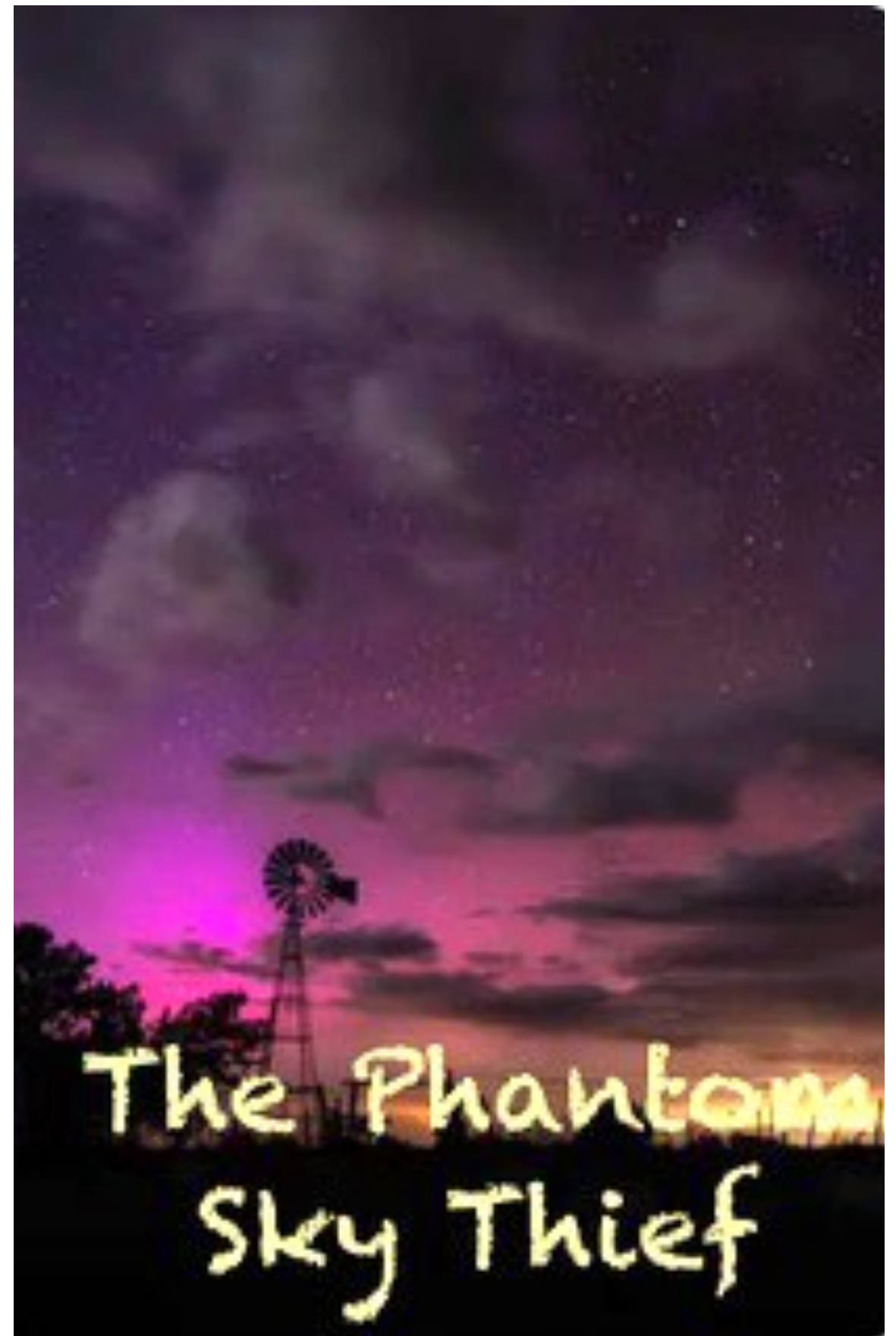


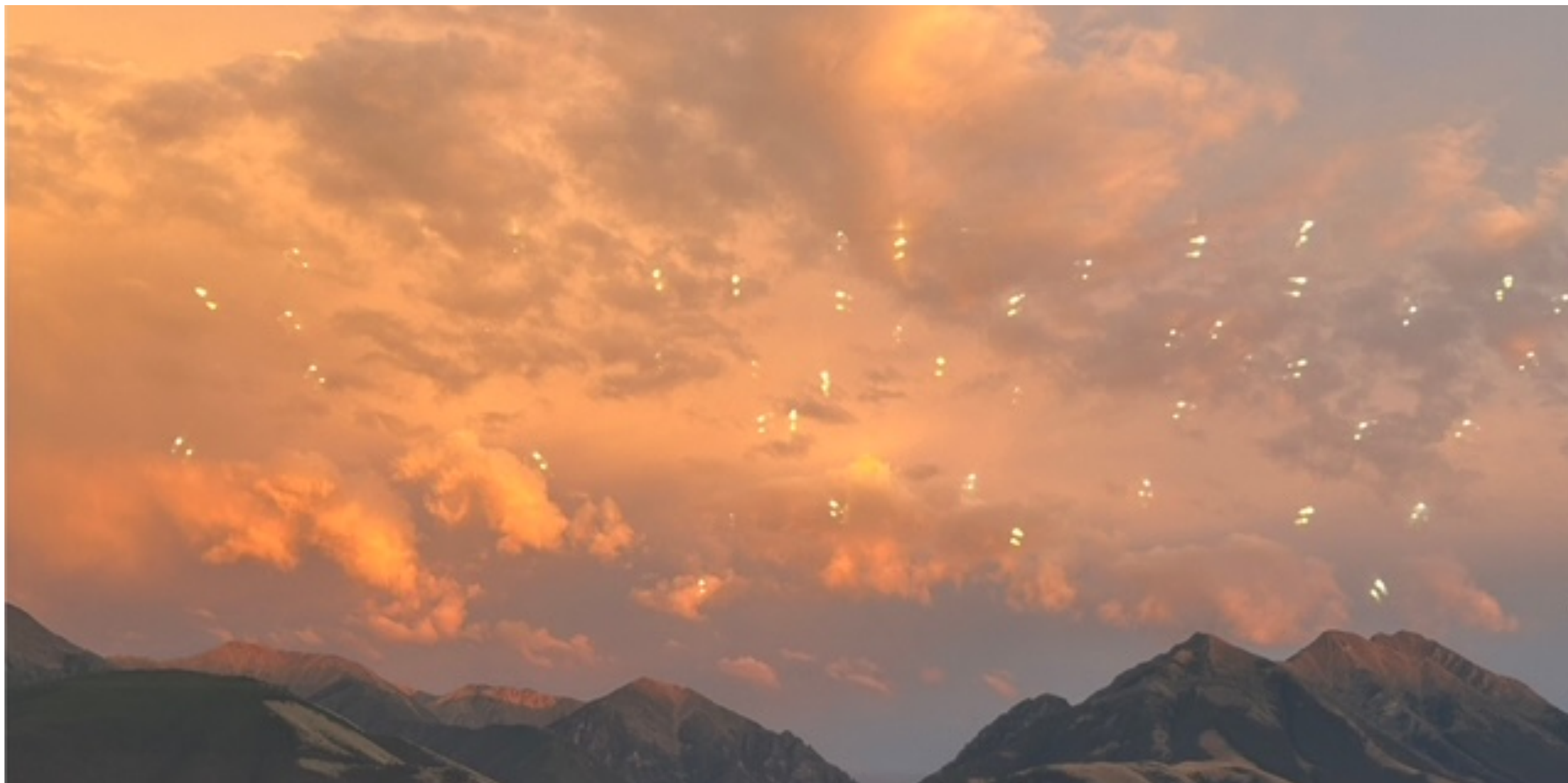
A short story by James Kozlik

The Phantom Sky Thief

A story of forgiveness from
the souls lost in War.

