see puffy cloud tops, a grey blue sky, and band of white light off somewhere to the right of me. I don't know distance. I notice a bright circular spot separate from the band of light. Either everything is moving or I am moving. I am in a state of bliss, all alone yet I feel other presences. It's not people just energy that seems to be moving like me. I have visuals of people from my life...when I was alive. Being alive was never like this. I want to stay here. I desire to end my human existence, I tire of the games I created, they are old and nothing new, like right now. Now is new and blissful I don't need anything else.

Lozen is sitting near me now. Waking me, she wants me to go with her. Where are we going?

Ariel wakes from her dream, she is a bit disoriented. She sits up on the edge of her bed and looks around, disinterested in what she sees. She goes to the door and swings it open. The courtyard is bathed in late morning sun. She walks over to the fire pit, some hot coals. There is a pot of coffee and a cup waiting for her. She looks over her shoulder at Perez's bedroom door, he appears to be gone. She ruffles her hair and raises her eyebrows, that motion opens her eyes wide. There is a well pump in a corner of the court yard she goes to it pumps the handle a few times and lets the cool water splash onto her feet and up her shins. Then she takes a couple handfuls of water and splashes her face. She laughs as she realizes that the prothesis doesn't hold water.

Okay, I'm still on earth. (More laughter) Huh, I think I'll have some coffee, oh look a danish that Perez must have left for me too. What a sweet papa! Whoo, now I have a mother and father, so I am half Portuguese and Mexican. What was that dream about anyway. Where did I go? I recall Lozen came to get me. Maybe I will go see her today. Wow, what did we discuss last night...sure did get some things worked out. Now if I can stay focused on being the creator of my life. Gosh, Farhad...what am I going to do about him? I'll let it play out however it's going to, he will know my feelings for sure. I better get dressed and start my day before it's over. (Another laugh - Ariel is feeling all-right)

She starts out on the main road, towards the jeep trail road. She sees a biker coming towards her with a bike pulling a cart. Thomas delivering Essene bread.

He stops when he comes to Ariel, "good morning Ariel, I'm glad we get to meet. I wonder if you want me to drop off some loaves of Ezekiel bread and Mana for tonights menu?"

Ariel is baffled, now she remembers this is the day Thomas delivers the special bread. "Sure, I forgot this is your bread day, I have been meaning to find you and ask how you and Gloria are doing. Did you get a sign, or better yet did you approach her about your feelings for her love?"

"First I have to separate sexual desire from the love part of the equation."

"You what? God you have too many rules to consider. Is it because of your religious beliefs?"

"Yeah, sort of that's the struggle in my mind. A real inhibition, I did tell her that I love her though."

"What was that scene like?"

"Well we were kneading bread and singing just having a great time. I asked her for a dance and we waltzed around the room...me humming the song of Mariam. Mariam celebrated when her tribe crossed the Red Sea. Gloria was smiling and laughing so I took that as a sign, that she loves me. Of course I was afraid to pursue the context of her meaning. That's next, when I get the courage. How about you? With Farhad, have you approached him?"

"Yes, in the Cook House garden that he tends. Samantha was there. We where all sitting on a bench with tea and warming by the morning sun. I know what I want and my love for him is happening quickly. I have an emophilia relationship with

some guys. It's part of my old pattern. I kissed him, I pinched off his shoe, threw it in the garden and exposed his prothesis foot. Samantha laughed, Farhad was startled then kept his composure with pure eloquence. In the end we both expressed our mutual affection."

"You are bold, Ariel, I take it that you don't have a spiritual belief."

"One thing I am finding out about this New World State is that the Framers have attracted quite a cross section of cultural and spiritual beliefs. I am what most call agnostic, however I don't go by using that identity to describe myself. I'm not sure what I am, what I do know is that I have perceptions that others label me. My borderline personality condition for instance, my CLAW...my sometimes wild behavior. More and more I am discovering who I am and that I have the freedom to create my world."

"I can honor that Ariel, I'll give you another identity to deal with...you are an inspiration."

"Your so sweet Thomas, thank you for that it warms my heart. I haven't heard that from many people."

"Hey, I have to get going so I can get back to the bakery. I hope Gloria is still there, and wants to dance some more. I think I'll kiss her see what evolves with my expression of, what you call it, emophilia?"

"In your case it will be pure love, a heart connection. You better stick with that so you don't commit a sin." She smiles and gives Thomas a hug. He is not startled, rather he is very receptive, and happy. He hands her a mana bread and they go their separate ways.

Ariel reaches the large cottonwood tree and takes a rest seated on a tree stump that was cut out with a rough backrest left in place. Ariel unconsciously blesses the tree trimmer. She is getting hungry, realizing she had no breakfast. She is about to start in on the bread when she spots Lozen coming along a roadway that goes to another part of the ranch she hasn't seen yet.

Lozen goes to Ariel, "greetings sister, you have come to see our village?"

"Yes, how did you know? Did you wake me this morning?"

Lozen stares at Ariel, "in your dream?"

Ariel is not sure what to say, she doesn't recall that part of the dream.

“I have some prickly pear jam, we can share your bread?”

“Sure, I have not tasted prickly pear jam.”

Lozen takes a knife from her pouch and hands it to Ariel who cuts the thick mana bread. They smear generous helpings of prickly pear jam onto their slices of bread.

“What was your dream?”

“I was just floating above the clouds, bathed in a white light type of energy. I didn’t want to come back to earth. I have had times in the past when deep depression had me thinking about ending my life. Not now though, the dream showed me what bliss might feel like. I was scared because of my past thoughts of wanting to disappear from this life. You waking me felt so real. That’s why I asked.”

“How do you like this jam?”

“Very good, tart, juicy and sweet, is it hard to harvest?”

“You have to be careful, especially processing the fruit. Small spines and a lot of seeds. It is good desert food, we also use the broad leaf, like pepper. Maybe next time you do native food from the earth my sisters can bring you some of this plant. You can serve the jam with bread and use the leaf in a creative recipe? Tacos or with some pork chops?”

“Okay, next Thursday when Stalking Man comes to cook with me.”

“You came to see Stalking Man today, yes? He is waiting for you in our wickiup. Let us go, I will take you to our place on this ranch.”

And so they go in silence.

After a short distance Lozen points at the road that leads towards a desert like area, “Farhad lives there, in the desert with the prickly pear. With the Muslims, the Iranians, the Jews, the Arabs, they all get along on this ranch, this place called The New World State.”

They continue on in silence. Ariel looks in the direction of where she will find Farhad. She feels anxious, her chest tightens and she is scared, she doesn’t know why. They finally reach the Apache village. Lozen stops, “this is where our clan lives, up there,” she points high above a cliff, “you will find him. You must follow the jeep trail to the fence gate. There you will see a deer and horse trail, follow it up to the top of the mesa then walk south until you see our wickiup. You will see him there. Good bye for now sister. Farhad is waiting for you this day, too.”

Ariel starts on the rest of her journey. She feels light headed, mystical and in a dream state. The terrain and this part of the ranch is unfamiliar to her.

What is it that I am visiting with Stalking Man for? I don't know what to expect. He did talk of his troubled mind once, said he would tell me his story of how this New World State evolved. Let's see Perez, Chad, and Taylor told me some facts. They all said that Chad had changed, there was something different about him after his talks with Stalking Man. I sure wasn't expecting this hike. And Lozen is seeming a bit mystical too, telling me that Farhad is waiting for me? How will I find him, I only know him from our garden visits. Those middle eastern cultures seem to have been at war for centuries. How can they possibly live together as one community. Ah, there it is, another hundred yards and I will be there. I sure hope he can transport me back to the Cook House.

She gets within thirty yards of the wickiup and sees him sitting in the shade along the east side of the structure. She approaches without a word, quietly she stops and observes Stalking Man who appears to be meditating, or just looking at the expansive view.

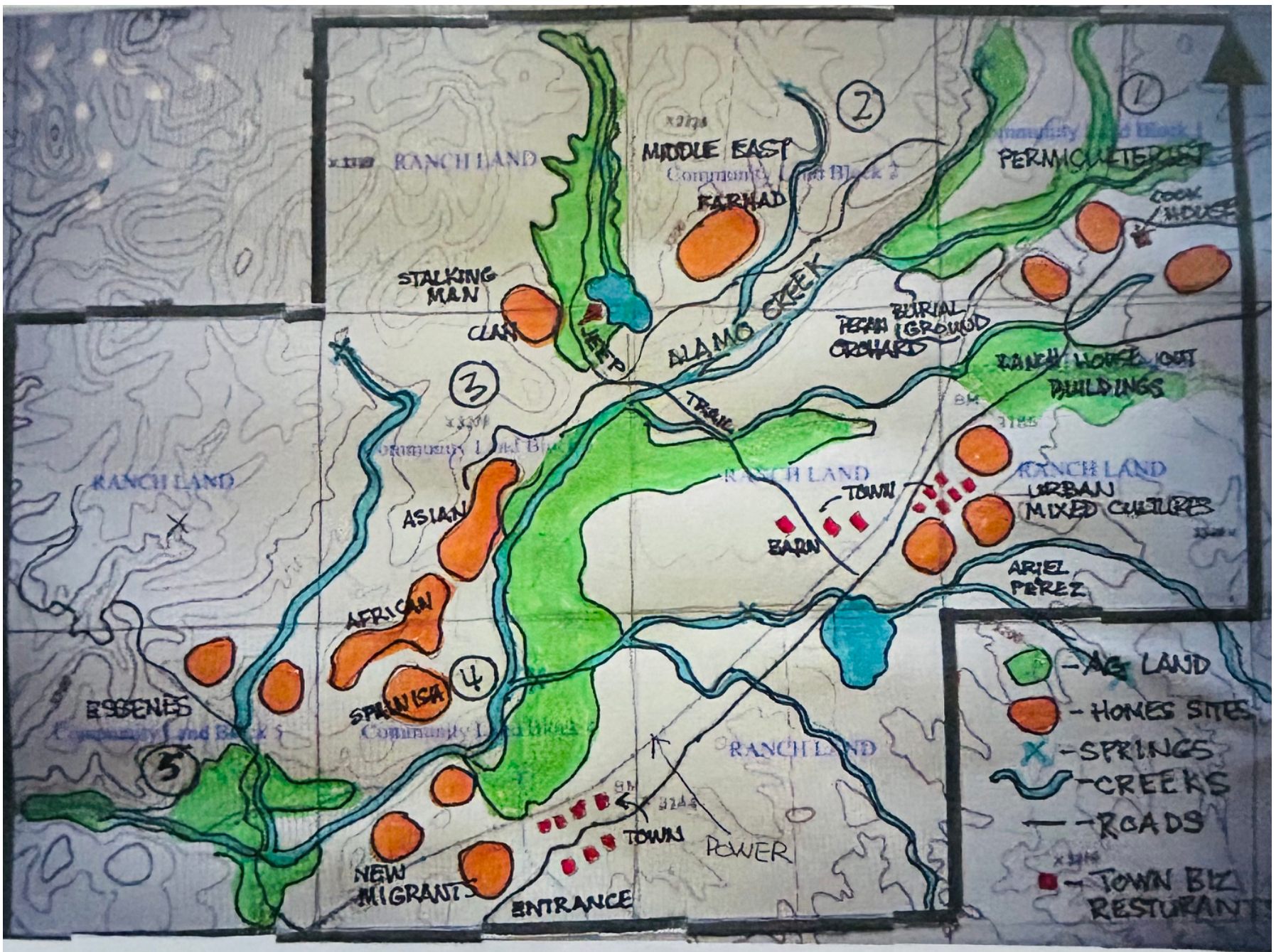
After what seems like five minutes Stalking Man speaks, "come sit with me Ariel, you have come to hear our story."