The Sky Pilot flies at sunset
He steals the soul of the
worthy dead left in the field
and takes them home.





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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Introduction

We were sitting around in the sunroom. We had just finished a meditation. There were five of us, chatting with each other. Two women were engaged in a personal conversation about a future event they were attending together. One woman was sitting still, looking out the window at the garden and distant mountains. The clouds this day were spectacular, moving with the wind. Colliding and bunching up, then separating. That's when I acknowledged the sunset photos that Joyce had emailed a few days prior to our meditation group. In her email she requested any sunset photo's I may have taken from our sunroom.

Joyce is a writer. There was a time long ago when we attended her weekly writing group. We would start with a blank page in our notebooks and Joyce would give a topic and have us write. There was a ten minute time frame to create a story or scene or just journal one's thoughts concerning the topic.

Joyce asked, "Jim, do you have more sunset photo's."

I reached for my phone and started scrolling. "Yes, here, look at some of these."

That's when Joyce remarked, "You're a Phantom Sky Thief. There's a title Jim, what would you write?"

"About a Sky Pilot who takes souls from dead bodies left in battle fields. He flies them to other realms. A statement about the innocent lives lost because of the warmongers who don't consider life as precious. However, there is a consciousness, that is limitless light energy."

That was my response, it brought up an old 1960's song (Sky Pilot by Eric Burdon The Animals) to the Vietnam War. The song is a timeless anti war song and relevant today.

I was inspired, by the song, by a book and by Joyce's title selection.

**This story is dedicated to Sri Preethaji and
Sri Krishnaji and the Oneness Movement.**

Chapter 1

His plane rises out of the Black Sea and climbs the steep southern slopes of the Crimean Mountains that drop into the sea. The Bbmoidaire Challenger 3500 rises effortlessly over the plateau shaped peaks. The Sky Pilot destination tonight is Donbas where he will steal a soul once occupied in the body of Bohdan Anastas whose heritage was that of religious scholars who believed in resurrection.

Sky intuitively knows Bohdan Anastas's body is somewhere in the rubble of Donbas. He connects to his "source" asking for landmarks.

"There are two churches, one is blue. Search the rubble. Find his soul, bring him here. You know the routine."



<https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/donbas>

Sky flies through the war torn country side. He sees hordes of people walking along road sides. They are trapped in this aberration. Innocent of any association with Neo-cons and warmongers.

Their only crime was to live a joyous life.

Sky sees the two churches side by side. The blue building is still standing and looks stunning amidst the rubble and gray mist that surrounds everything else. He locates a landing. It's easy landing this jet that doesn't exist. As he descends it begins to dissolve into light energy and merges with the earth. He is walking now towards the blue church. His form takes on a human form with strong muscular arms. Sky stops at the church and sits on the steps. He takes in his surroundings and listens. There are distant screams, crying, and he hears tanks moving from the area. There is a young girl approaching. She looks scared and disoriented. She stops at the stairs and just looks up at Sky who is looking directly at her. After a short while the girl says,

“Я потребу допомоги” (I need help).

Sky responds, “Як вас звати?” (What is your name?)

“Sophia”

Sky has the intelligence to speak whatever language he needs to speak. In Ukrainian he ask the girl, “where is your mother and father?”

“I don't know, I am lost. My home is gone. I need help.”

Sky reaches in his pocket and hands Sophia a small loaf of bread. He watches as she eats. After several bites she says, “thank you.” She continues to devour the loaf.

Sky ask, “I am looking for Bohdan Anastas, do you know him?”

She points to the rebar and cement blocks mixed with large ancient rocks that are piled next to the bombed building.

“Де твій будинок? (Where is your house?),”

Sky ask Sophia.

She points in a direction towards the hillside that is west of the church. “Я живу он там, біля пагорба (I live over there, next to the hill)”

Sky looks and sees more destruction. The village and most of the area is a mass of rubble. He is not surprised as he has visited many war zones with similar destruction. He gets up and walks over to the pile of rock where Sophia had pointed too previously.

Sophia follows him in silence. Sky is standing with eyes closed arms stretched out and his palms are facing outward, towards the pile.

Sophia is observing and standing still as a rock. Sky opens his eyes and turns to Sophia.

“How old are you?”

“I am twelve years of age.”

“You are about to witness something that might be hard for you to understand. I am about to extract the soul of Bohdan Anastas from this pile of rubble. You might not see him in physical form. Then again you might! You need not be afraid. Do you understand?”

“Will you talk to his spirit?”

“Yes, that is the same as his soul. I will talk to the light energy of Bohdan Anastas. Just as I am talking to your light energy right now.”

“But, his body is dead. Will I be able to listen and hear what you say?”

“Do you know what it is to be telepathic?”

“Communicating without talking?”

“That is a good description. Since I have a power that allows me to communicate in physical form and non physical form, you will be able to hear me. You will not hear Bohdan’s response. What you can do is use your will power to communicate. Do you understand?”

Sophia nods yes. Sky turns back to the pile of rubble and starts to remove some debris where he intuits Bohdan’s body to be. The first thing that appears is an outstretched arm with a hand clinging to a rock. He continues to uncover the body of Bohdan Anastas.

Sophia is watching when she hears several heavily booted footsteps. Rifles hang from their shoulders, ammo belts across their chest. The

men look menacing. Eyes darting from her feet to her head. Their eyes meet. Her eyes show no fear. Their eyes are eyes of cunning desire. She looks away and sees Sky still moving rubble, uncovering more of Bohdan’s body. She wonders if Sky is invisible and that the scene of him digging for a body is non existent. She turns to the soldiers who are whispering to each other. Sophia says, “Вы бы изнасиловали русскую девушку?” (Would you rape a Russian Girl?)

“Вы русская, живёте здесь?” (You are Russian living here?) ask one of the Russian soldiers.

“Yes my family lived here since before 1991. I still consider my self Russian. Look what you did to our way of life as Russians. The change of governments and borders meant nothing to us. Our community meant everything.”

The soldiers look at each other. "Where is your family, then?"

Sophia points at the rubble at the foot of the hill side. She does not show any fear of what might happen next. Secretly she is willing to see Bohdan Anastas rise from the dead. The soldiers move closer. Sky calmly removes more rubble. While he is doing this he ask Bohdan's soul, "do you want to remain in your human form and help Sophia and her new friends rebuild the village? Or do you want to remain in the realm of bliss?"

"Can I return to bliss when I complete my new purpose?"

"Yes, you will always have that choice. To take on a form or to remain as a light energy? You can be a Light Being on earth. You can be a

"rubble rouser" and rebuild a village as you discover other souls buried in the rubble"

Bohdan rises out of the rubble. The sound of rocks rolling back alert the soldiers. They look over at Bohdan as he is brushing himself off. His arms are very muscular, the size of a weightlifter's.