She sits and rest her back on the wall of the dome like structure. "Yes, thank you Walking Stick, do you stay here or do you live with Lozen down in the village?"

"Yes I live with Lozen. This is where Chad and Taylor found me. I knew they were coming, I can see most of the ranch from here. They were rounding up stray cattle that day. They hadn't been up here for a long time. I came here to be with my ancestors. Many were buried above the Pecan orchard. Chad and Taylor were surprised to see an Apache living up here. We sat and passed pipe, then we talked. Chad said nothing about me trespassing his ranch. I told him that I was watching the activities of this area that was once occupied by my brothers and sisters. He understood, then left and did not tell me to leave. He honored my presence on this land. The next time we meet he was checking the pecan orchard and the pickers who were harvesting. He saw me sitting on the flat rock out in the field. Do you remember that place I showed you?"

"Yes vaguely, you pointed up onto the ridge and told me about the ancient burial ground."

“I gave him appreciation that he moved the orchard. He said that our first meeting and understanding ownership of land as mans idea of power and status. He said



that his original idea of aiding illegal immigrants was typical of large farm land owners. Only he did not want to hide them. He was a good negotiator with the government. Now he wanted to do something that shared the land with others. I thanked him for that intention and we parted that day both feeling that we have been blessed to meet each other.”

“The children said their dad was different since the first time you met Chad and Taylor. He road his horse more often to different parts of the ranch. He would come back from town after his weekly coffee with the other locale ranchers and sometimes seemed disturbed.”

“The second time we met Chad was sitting on the rock. I had approached silently from behind. I wanted to visit the burial site. It was late evening just before dark. I would go at that time so nobody would see me. Usually I would follow Alamo Creek and come up the back side of the high bluff. That evening I was told to go to

the rock. Chad's horse snickered and he turned to see me standing behind him. He greeted me and asked to talk. He wanted to share his vision. He asked that next time we meet if I would also share a vision. We made the 'rock in the field, by the Pecan Orchard, below the sacred grounds' our meeting place. We would meet by listening to our intuition and guides. His guide was God mine was The Great Creator, so our intentions were pure of heart."

Ariel is listening to this description and reference to a source that is tied to vibration and frequency. She suddenly has a thought of Jenny and Christine, how they met and now Jenny living on this ranch. "Excuse me Stalking Man, you have said something that I need to do right now. I want to listen to the rest of your story, I do not mean to be rude..."

"You want to find Farhad and visit with him before it's time to cook." He is smiling, "I am happy for you Ariel. We will continue when the time is right. Lozen will bring you the prickly pear, Farhad will have the rest of your menu for tonight. Go in peace and love. Aho!"

Ariel is crying now, Stalking Man rises and touches her shoulder letting her cry. "There is a small mule waiting for you. You have walked a long way today, take the the mule, her name is Katie." Then he goes into the wickiup to contemplate.

Ariel has never ridden a mule or horse in her life. Katie has a set of panniers over her. She's more of a pack mule, unbeknownst to Ariel. Not sure what to do she decides to just walk with the mule, thinking that it might come in handy to haul anything she needs for the night's menu. So she starts on the long walk to find Farhad's home. She is strictly going my chance and a hunch that she'll find him.

It seems like the people that are most prevalent in my life right now are directing much of their energy towards me. What am I the rouge cell in this connection business? All the chatter that goes on in my head, even now as I walk so many influences that seem to have an effect on my being. Just being me is all I ask for and yet it seems so difficult. Like the scene in the movie 'The Man That Fell to Earth' the alien being that is standing in front of a wall with so many TV screens blaring at him. News, disaster, war, game shows, cartoons, everything that seems to matter and it doesn't to me. Now I have these connections that are encouraging...with The Framers, Jenny, Christine (I hope she comes back), Samantha and Farhad (how will this turn out), and even Thomas and Gloria. Thomas maybe he feels the same way as I do a rouge cell engaged in all the disciplines of being on a spiritual path. And then there is Stalking Man and Lozen, so who are they really in

my life, what are they providing for me. They have an indigenous connection, with the earth and another time, another space and way of thinking. How does this modern day society, that was so foreign to their ancestors, work for them. Even their ancestors weren't much different, protecting territory, warring (taking coup is that an expression). Even their man/woman mind sets...not much different. God where do we come from? The circle of life, maybe there is no circle, just a linear line, the flat line isn't that what happens anyway at death we flat line, nobody really knows for sure what happens. The NDE people maybe their experience was a dream induced state. A temporary altered state that showed them something of an experience that transcends the sub conscious and conscious mind. Oh, I think I am here, the edge of the ranch desert land. I see structures dotting the plain and a narrow water fall tucked into a low cliff. Looks like an oasis, now where do I go? I guess I'll stay on the path until I meet someone. Huh, Thomas...kiss her, kiss Gloria and dance, stay happy. I'm thinking of you brother...a scared lover who wants to love physically as well as compassionately and contextually. Oh stop it Ariel, you're not making sense right now, Farhad was startled when I kissed him, Samantha, yeah she laughed she loved the excitement. I'm sure she wants to be part of the physical world too, not just a rouge cell.