"Well, Sophia, what have we here cousin? And whom are you my friends. Soldiers of the Russian Army. We have been decimated, so what need do you have to return? Looking for dead farmers and their daughters?"

"Нет, мы ничего не ищем. Это наш пост. Мы хотим восстановить ту Россию, которая у нас когда-то была. Вот и всё." ("No, we are not looking for anything. This is our post. We wish to restore the Russia that we once had. That is all.")

Sophia's stare penetrates their beings. She knows they are lying.

The two soldiers shift their bodies. Their hands instinctively are placed on the butt of the rifles that they are carrying. Sophia is aware of the uneasiness of the soldiers. The name Sophia means wisdom. "What are your names?"

"I am Alexei and my friend is Dimitri. You are Sophia? It is a wise name indeed. Why do you look at us with mistrust?"

"You have chose to do battle with a countrymen who are similar to you in many ways. In war you may think that you have certain entitlements especially when you see a lone woman in a village that has been overtaken. And so maybe you think that I will submit to what it is you really desired when you first saw me. But I am just a girl. Your hands now rest on your rifles. So you think you can kill again and then have me with no witnesses around?"

Their hands slacken and are at their sides. Their heads drop a little as they feel shame.

Alexei speaks, "My assignment was to defend my country. You, my child have looked into the depth of my being which has been misguided." He looks over at Bohdan. "You are Russian, too?"

Bohdan responds, "Да, я тоже русский" (Yes I am Russian, too).

Alexei sits on a pile of rocks. "My name means protector, yet I know not what I am protecting." He takes the rifle from his shoulder and lays it on the ground.

Dimitri does the same. He is crying, "my name means earth lover, look what I am supporting. The destruction of life."

Bohdan speaks, "we have a friend who is in the rubble locating buried bodies. He is off in the hills you can't see him now. He will be gone soon. We might have a few live villagers. Some might have declared their Ukrainian heritage, some might still recognize themselves as Russian."

"Thank you for putting down your guns, I feel safer now," remarks Sophia.

Sky finds Sophia's father. He touches the father's heart. A light essence appears and Sky talks.

"Mykola (Ukrainian name - means Victory of the people.) you are just energy now. I'm a Sky Pilot and I can take you to the next dimension. Your daughter lives. She is at the church now asking for you to be in human form."

"Will it be a form she can see and touch? Will I have a different type of wisdom in which I view all realities?"

"If you choose to come back into a physical body to remain on this planet you will know what is real for you. Your understanding of who you are will give you a secure sense of existence and why you are meant to be here."

"And where is here? In this pile of rubble or in this blissful state that I wish to remain?"

"That is between you and the message you are getting from your personal Divine source. I am going to leave you now and look for your wife. Her decision will not have a bearing on your choice."



To everything, turn, turn, turn
There is a season, turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under heaven
A time to be born, a time to die
A time to plant, a time to reap
A time to kill, a time to heal

A time to build up, a time to break down
A time to dance, a time to mourn
A time to cast away stones
A time to gather stones together

Source: [LyricFind](#)

Songwriters: Peter Seeger

Turn! Turn! Turn! lyrics © T.R.O. Inc.

Sophia sits down and there is a silence between her and the soldiers, Alexei and Dimitri. She is thinking of her mother, Lesya (Леся: Meaning "defender, helper, liberator of men"). She looks at the two young soldiers, then over at Bohdan who is frantically moving rocks in the rubble. She surmises that Alexei and Dimitri are in their late teens or early twenties. She wonders who sent them off to war and why they became soldiers in the first place. She looks off in the distance and notices some bright lights that seem to be radiating like a gleaming star in the sky. She looks over at Bohdan, "what are you doing Bohdan?"

"I am looking for my Synodal Bible."

"What will you do with it when you find it?"

"I will share some readings with you, Dimitri and Alexei. We might get some guidance from it's knowledge."

"What we need right now is some food and compassion."

The men look at her, somewhat dumbfounded. Dimitri looks at his backpack, "we have some food, let us share with you."

Sky finds Lesya and beckons her soul to be present with her recent past incarnation that has been violently disrupted.

"Lesya, I am a Sky Pilot here to gather souls that might want to go to the next realm."

"My unconscious thoughts are connecting with the collective consciousness of a band of light I recognize as home. So how is it that I am connecting with you? A Sky Pilot you say?"

"We are talking in pure consciousness, no ego to get in the way of our oneness, if you want to call it that."

"Where is this next realm you want to take me too?"

"That is a good question, I fly and drop souls off

into the void of the universe. I never reach the sky."

"Where is my daughter from this past life?"

"I found her when I landed, she pointed me here, where she said you were, on this physical plane."

"Under this rubble, you mean. If I decide to leave and enter the void will I still have contact with her. Will I know how she is fairing in her physical life?"

"It will depend what she believes, or what she experiences. Maybe how you communicate"

"We named her Sophia so she will know her wisdom."

"I am going to leave you now, you decide what plane you want to continue to be on. I'll be back."

"Where are you going?"

"To gather more souls."

"How are you able to talk to me? How do we communicate at this... frequency? Is that a definitive description? Communicating through some sort of frequency?"

"Let's just say we are both in a state of pure consciousness. There are no thoughts, perceptions, judgements, identity, nothing but total presence."

"Then how is it that you have given me a choice to return into body, ego, duality... consciousness?"

"You got me on that one. All I know is that I have a plane that turns invisible. I have an energy that can flow in and out of form. I take souls into the void and watch them exit into darkness where there is light, their own light, that becomes part of a whole. Don't ask me what the whole is...maybe it is the Black Hole. Ha Ha, Maybe I am in a dream? Anyway, I have to find your administrative chief."

"Okay, his name is Vladimir, our mayor. If I decide to remain in embodiment, will I just walk out of the rubble or do you need to see me again?"

"I'll know whether you stay or decide to fly with me. I leave at sunset. I always fly at sunset."

Sky moves on, toward what might have been a town center. He intuits where Vladimir may have been when the bombing started. He sees a desk smashed by a large rock. Perhaps the cornerstone of the building. He sees a shoe under the smashed desk. Sky starts to dig. He digs deep until he finds a body. He touches the heart, his connection to all souls.

"Hello, Vladimir? Is it you my friend?"

"Yes, what happened? Who are you? In this rubble I have dissolved into space. I seek my lover Anastasia."

"Vladimir, do you not know that your physical life on earth has ended?"

"Who are you?"

"I'm Sky and I look for souls that want to return to a state of infallibility. Where consciousness is not about the safety of body, money, sex, or any other

thing that needs to be defended nor be dominant. War becomes the byproduct of body consciousness. Now Vladimir, you have witnessed how Anastasia lived on this plane."

"How did you get here?"

"I chose to transcend at some point and all I know is this present moment of Sky Piloting. I do not know how I got here in this seemingly unreality. However, what is real right now is our conversation. That's all I know for now."

"So, I am dead. But I am not? And the choice is mine to be resurrected or ascend or return to pure energy, pure consciousness. Or whatever I believe as a belief system that is created by us humans. And you are some sort of a Hindu Avatar or Aviator?"

"Something like that, you get to figure that out. In the meantime, there is a young girl, Sophia who survived the bombing. She has young wisdom and needs the support of souls willing to return to make peace not war."

“Okay, thanks for all of your explanations. I still don’t know what’s real and what’s an illusion. So I will contemplate on that and make a decision. At least I’m conscious of something. If you don’t see me at sunset you’ll know where I am? I just might want to check out the reincarnation that us Orthodoxies believe in.”

Sky moves onto the next pile of rubble. He notices the long stream of refugees that are abandoning this decimated part of “their” country. Where will they end up? In another country to defend, or a country that wants domination. And what makes the majority give power to a minority of people that seem to want to control the masses? Small regions of Ukraine have self governing bodies, even though the “state” was created to have the final say. At least a small village such as this can recreate how to continue onward as a place of peace.

Sky gathers souls that want to ascend, or go to other realms, or return back to white light energy in a state of bliss. Whatever you want to believe about death and dying. He pilots his plane to the sky.



Sophia, Bohdan, Alexei and Dimitri are sharing some of the soldiers rations when she notices four figures approaching them. In the distance she sees a white light rising in the reverse trajectory of a shooting star. She thinks and quietly says “good bye Sky. Will you return some day?”

Chapter 2

As they eat the rations Sophia ask, "you look different Bohdan, then when I knew you before the bombing. You are more muscular. Is that to help you find your book of knowledge of Orthodox beliefs? Or to help transform this rubble into a new town?"

The soldiers and Bohdan stop eating and are all staring at Sophia. The soldiers look at Bohdan waiting for his response. "As I said before our Septuagint will guide our way."

"Is that what you believe to be true? That there is one God? One who creates and destroys? One who gives birth and death? One who gives the resurrection of body and soul to live an afterlife? Or does the soul return in

another form perhaps, if the personhood so desires?"

Bohdan looks at his forearm and feels his new biceps and triceps.

Dimitri ask Sophia, "what do you believe in?"

"Are you a Russian Orthodox? If so and I believe otherwise what might happen to me?"

The three light beings are getting closer. They are starting to take form. Only Sophia can see them since she is facing in their direction.

"You are young, to be questioning religion. What you have been taught is what is to be believed."

"And what if it is unbelievable? Bohdan has taken on a different form and we are not in heaven. Look behind you. That is my mother,

Father, and our mayor. They all look different and the same. They are alive and were buried. You tell me Bohdan, what is believable? What we know and experience or what we believe?"

They all turn to look at the three figures walking towards them. They all stand, except for Sophia. She looks up at the sky and watches the star disappear. The phantom sky thief, the sky pilot. How high will he fly? Sophia slowly rises and walks towards her mother and father. She is the first to approach the threesome. Her mother extends her arms towards Sophia who is gathered into her mother's bosom. She is hugged by her father.

Then Alexei asks, "how did you survive?"

They look up into the sky. Vladimir responds, "it was our destiny to survive. We are here to rebuild our town. If you Russians let us."

Alexei replies, "we are soldiers of an unknown army for we do not know if we are part of a war or a conquest. We have laid down our weapons, we want to help here, be part of this rebuilding."



Dimitri shares his feelings, "this destruction makes me sad, for lives have been taken. I did not do it, yet I was part of it. Look, over there in the field. Sheep with their wool shorn off.

They will grow their hair again. We will kill some for our survival. You will eat some of the mutton and not think that you killed but you will have been part of it for your survival. Our fear is of dying and when a bomb hits dying is sudden. The fear of death is no longer. For us that live the fear to survive in war is ever present. I am happy to see you people who have survived the bombing. Since I am part of this war, I want to be at peace with you. Please allow me to build a new town. Maybe we will find more survivors. You men look strong armed and ready to build."

Sophia looks at the forearms and upper arms of the men. Her father, Bohdan and Vladimir's arms all look different than when she knew them before death. Something feels different about these men. She looks up at her mother. "Mother, you seem taller than I remember and your body feels different, your hug gives me

strength. Who found you in the rubble?" She looks over where their home was. It is a mass of broken stone.

"It was a man we could not see. It was the light of kind energy. I was given a choice to remain here or know afterlife. I feared that I would never see you again, my daughter."

There's a silence. The breeze brings the smell of war with its fresh air. There is the sound of tanks rumbling in the distance. Alexei warns everyone, "they are coming for survivors. The innocent people will become captive and their world will change more than it already has. Over there, let us become parts of the rubble and maybe we will not be seen."

The group moves towards the low ridge where Sophia's family lived. Lesya points, "over there is a root cellar. We will go there."

Mykola says, "we have food stored. We can remove some of the rubble and hide in there."

They quietly walk over to where Sophia once lived. She wonders how it is that her body survived the blast. She knows for certain that Alexei and Dimitri are who they said they are. Her mother's hand, that she is holding feels different than the soft hand she knew. Who are Bohdan, Vladimir, my father and mother? They look like the people I have known, yet they seem different. She looks over at the soldiers who have picked up their rifles and walk as guards might march prisoners to a war camp. Her school studies have taught her about the casualties of war. Not just the injuries, but the captives and the immigrants who flee to another country. Maybe they are welcome as an act of kindness by some people. She is also wise enough to know that the welcome can wear thin when local country men and woman are fearful of a cultural shift that might happen in their community.

They arrive to the area where the cellar is located. Mykola points, "here under these rocks, let us move them." Once they complete the task, Mykola opens the door. There is a candle and matches on a small shelf at the bottom of the stairs that lead down into a concrete and rock walled room. He lights the

candle and walks over to a shelf with more candles. He lights a few more. Their eyes adjust to the light in the darkness. Mykola instructs, "Dimitri and Alexei let us arrange the rubble to hide the cellar door better."

Once that is done they are all sitting on some chairs and boxes around a table that is used to process food preserves. Lesya has some water poured in glasses.

Dimitri asks, "this seems well fortified, why did you build this?"

Mykola responds, "the history of our countries have known war. The blood fields of the past. War is the lack of consideration for all life. This root cellar preserves life. We are farmers, we are stewards of the land. We preserve life, that is our purpose."

"Alexei, what is the procedure of troops after an area is bombed?" ask Bohdan.

The tanks and artillery is being moved. We might see some troops following, maybe foot soldiers to replace the wounded. If they come through here they might be looking for survivors. Depends on their mood whether they take them as captives,

shoot them, or rape the women. It's war, despite what international law says about victims, some soldiers feel entitled to do what they please."

Lesya is preparing a meal from some of the canned goods. She is listening to the conversation. She sets an intention of protection for her daughter. She is aware of how in the past she would worry about Sophia's safety. Lesya rubs her arms and looks at her forearms and hands. She is wondering if indeed there are some changes that her body and mind have taken on.

Mykola is looking at his daughter who is asking Dimitri (the 18 year old soldier) why he signed up for the Russian army. Dimitri responds, "I was just doing what I thought was patriotic. I really don't know much about why we are fighting. Some people say it's about resources. Others say Ukraine belongs to Russia, and my parents and grandparents like Putin. So I sign up for Army. But I don't like war either. I am scared. When you spoke so fearlessly to me and Alexei, your bravery made me wonder why I would want to hurt a girl like you."