She makes her way into a more populated area. There are sheep, and corralled animals. Another different section of the ranch. Here is where Persians, Arabs, Jews occupy this desert area in unison with no conflict related to territory, religion, and culture as it was in the Middle Eastern region where they came from. There is a small contingent of Afghans living here too. They live up above the low ground surrounding one of the the highest areas on the ranch at about thirty-two hundred feet. They mostly focus on growing grains, nuts, apricots, plums and grapes as well as onions, tomatoes, beans, and spinach. They raise mostly sheep and goats here and some help Chad with the cattle.

Ariel is starting to feel low energy. It has been a long walk and it is the heat of the day. She sees a man sitting on a bench located on the shaded side of a building. As she approaches him she recognizes... "Farhad, I am so glad to see you waiting here. I was told you might be expecting me."

"You come during rest time, sit here with me. I have some tea in my canteen."

"Can I have a hug first? It is part of my cultural upbringing." She makes that up and dismisses it as a lie. It is more of a desire.

Farhad obliges her and they hug, Ariel kisses both his cheeks as an intimate greeting. He smiles and motions for her to sit.

“I have some sheep meat for tonight. It’s in the building here staying cool. I will help you with the menu tonight. Maybe some Kabuli Pulao - slow cooked lamb with sweet caramelized carrots mixed with raisins and toasted pecans from the orchard. The Prickly Pear fruit jam that Lozen made can be wrapped or stuffed into flat bread I have a recipe for Bolani my mother made. She used sweet potato but we have this desert fruit, so good. And we can have Samantha make Cardamon Chai tea for a beverage.”

Ariel smiles, “I like how you are so inclusive, you make the three of us sound like family.”

Farhad salutes with his tea, “oh...here we need to touch our cups, please take your tea let us salute to the chef and her helpers.”

“Where do you live in this village?”

“Up on the hill, near the highest point, there is a small clan of Afghans up there.”

“Do you live alone or do you have family?”

“I am by myself, in a small stone hut. It reminds me of homeland.”

“Humm, someday you’ll have to show me.”

There’s a long silence before Ariel speaks again. “Farhad, if you haven’t noticed I am attracted to you, what is a proper way for a man and woman to socialize in your culture?”

There is another rather long silence. Ariel looks away and towards the grassy field. Finally Farhad responds, “I think you don’t mean social connection. I feel your desire to know me closer, perhaps as a mate? You see, it is customary to go through other female elders, who relay the message unto the man’s family. And then there are chaperoned meetings in a group setting. Here we are, you and me in America and this western culture that is so different in these regards. I get to receive your hug and kisses rather than a shy bow with a hand to the heart. I feel your affection and I am open to consider a relationship with you that is more than being your garden man.”

Ariel takes a deep breath of relief. *Wow, I did it and he is willing to explore more than friendship. At least that is my understanding. I wonder how*

Thomas is doing with his expression of love towards Gloria. Okay, stay focused Ariel, now what, I need to respond.

Ariel reaches for Farhad's hand, it is warmed by the tea cup. She feels a little clumsy with the prosthetic hand. She looks directly into Farhad's eyes, "I am not sure what to say or do right now. I am happy about your reaction, I want to make this, our new relationship work...as mates?"

Farhad smiles," let's dance then, I will hum a tune we can dance and feel our mutual joy, and if you want, we kiss, I like your kiss!"

He rises up and pulls her up and in to his body and starts to hum a tune and starts movement for a slow dance. A dog barks in the background, Farhad howls like a wolf and Ariel catches his lips for a kiss and they embrace like lovers.

Meanwhile, in the Essene Bakery there is another celebration taking place, as Gloria and Thomas also dance with a mutual new lover!

'Deliberately and otherwise, people are forever presenting each other with culturally mediated images of where and how they dwell. In large ways and small, they are forever preforming acts that reproduce and express their own sense of place - and also, inextricably, their own understandings of who and what they are.' Wisdom Sits in Places by Keith H. Basso

Chapter 16

The evening goes well. Stalking Man showed up in a jeep and they all went to the Cook House together. Stalking Man prepared the Prickly Pear leaf, Ariel made the flatbread stuffed with the Prickly Pear fruit jam, Farhad did a traditional Afghan Lamb Kabuli Pulao and Samantha put together a Cardamon Chia tea mix.

When the 'kitchen crew' albeit the cooks finished cleaning up, they retreated to the front porch to sip Prickly Pear juice that was prepared by Lozen earlier in the day. The stars were out and the late evening cooler temperature settled into the atmosphere. Chad and Elsie came to join them.

The Gathering;

It's peaceful on the porch, there's a stillness that prevails as each person is quietly sitting and adjusting to being in a calm state surrendering to the sky. There is a borealis in the western night sky, lighting it up with magnificent color. Some coyotes bark in the distance.

Chad breaks the silence, “we want to ask you all about an event we are planning. We don’t have the entire thing worked out yet. We seem to get the inspiration when a certain energy flows.”

Elsie, “that energy suggested that we show up here tonight, after we came up with the idea at diner.”

“It was actually Taylor who came up with the idea. He was noticing how many different nationalities we have as ranch hands and migrant workers for the agriculture.”

“We all stopped eating, and just looked around the cafeteria for a moment. We went back to eating when Taylor nonchalantly mentioned the new barn,” Elsie looks over at Chad.

“Go ahead, Elsie, by the way Ariel, it was finished last year and really has only been used to store equipment.”

“So anyway, Taylor’s idea was to put in a floor, concrete slab, and turn it into a Great Hall. That’s what he called it. His vision is to have a monthly gathering of everybody living on this ranch.”

“Yeah, a big shindig with food, dance, and merriment. Beyond that a gathering where we do some interpersonal relating,” adds Chad.

“As for the food preparations we’d need all of the cooks, the ranch cafeteria cooks, including the cooks and chefs from two cook houses located in the villages.”

“What do you mean by interpersonal relating? What is that vision?” Ask Stalking Man.

Chad replies, “there was a famous area “Manitou Springs” in Colorado. It once had over twenty natural springs...something like that. Anyway it was apparently in a vortex of energy and would attract many of the tribes that would surrender all of their grievances in order to enjoy the springs and peace among the nations. It is close to The Garden of The Gods. We remembered this from one of our family trips that mom and dad would take us on when we were young.”

“You father had a similar vision when we would meet on the rock. He realized what this place meant. That was when he had a major shift in his consciousness.”

Stalking Man looks at Ariel, “this is a part of the story Ariel, and all of you should remember.” There is a silence, chairs shift, tea is sipped, someone coughs. “Let me continue, we named the place so as not to forget the moment. The Rock below the

sacred burial where all water flows to feed the Earth.' It was named many seasons ago by my ancestors and their ancestors. I was chosen at a young age to carry the oral knowledge of this land and pass it on to the next generation. The connection to the souls of the brothers that passed before my time connected Apache and my tribe to this land. Your father understood this. At the time he discovered the burial site, he did not know the sacredness of how we transition to the afterlife. He just knew that it was special to leave it alone. He hired an anthropologist to mark the size of the original site. There was very little disturbance, the man hired understood the significance of leaving it as found. They marked the site and fenced it to protect it from the cattle. I watched and the day your father chose a place for the pecan orchard is the first time we met, telepathically. When Taylor and your father found me not much needed to be said. They seemed to know why I was here. Later one day we met by 'The Rock below the sacred burial where all water flows to feed the Earth' is when I claimed a place for my family tribe to come back to, as keepers of this place."

"So how did the idea manifest for the New World State?" asked Farhad.

"It was later during one of our meetings, he told me that an Elder visited him in a dream. The Elder revealed the many times that this area was defended and the final defeat of my people. He showed your father the desecration of the burial site by those that claimed the land as theirs. Chad's heart was affected."

"My mother told me about dad's dream. We watched the changes taking place, how this was no longer going to be a transient place by temporary visitors. He arranged a special meeting with the cartel that would deposit illegals along our fence line. They agreed, for a fee of course, to hand pick people that wanted to stay and live in this New World State. Father insisted that the migrants would include a cross section of nationalities. He had already maintained his own vigilance with a small ranch army that was weaponized. Perez was the 'General' the 'Commandant' and he threatened to go to the local federal authorities and hire a professional military presence along this stretch of the border if the cartel didn't hold up their end of the deal."

"So how many people are let in now?" asks Ariel.

"Now that we have a full capacity of one hundred and fifty, we keep a population of about One-hundred twenty . That allows for some newcomers. However, we haven't seen many over the last several years. The border has been secured by the last couple of administrations. Some other time I can tell you how the rest of the New World State was formed. Do you have more to tell Stalking Man."

“Chad took me to your family’s cemetery. It was there that we consecrated our mutual brotherhood. Out of respect for each others position on this land. That is when he verbally gave up the sense of ownership and became a steward of the land. This is all for now. Talk of Taylor’s idea of a gathering.”

Samantha blurts out, “I like to swim where the water flows to feed the earth!”

There are many smiles, Stalking Man responds, “I will have Lozen come get you tomorrow and you can swim in the pond near my village. Then you and I can fish.”

He looks at Elsie, she gives a nod of approval.

“I have a fishing rod, my dad gave me a nice fishing rod and showed me how to dig for worms.”

Chad continues, “now that the swim day is settled, let me talk of Taylor’s idea. It is simply to have a gathering of the greater community, not just a party, also breaking up into groups of ten, circling the chairs and sharing whatever is on our minds, whether it is emotions, challenges, disputes whatever. Just a time to get to know each other. That is the interpersonal relationship part of the gathering. Maybe do one every month.”

Elsie adds, “some details need to be worked out, it’s the vision of such a monthly event that we wanted to share with you. Maybe over the next several days the three of you can come up with a menu.”

Ariel reminds Elsie, “there is four of us running this kitchen.” She turns her attention to Samantha who is still thinking about swimming and fishing tomorrow. Even though that is everyone’s perception, they are all reminded that Samantha plays a role in their lives. She has much to give.

The feeling is mutual. There is a quiet pause before people are standing and moving some hairs back inside. Stalking Man ask, “would you like a ride back home Ariel? I’ll take you and Farhad.”

“Thank you, I want to sit here for awhile and just absorb the completion of this long day. I’ll walk when I am ready, thanks again.” Everyone has departed and it’s just Ariel pondering all that transpired in a day.

There is so much happening and yet I am feeling calm. It’s as if my mind doesn’t have time to cross wire. I feel so present. Samantha was so present with her vision of swimming and fishing. She handled the chia tea drink so well, she was so focused and joyful to be engaged with her task. I

am staring to feel that type of engagement with life. My mind is not jumping from one emotion to another thought. My thoughts seem to be connecting to positive frequency.