"My sons, you two show great bravery and compassion for this decision that you made. It must be confusing to be fighting some of your own Russian people. And fighting for the desire of people you don't even know. Leaders of countries think that their beliefs are for our benefits. But they don't know who we are. They watch from hundreds of miles away from a war zone that they created. They don't know our lives. They don't understand the way of farmers, or country folks. They don't consider the land that becomes devastated. The earth that is precious. Who will want to live here again."

"We will help you rebuild," says Alexei. "I feel your pain, sir. As we passed some of the other villages I saw elders sitting. I thought, the last years of their lives, ravaged by war, must be a heart break. To live through their history of life and have it end in war, I can't imagine what it is like. Excuse me sir for saying this..." Alexei looks directly at Sophia, "the thought that I could have your daughter and force myself on her is a thought I wish to never have again."

Sophia looks at the soldiers and gently says, "you Dimitri and Alexei, can be our protectors."

Bohdan remarks, "like the Archangel's Michael and Gabriel."

The sounds of rumbling tanks and artillery have passed through the area. It seems quiet above the cellar.

Mykola looks over at Lesya, then states, "you all have something to eat. I want to walk and talk with my wife. Please Lesya, come with me."

"Sir, there might still be some Russian Soldiers taking up the rear. Let me go first and see what is out there," says Dimitri. He rises and takes his rifle that was by the door. I will knock three times when I return. You will know it is me. Slowly he cracks open the door, then opens it just wide enough to slip through. He is out amongst the rubble and cautiously climbs the low ridge. When he gets to the crest of the ridge he has a vantage point that allows him to survey the bombed town and it's

surroundings. He can see the tanks and troops off in the distance, heading towards an unknown destination. Maybe it is their march to Kiev. Isn't that the plan? Dimitri is satisfied that they might be safe. He starts to go back when he sees some other movement. It looks like some villagers. He goes back to the cellar and knocks on the door three times.

Sophia looks at the four men sitting at the table. She considers being left alone. She has a fear now and is not sure what to do. Her mother and father don't seem exactly who they say they are. However, she wants to cling to someone to trust. "Mother and father, I want to be with you. May I come with you now?"

Lesya, "of course dear one, come."

Sophia notices a different kind of connection coming from her mother. She has never called me 'dear one' before. Father has never given an opinion about war and calling Alexei and Dimitri 'my sons' what was that about? She rises from the table and meets them at the door. Before departing she looks over at

the three men who keep their eyes on her.

The family walks out a ways and surveys their surroundings. Mykola ask, "Lesya, where were you found, and by whom?"

"Over there, near the apple trees and under the debris from the barn. It said it was a Sky Pilot here to gather souls. I had a choice to go to another realm or stay here in this plane. I chose to stay, with my daughter. I sense that I am in another body and mind. Sophia you look at me as if I am not your mother, how is it for you?"

"I want you to be my mother as you once were. You look a little different and say things differently. You have never called me dear one. However, I wonder why you call the Sky Pilot it, as if Sky is an Alien? Sky Pilot has a name, Sky."

"You were buried to? Where did Sky find you?"

"I was sitting on the church stairs when Sky came into my world. He talked to my energy, a field of

light is how he put it. I took that to mean my consciousness. He made me aware of my thoughts. He was removing rubble where Bohdan was buried."

Mykola makes a contributing comment. "I think your mother and I have experienced the separation of the body and mind from the physical form to just conscious energy."

"If you are not my earthly father and mother, who are you now, on this earth? Am I talking to consciousness?"

Lesya speaks, "consciousness can be an unlimited reality once you become more aware of how you want to relate to your inner thoughts."

"To be honest I am living in fear. I fear that you are not my mother and father whom I once knew. I fear the soldier boys. I fear Vladimir not sure what his motive is. I fear Bohdan that maybe he is losing his mind. And I fear that more soldiers will come and I will be alone. I fear what this war has brought into my life."

Mykola speaks, "we are here to support you. We have changed the patterns of our thoughts and that has changed our behaviors. Lesya and my self might seem different to you in some subtle way. Just know that what you project with your thought is what you create. It is a different reality when you stay present with the life that is unfolding in your sphere of existence."

"Let us get back to our friends with some apples and water," remarks Lesya.



The group is quietly sitting and eating some of the food that was prepared by Lesya, along with the apples from the tree that was near where Lesya was found by Sky. Vladimir speaks, "I am sorry, forgive me Lesya and Mykola for not giving gratitude before we started to eat. I am also grateful that the apple tree is still standing to provide our new community with food." He looks over at the Russian soldiers, "I feel at peace with you Dimitri and Alexei. I feel your sincerity and honesty about the confusion you are aware of concerning war and why you became soldiers."

Dimitri looks up from his plate of food, "Some of the soldiers I have met are like us, confused and doing what we are told. There are some who are angry men and some who fight because it makes them feel power. Some relish the terror that they project. There is much inner conflict that we are dealing with. Someday we might know peace in ourselves and connect with our fellow brothers like the ends of the rainbow that touches the earth."

Chapter 3

There is still late afternoon sunlight. The conversation has been about what to do next. How long should they wait before building a structure. Bohdan has suggested they all move into the church. There is a small kitchen in the basement, and plenty of places in the main church with rooms in the back that could be made into private rooms. There are some cots in a storage room.

Meanwhile Sophia is getting anxious to see the sun set and hopefully find the Sky Pilot. She whispers to Lesya, "I want to go out to the fruit orchard and pick some apricots."

Lesya nods her approval and motions to a basket used for harvesting. She takes it and quietly slips out the door. Dimitri notices Sophia leave. He looks at Alexei who is deep in conversation with Vladimir. He clears his throat and with a demanding voice he says, "Alexei, I think we need to go out and do some reconnaissance. Make sure that the troops of left

the area. There might even be some Ukrainian soldiers still alive."

Vladimir remarks, "that is probably a good idea. If you see some guns and ammo you might want to gather them for our use."

They both rise grab their gear and head out.

Dimitri ask Alexei, "did you notice that Sophia left, or were you to busy with Vladimir?"

"No, she left? Are we to find her?"

Up on a small ridge above the fruit orchard are two Ukrainian soldiers, who have been in the Ukraine military since the Donbas conflict started in 2014.

Danilo (Ukrainian name meaning "God is my judge) sees Sophia by herself picking apricots. He nudges

Andriy (Ukrainian meaning warrior, manly and strong), “look over there” Danilo hands Andriy the binoculars.

“Ooo, a young beauty.” He pans the binoculars over a long swath of the area. “I do not see anybody, just rubble and a lone standing church.”

“What is she doing by herself?” ask Danilo.

“We have been fighting a longtime, too many years without a woman.”

“What are you thinking Andriy?”

“I think we should meet her, find out who else is alive here.”

They have set up a small camp, out of view. They have been on the run ever since the Russian initiative turned into a full scale escalated conflict. Now that the Russian military are in control of the region that Putin thinks belongs to Russia, they fear for their safety. They are trying to retreat further

into Ukraine. They leave their camp and make their way to where Sophia is laying down in the tall, soft grass under the tree. She has two thoughts on her mind, trusting Alexei and Dimitri and the Sky Pilot.