You must remember about the frequencies in which we ask you to play. We have taken you up above the battleground. We have taken you up above the physical material world into the world of concepts, creativity, idea, and inspiration. Up there, everything shared is multiplied. Everything given away is returned to you because ultimately, there is only you playing with your own consciousness Here. Tina Louis Spaulding

What was that? Where did that thought just come from? Is it something I read? Is it from my Divine...isn't that what I learned in FOA...to surrender to the Divine.

Ariel gets up out of the chair, looks up at the stars, then begins her journey home. She passes by the blacksmiths building and sees the flame and anvil through the window. Amos is busy, she hears the song of metal being ponded. Amos's blues is what crosses her mind. Blues in a good way, a good vibration. She is approaching home now and sees the glow of fire outlining the top of the courtyard wall. She hears some chatter and stops quietly at the door to listen to the sound of voices. She recognizes several, Perez, Jenny?, Mom? And Christine?! She quietly opens the courtyard door and stands there not sure how to react, what to say, or do. She is frozen all of a sudden. The euphoria of her last thoughts seem so distant, maybe not true. She is starting to feel the old pattern, mind in panic, wires being crossed. Jenny feels Ariels presence, her aura and panic. She looks over towards the entry while the others are talking and sends a telepathic message...'breathe Ariel, breathe always return to the breath. Come on, do it!'

Ariel approaches..."mom, dad? Christine! How, when did you get here?" It is said with urgency in her voice.

Heads turn, Perez feels her shock, "my sweet daughter, please join us for our reunion."

If you keep your love to yourself, it is a lonely journey. If you share your love and give your love for beauty, children, flowers, or cooking — you love many things, and you give those things away — you really reap the harvest of that wonderful multiplication. Spaulding

There it is again, the inner voice, it's not mine...who are you? Are you of the mind or the light...Divine is that you?

Christine stands walks over the short distance to Ariel who is startled to see her. She embraces Ariel and whispers in her ear, "it's all right, it's all good sweetheart. We love you, that's why we are here waiting for your love to return to it's rightful place."

She takes Ariel by the hand, they stand by the fire pit.

Ariel looks around and takes in the scene. Finally she speaks, "Mother and Father, I never would have thought. All these years I have resented the both of you. Now that I know your stories, I am happy to see you together. Is it going to work out? Will we be family?"

Perez and momma Ariel look at each other. Ariel speaks, "we have thirty-five years of separation to muddle through. We never had time to know who we were now we have to find our commonality and it's not because of you."

Perez speaks, "we realize our entanglement with our past, the future is what it's going to be. Right now, presently, we found us, our family together. Bound by compassionate hearts, I hope."

There's a stillness, Ariel begins to cry, the sobs turn into heaves of great emotional release. She drops to her knees, and bows her head, letting all the emotion of the past exit her body. When she is finished and is handed a handkerchief to blow her nose, she begins to laugh and looks up, into the amused eyes of everybody. Smiles start to emerge, there are two sets of arms lifting her up and she finds herself in a circle of friendship and love. Jenny tells her, "you don't have to say anything dear, we can feel your presence."

Ariel, nods and laughs, "Oh my God!" She takes a deep breath and lets out an exasperated sigh. "I am so glad, so fortunate that this day has come."

Jenny - It's amazing when we understand the frequency of light. When all form is dissolved into light. We become that one consciousness of pure energy. We rise above the ego, the darkness, all thought that doesn't serve. We live in a reality that is love beyond anything we ever experienced as love in a material world. Ariel calls us her angels, really the synchronistic occurrences that show up, the abundance of God's grace in our lives, the connections that manifest all of that is the angel effect. To open up to limitless conscious thought sends out a vibration and frequency of giving and receiving love as light energy, a state of mind, as Krishnaji and Preethaji adamantly teaches to those who come in contact with their teachings.

Stalking Man and Lozen - He shouts out to Lozen, “come my love, come sit by the fire with me tonight.”

She emerges from the wickiup with a smile. “The blankets and deer hides are made. We have a nice bed for our love making. I have smudged the area.” She sits and snuggles up to Stalking Man.

“Look at the night fires, there is a glow from the Essene’s enclave, and from where Perez and Ariel live. There is Amos’s place he works at night often.”

Lozen is also aware of the glow from night fires. It is very unusual to see so many, “Over there, the top of the ridge where Farhad’s clan of Afghan’s live and even out in the field of the Permaculture farm.”

Stalking Man squeezes Lozen, “look, over by our ancestors burial ground!”

Stalking Man - This is a special night, a lot of giving and receiving will bring a sense of oneness across this land. We will consecrate new relationships this night. Lozen and I will set an intention for this physical love to become a unified consciousness tonight. It will be strong medicine for this place, for the New World State.

The Rock below the sacred burial where all water flows to feed the Earth.

They set up camp there, three small tents around a fire pit. Chad and Taylor, meeting there to spend a night of not just reminiscing, rather to continue the story.

Elsie, Jacob, Bud and Samantha are roasting marshmallows at their fire pit, under the milky way...the night sky is brilliant. Bud is putting a few marshmallows on his skewering stick.

“Bud! I am the chef, I will cook your marshmallows. How do you want them? Burnt or browned?”

“Huh? You don’t have to be a chef to roast marshmallows.”