Andriy and Danilo get closer. They remain silent and motion to each other to approach the ‘sleeping beauty’ from two opposite sides. Without uttering a word their thoughts betray their dignity. There is no dignity in war. To conquer gives one the right to entitlement. Despite IHL recognition of rape as a serious war crime, they both have discussed, over their years of fighting Russian separatist in the trenches, that the Donbas region should be declared Ukrainian. They get close enough that they stop. They look at Sophia who is about ten feet away. She opens her eyes and is startled by the site of Andriy. A big strong looking man in Ukrainian military uniform. She sits up. Her village was known to contain a large mix of Russian/Ukrainian people.

To her demise Sophia unwittingly says, “Ya russkaya (I am Russian), confused and scared of becoming a

“spoils of war”, she does not recognize the uniforms.

The men move quickly with lust in their eyes they view Sophia as an object to satisfy the pleasure of dominance and sex that has been absent in their lives. Like hungry wolves they move in tandem, Danilo grabs for Sophia's upper garments and rips them off of her torso, Andriy pulls her pheasant dress off, over her bare feet. Sophia lets out a yelp and is violently slapped across the face. She turns to face her assailants and all time stops. Her energy is calm, for Sky is present.

“Sophia, what do you fear? Your conscious thoughts are about to become fruition. So what is your thought now? Panic, or resolve? A surrender to what is about to happen? Or do you feel secure in your being that whatever the outcome it will be a process that you are willing to face to overcome the resulting circumstance?”

“Do you mean if I am impregnated and carry a baby unwillingly?”

“That might be the consequence, what I mean is; do you see how your thoughts create the world of your choosing?”

She looks at Andriy's surprised eyes and hears a blast that follows the American bullet penetrating through his heart. His body drops and lands over the right side of her body. Quickly she looks at Danilo who is holding what remains of her blouse as another blast is heard and an American bullet decapitates his head. His body falls backwards and a splatter of blood lands on her bared chest about where the heart is. There is a tear of blood that curls around the lower part of her breast.

“You saved your human form.”

“I did not have thought of gun fire.”

“No, you stopped thinking that you might be raped. Now what are you thinking? Here comes your friends whom you feared. I must go now.”

"Where are you going?"

"I have to take some souls to other realms. You are thinking; 'even these souls?' and yes you can forgive Andriy and Danilo they'll need that for sure. Their souls are already boarding the plane."

"How come I even though we talk I can't see you I only hear you, How do I know that you are real?"

"You have created your reality. You sense that there is something greater than you. You are learning to tap into energy, frequency and vibration. However harsh the circumstances might be, do not resist. Surrender to your personal Divine. Strive for gaining knowledge and turn it into wisdom. Your wisdom belongs to you so go forth with courage. It is not something to believe in, it is your's to create."

Alexei and Dimitri are present now, Sophia feels a hand wiping the blood on her breast with a piece of her torn garment. She is handed her pheasant dress that was pulled off of her. The buttons popped off the shoulder straps, but she is still able to have a

skirt. Dimitri is holding his army jacket for her to wear. He holds it open so she can slide her arms into the long sleeves. She looks at Dimitri and sees compassion in his forlorn eyes. They are locked into each other now. She ask Dimitri, "can you wait for me to come into my womanhood?"

"I can wait for you as deep as a river flows through a canyon and as high as a mountain climbs to the sky. I am young too, and we can grow our love together."

Alexei clears his throat, "I will go see if these American made rifles have ammo left at the camp."

He leaves, they never heard him. He smiles and is full of joy for their connection.

There is a plane that circles overhead as the setting sun is lighting up the sky. It's a plane that they do not recognize.

Sophia remarks, "it's a phantom thief in the sky."

When Sophia, Alexei, and Dimitri come back to the root cellar, Bohdan, Vladimir, Mykola, and Lesya are standing outside, waiting in anticipation. Bohdan is the first to speak, "What happened, we heard shots."

The two protectors replay two separate stories. Then Sophia adds her experience, "The Sky Pilot was there, you all know about him, except for Dimitri and Alexei."

Dimitri and Alexei have puzzled expressions. "When we first came upon you Sophia and Bohdan, we felt another energy present. It was so powerful that our thoughts transformed into kindness, wouldn't you agree Dimitri?" states Alexei.

"Yes, and even now, there is a presence amongst us that I am consciously aware of, just as I am aware of my breathing."

Vladimir talks, "we will see more people appear from the rubble. They will want to help build a new

community. I fear that the Russians will come back and destroy our rebuilt village."

Mykola replies, "we must change our way of thinking. We can camouflage the new village amongst the rubble, or we can rebuild it and declare our independence from an illusionary existence."

"Vladimir, I recall one of your old transcripts when you talked about your soulmate, Anastasia and you both help create a community of prisoners who were allowed a hectare of land outside of the prison. How did you get the authorities to allow that endeavor? Why did the prisoners stay and live next to the prison with their families? How cooperative were the prisoners with each other in building this community? Did they become self sufficient and not need any physical, economical, and agricultural support from the prison authorities?"

"Yes, yes, how can I forget?" He looks at Sophia. You seem different to me Sophia. You seem to have a special maturity about you. I don't think of you as a 12 year old girl."

Sophia gives him a slight smile. Bohdan is also sensing something...

Lesya comes out with a change of clothes. Sophia unabashedly takes off Dimitri's jacket and as she is putting on a new blouse she realizes that the others are watching. "Oh my, excuse me. I wasn't thinking. I must go inside."

She doesn't seem embarrassed, just aware that she is with her new family tribe. As she enters the cellar she wonders were her mother got a new set of clothes for her to wear. She is in thought now - I wonder how people, with a conscious thought process, would think of my nakedness? Just then, was it shocking for them to see a naked body? How many naked bodies have they seen in their lifetimes and what are their thoughts. What might they create in their minds? A carnal experience, or might they just be respectful of human form, whatever the form might be. No judgement, or comparison with another's form. I wonder what the soldiers

thoughts were when they first saw me and how might they have changed? I saw hunger for a woman's body when I looked into their eyes. Their desire was so great they did not see me as a young girl. I saw compassion in the eyes of Dimitri and I saw kindness the eyes of Alexei. Is a conflicted mind an unconscious mind? A mind that just reacts? How come Dimitri and Alexei acted differently than the Ukrainian soldiers? She has slipped into a skirt. She takes a deep inhale and walks back out.

Bohdan is the first to greet her, "I'm sorry to know what has happened to you. This Sky Pilot that we all seem to have been in contact with, except for Dimitri and Alexei, how do you describe who he is?"

Lesya speaks first, "I was given a choice of what realm I want to live in. I had until sunset to decide. What I witnessed, when I emerged from the pile of rubble that had me pinned down, was so much more real than the thought of being in another realm. A realm that even the Sky Pilot could not describe. He said he was just doing what he was asked to do."

There are blank looks on everyone's faces except for Sophie's. She has a calm, content look. Dimitri takes notice.

Mykola has his say, "I was left feeling directed towards a chance to acknowledge a higher source that operates separate from my rational mind. And when I was given the chance to ascend to another realm that could not be described, I chose to create my parenting as a support system that Sophie can rely on. Someone that can be trusted for emotional support as well as physical support. I discovered my purpose."

Alexei speaks rather quickly, "I am sorry if I interrupt..."

Mykola shakes his head no..."I completed my remarks."

"I have not been in direct contact with this Sky Pilot, however I have felt an energetic frequency that seems to transcend all that is inherent when we go to war. It seems that we suffer not only with

our inner conflict, there is also fallout from compromised leaders or those I allowed to have authority and power over me, over us. I choose to be part of your rebuild. I consider it to be OUR rebuilding process of self and community."

"Sophia, please speak. You have seen the Sky Pilot several times."

Sophia doesn't hesitate, "I am very aware of how the four of you have changed in demeanor and what you say. It seems different than what I am used to. It's as if you all had a near death experience and now you see life differently. Sky talks to me about consciousness. Dimitri and Alexei, you may be baffled by our conversation. What you said Alexei about an energetic frequency, that's part of what Sky talked to me about. He talked about how my thoughts of fear attracted rape consciousness. Consciousness being aware of my fear. He said we have the ability to create new behaviors and new patterns to live a graceful life without continual suffering."

"You speak with a wisdom beyond my insight which is created by beliefs that I have attached my thoughts too." Bohdan states. "The meaning I get from what you just described is this; I might be influenced by what I read, or what someone else says, yet it is the thoughts that I create that form my ever changing beliefs?"

"Yes, father, you mentioned before how you, my new father and new mother are here to support me. Are you saying that you can not transfer your wisdom to me, it is I that has to experience my wisdom?"

Lesya asks, "Sophia, just to be clear, you might be conscious of thought but, consciousness is the awareness of what you choose to do with the thought?"

"It's all a mystery to me, yet I have experienced how powerful fear can be if I don't change the thought."

Bohdan is feeling some anxiety. He is sensing how he has created his worldly experience based on what

he has been told is truth. He is pondering if what he has been told all his life is really what he believes to be true. He had been searching the rubble for his Septuagint. Now he feels that it's not so important to find it. He surmises the situation and says to the group, "How about we go to the church and see how we can set up a place of comfort to live as community. From there we can plan our next course of action."

They all agree, and so they start the walk back to the church to see what is salvageable. As they pass through the streets they are all marking where friends homes and businesses once stood.

Sophia was flanked by Dimitri and Alexei as they walked. She looks at both of them, "Alexei and Dimitri, the three of us are the only ones who haven't been pulled out of the rubble. My mother and father, Bohdan, and Vladimir seem different to me. Do you think that they had near death experiences? Maybe that is why they are different?"

Alexei is first to speak, "Sophia, we did not know any of you before we came to your town. Sometimes people survive being buried."

"Yes, but Sky..."

Dimitri interrupts, "this Sky you speak of, we have never seen him. Who is he?"

Sophia thinks, how can I explain what I saw and who I talked to. How do I explain what he said, that I was talking to consciousness? I can't even describe Sky. She remains silent.

They continue to walk in silence. The others are walking briskly ahead of them and reach the steps of the church. They hear some voices and look at each other with perplexed expressions. Vladimir places his index finger to his lips. Then whispers, "soldiers?"

Mykola looks back at Sophia, Dimitri, and Alexei. He whispers back to Vladimir, "we have all been in contact with the Sky Pilot. We know that he is a

gatherer of souls. I think we are not the only ones that wanted to stay and rebuild this village and community. Sophia has seen The Sky Pilot and calls him Sky. They (and he points to the Dimitri and Alexei heading towards them) have not. But they have been witness to this phenomenon that is happening. Let us wait for them and all of us will enter the church together."

As the threesome approaches, Alexei's eyes are distracted by a rock with an inscription that is cruelly carved into the stone. It is carved twice, once in Russian and below the Russian inscription it is in Ukrainian. It reads:

Коли ми живемо життям у прекрасному стані любові та зв'язку, ми не лише приваблюватимемо потрібних людей, але й утримуватимемо їх на все життя.

Когда мы живем в прекрасном состоянии любви и взаимосвязи, мы не только притягиваем нужных людей, но и сохраняем их на всю жизнь.

When we live life from a beautiful state of love and connection, not only will we attract the right people, we will keep them for life. Preethaji

They climb the church stairs in silence. Bohdan gently opens the door and gazes in. He sees a rather large group of people, maybe thirty is his estimate. He closes the door and turns to their small group. "There are others gathered in there. They are mostly sitting as if they are waiting for someone. I see several nationalities."

Mykola, "let us enter."

They squeeze through the doors together, shoulder to shoulder and unconsciously they are holding each others hands, standing still and gawking at what they observe. There are several cultures that are sitting in the pews. Each in their own gathering. There are the Palestinians, Israelis, Afghanis, Africans, Syrians, Haitians, and other families and couples, including some singles. Some are children, adolescents, mothers and fathers, soldiers, and clergy. About fifty in all, it is quite a mixture of people, victims of war.

Author's note: Google where the conflicts are happening in the world. See what you get.

List of ongoing armed conflicts - Wikipedia

W

Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ongoing_armed...](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ongoing_armed_conflicts)