“Bud, Samantha is a gourmet roaster, she needs practice for the big barn gathering.” Is the quick response from Elsie. Jacob looks over at them, then at Elsie. Eyebrows furrowed, lips pursed, eyes looking in the distance.

“What is it my darling? You sensing something?”

Startled as if out of a dream she says, “yes Jacob, I am wanting to go sit by the Rock below the sacred burial where all water flows to feed the Earth.”

“Yeah, you mean the rock by the Pecan orchard.”

“Please, none of your cynicism now, not now. I got a hunch Chad and Taylor are there. I think it’s going to be story night.”

“Okay, I got this with Bud and Samm...Samantha. She is the chef, for sure.”

Elsie sees the fire pit glowing and three small one person tents set up. A regular campsite. She feels an excitement. “Good night brothers, you are here!”

“Hello Elsie, we knew you’d show up,” states Chad.

“You got Jacob with the kids?” replies Taylor.

Elsie walks by the empty tent and drops off her day pack. “Yes I do, he kind of sensed that I was already here with you. I am so glad that we are to... gather, if you get the jest!”

“Yep, a lot to discuss about the gathering, although tonight we are going to finish the story. This is the place of dad’s and Stalking Man’s wisdom. The vision made whole,” Chad reminds his brother and sister.

“I’d like to start since I was with him the day we found Stalking Man up there in Section 5 of the ranch. As we road back to the ranch house he stopped by this flat rock. Right here where we are tonight. Funny if I recall that night was a full moon. Tonight we have our harvest moon. Look at that, up there...”

They all look up and it is a larger moon than normally seen, orange in color.

“Full moon generally brings on change,” contributes Elsie.

“Yea, so we stopped here and dismounted. Tied our horses to that scrub oak over there. It’s bigger now, still here as a memory that I recall so well. So, anyway, we hadn’t said a word from when we left Stalking Man. Now dad sits down and pats a place next to him for me to sit. He said, ‘Taylor, I’ve been thinking, there’s going to be some major changes to make.’ And I asked him, ‘what do you mean? We own this land no matter what that Apache said.’ He looked at me his eyes were distant.

Then he seemed to softly mumble, I heard him say, ‘Taylor, there are two kinds of energy light energy and dark energy. In light energy you serve others, you consider the whole existence of mankind. In dark energy the ego has it’s say, it serves only the self.’ I told him that he and mom have been serving others for a longtime. He agreed then he said something about the future, which is basically going on right now. He said, ‘just as Stalking Man has a vision of this place (*The Rock below the sacred burial where all water flows to feed the Earth.*) that his people once occupied, I see a world where the light energy and dark energy is so apparent that people are choosing what kind of reality they want to be part of. One tied to the earth’s regeneration or one tied to the earth’s destruction. One defined by consideration for another’s welfare and being, or the dark energy defined by competition and nationalistic pride and wealth for the few, and war necessitated to protect that wealth.’ I might not have the exact words or description that he used. I was younger back then, so I didn’t quite grasp his meaning. It’s pretty clear now what he meant.”

Chad speaks, “remember when he took that trip all the way to Montana, and he visited the Sawtooth Ranch community. He stopped at several intentional communities on the way. They all had one thing in common, living in a resilient community committed to interpersonal relationships.”

“Yes, mom realized that there would be a lot of nurturing mind sets that were so accustomed to ego self. That will be the main highlight of The Gathering. People working on inner conflict, so that all of the cultures and beliefs that reside on this ranch can maintain a status quo of true brotherhood and sisterhood.” Elsie adds.

“Anyway, let me get back to the story. Apparently dad met a Crow Medicine Man and Medicine Woman in that Montana community. What he saw first hand was their clan living amongst the other community members. The original owner of the ranch relinquished ownership, was married to the Medicine Man and the community flourished, still linked to the big city dwellers by way of a dude ranch health retreat business. Permaculture methodology was the premiss of community and they even had converted an old barn dedicated to group and personal processing or psychological healing.”

Ariel - I now realize that my mind abides in a state of duality. My ideas and beliefs often conflict with each other. I am so use to thinking that it’s some kind of wires crossing in my brain. That is when my erratic behavior kicks in, now I can see that it is my state of mind.

“I am so glad that you showed up this night Jenny, and Christine what a surprise. Just your presence has eased any tension that I brought to this reunion of Ariel and Perez...my mother and father. I need to be excused now. I am going to visit Farhad, this night of the harvest moon.”

Everyone looks up at the big, bright, orange moon!

He is waiting on a bench, along the road, where the sheep meat was stored earlier today. He has a fresh pot of coffee, and two mugs. He'll wait until his guest arrives. He is sure she somehow got his signal. Maybe it was his fire high on the ridge, or maybe it was something said during the evening while they were preparing and serving the meal, maybe it was the kiss, his willingness to receive it. Maybe, and this is what he believes (or knows?) to be true, maybe she picked up on the frequency...the harvest moon. A direct message from the Garden Man.

Ariel walks past the blacksmith shop. Fire is still flickering in there. On the front porch Amos is waiting for her. He has something, and he knows that Ariel will pass his shop. There's movement coming from the shadows to his left, his peripheral vision sees it, “Ariel my sweet one, come here, sit with me for awhile.”

Ariel is at first startled, then the resounding, deep voice is recognized, “Amos, you startled me.”

She slowly walks over to the front of the building. Not sure how to respond to Amos's greeting and demand. Is that what it was a demand, or a request? Coming from Amos she reconciles that it is a request. “I will sit, not for long, I am on my journey.”

“Yes, I know, and maybe I am a part of your journey.”

Ariel laughs, “there you go again with your ‘maybes’. Do you ever make a statement?”

She sits, “what is it Amos? What do you have for me?”

“Take this with you, it's for Farhad.”

She receives a small bronze statue of two lovers entwined. She looks at the detail, it's a woman with one hand, what appears to be a prosthetic claw on the man's back. She follows the torso of the man downward and one foot is missing. The leg stops midway down the shin, a jagged edge is all that's there.

“The light isn't bright enough to see the detail of the faces, I presume it to be Farhad and I embraced in a kiss.”

“Yes, he wanted this for the Cook House Garden. I think you found your mate in this lifetime Ariel. Ah, a statement for you... You will meet your true lover this night.”

Ariel is not sure what to make of this bronze replica. “What makes you think he will have me as a lover? Maybe, just a friend, a deep relationship, perhaps.”

“There are no ‘maybes’ in a statement. You are out of touch with your reality. You are out in the night, of a harvest moon. Soon you will be at the big cottonwood where you gathered corn, then you will be in the village where you gathered the sheep meat. He is waiting for you there. You want him tonight and forever. There is no duality in what you truly desire. It is part of God’s plan that you forgive the world, and that your salvation is your purpose. You have done that tonight, once already. Now you go, and find your salvation in him. He has been waiting for you.”

Ariel stands, bends over and gives Amos a kiss on his forehead. She slowly backs away, “thank you Amos for being here for me.”

I wonder how many more angels will show up in my life. What was that saying in Miami...be in the flow of life. Accept it, and know that for every reason there is a time to be happy or sad, anxious or calm, a state of suffering or a state of beauty. I walk this path now and my past is faded memory, insignificant to the present bliss and happiness I feel.

Chad speaks, “apparently there was a couple and an older Crow Medicine Man who set in motion the making of that community in Montana. I remember a conversation with mom and dad once, we were having coffee at their kitchen table. They both felt that Ariel was going to be back here someday. Dad told me to tell Perez to be patient and let Ariel get to a place where she could forgive the errors of her past. It was hard on Perez when he found out that Ariel was his daughter. He too had to overcome the pain and shame of his past.”

“It’s kind of circumstantial that a ranch community in Montana has similarities to our New World State.” Is Taylor’s observation.

“Mom wanted to make sure that Ariel was to be the chef at the Cook House, way before Ariel asked to return. She had this premonition for Ariels return and what it might mean for our on going project. It’s beautiful how someone we think we are helping actually can have a reverse impact on our lives. We receive so much wisdom if we are not meeting them from an ego state that we are better than them. The

night I spent in the kitchen with Ariel when we reunited, was special. She talked about her relationship forming with Samantha. About Stalking Man and Farhad the Cook House core. That was probably part of his vision. Would you say so Taylor?”

“That day on the rock with him, wasn’t clear to me then. Now that we are here together telling story, it all makes sense.”

“Look!” says Chad, “look up at the harvest moon, you see those two shooting stars.”

Epilogue

Resilient relationships seem to last, not based on past history. Rather they last because the participants keep moving forward in a constructive way. They recognize how life flows. They are determined to work out their differences knowing that all conflict starts within the self. Many In Body, is all of us, striving for salvation from the ego self. One In Mind is in reference towards an intention to feel the other. That is the work that we are all here to accomplish.

Ariel -There are two distinct worlds that I live in. One is what most consider the real world. The events of the “real world” seem to mimic the past, like Ground Hog Day. The other is what I experience when I connect to a source energy that is in the flow of life. Synchronistic events occur, people (angels?) show up to help, love flows in the ethers, it’s easy to move from suffering to beautiful states.

‘ When you forgive the world and understand why you forgive it — because it is a projection of your mind playing out for you to see the unloving parts of your mind — you understand why you forgive. You understand that your part in salvation is very important, because you help manufacture a dangerous and violent world when you have unloving thoughts in your mind. So your part in salvation is very powerful, because you literally create a world from your beliefs and ideas.’ The Year of Forgiveness by Tina Louis Spaulding

June 1, 2026

She said, “look at the blue moon.” So I went out bare foot, this clear damp morning. It was after two days of constant rain. The sky was clear, and I saw it, a big moon. The second full moon of May '26. It was still full and it's terrain was blue, it's hue was red with the early sunrise reflected on it's surface. I never saw it setting over Tom Miner Basin before this morning. My mind had been troubled. I couldn't explain my disposition to her. So I sat with a cup of hot coffee and opened to Pages 138 and 139 of Basso's book 'Wisdom Sits in Places'. The pages I read described what I failed to share with her. That my mind was burdened - “pursuing the trail of wisdom can become just another burden. There is enough to do already without thinking about places and working on one's mind! And so it happens, often with reluctance but also with a welcome sense of relief, that the work is abandoned.”

This last full moon of May was setting where I take refuge to still my mind. It is were I hike, and bike, and ski. I talk with my source - not sure which one it is - God?, The Divine?, The Great Creator?, all within me. I realized this day, why this story Many In Body, One In Mind needs to be connected with A Journey of Love series. It pertains to the beginning of the series, Circumstance and Consequences and the ending of The Sawtooth Community. It is the mystical journey of Julian and Jim continued in The Lost City...the afterlife. Did they reconnect as Ariel and Farhad? Maybe...maybe Amos is the story teller of what took place on The New World State ranch.



Angels of Light

This is the sequel to Border Crossing and Many in Body - One in Mind. You will be taken on a Journey and reconnected to pure consciousness, where the body and mind is formless, until new forms transcend back to earth to continue it's journey of love.