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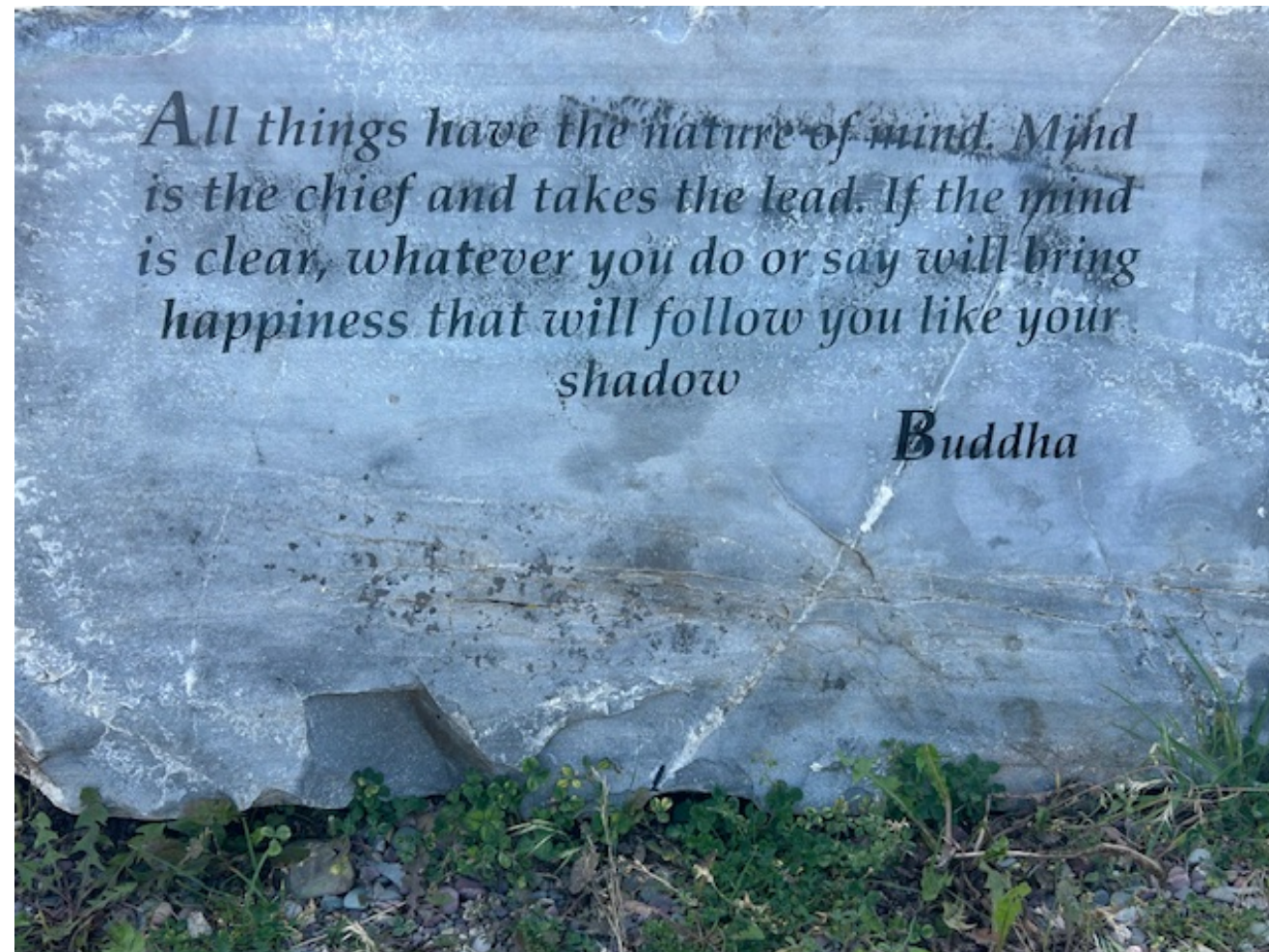
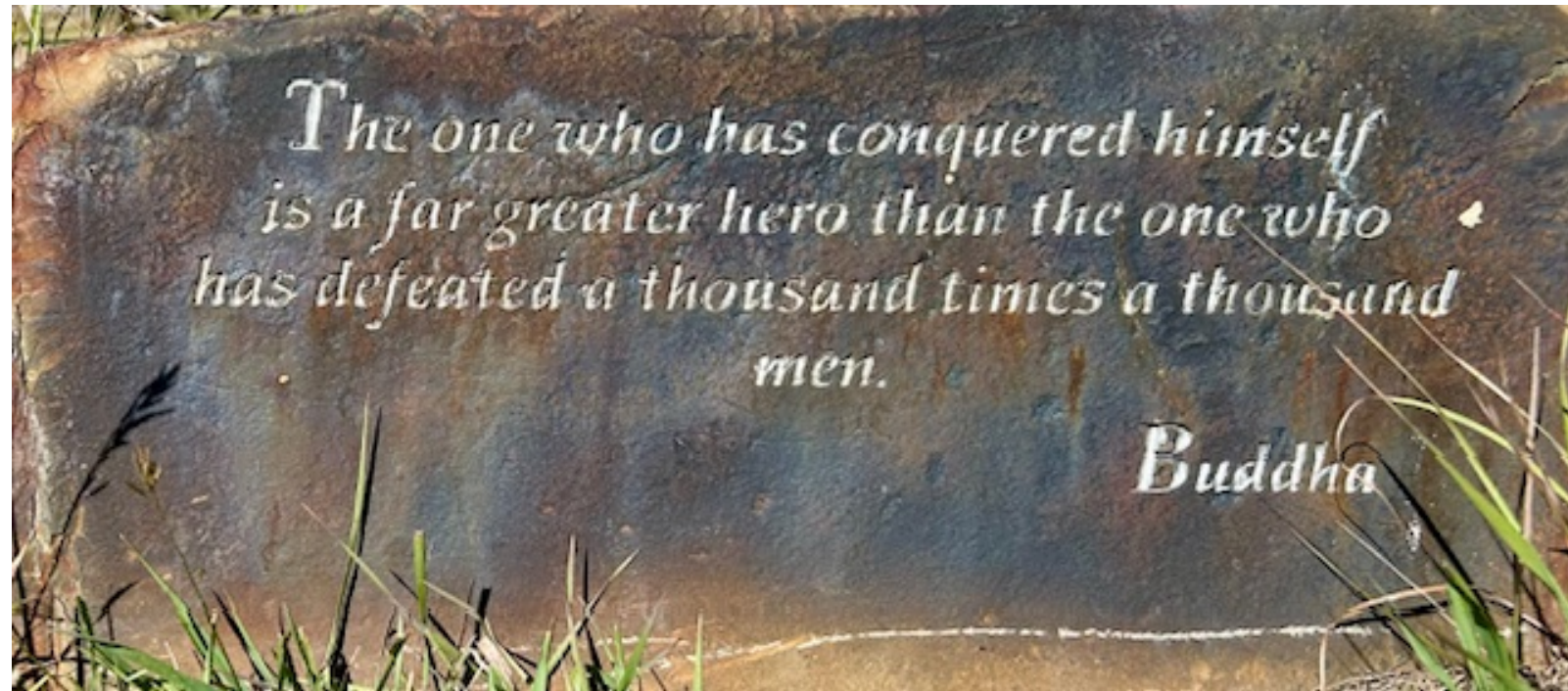
Where are most of the world's conflicts located?

Global Conflict Tracker | CFR Interactives

- Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea. ...
- Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. ...
- Conflict in the Central African Republic. ...
- Conflict With Hezbollah in Lebanon. ...
- Conflict in Syria. ...
- Instability in Afghanistan. ...
- Instability in Pakistan. ...
- Tensions Between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

[More items...](#)

There are so many different conflicts and displaced people, especially children. Think about that for a moment. Then consider how is it that from one generation to the next, the constant is that the status of the world continues to be controlled by governments that are self serving for special interest. Now I am not talking about governing or self governing in a community. That is different than governing the masses. A country and a world.



Let's get back to the story...

Lesya gently places a hand on the small of the back of Sophia and gives her a slight push forward.

Sophia turns her head and looks back at her mother.

She whispers, "it is you that needs to speak, dear one."

"I only know Russian, Ukraine and some English mother. How will they understand me, and what will I say?"

Just then she feels another nudge, not physically, rather intuitively. Just as she moves forward the sun shines through one of the tall stained glass windows on the west side of the church and light filters through and obscures her form. Sky whispers to her in her mind, "open your heart and you will speak your wisdom for all souls gathered here."

Sophia is startled, and mysteriously starts talking and nervously says, "hello..."

A man responds in Ukraine by saying, "we can't see you, can you move forward out of the glare?"

Sophia giggles, "the light I am in is consciousness!"

A cloud momentarily blocks the sun and she is exposed to all those gathered. Sophia laughs, and looks in the direction of the voice that made the request. It is one of the Ukrainian soldiers that ripped off her blouse in a rage of what he thought was entitled passion driven by desire, in a time of war. The other soldier is next to him and they stare at Sophia. She feels naked and exposed. Andriy and Danilo that was their names. She is frozen and no words are coming from her. It's Danilo that speaks, "you forgave us, our souls were stolen from our bodies by that phantom sky thief, now we are here and humbled that we are allowed to be. Your heart is big we are changed and no longer at war."

Sophia blinks and has a soft spot for them, in her heart, they are victims of war. She returns her gaze at the others, who have risen from their seats and turned in the pews to face her and the small entourage standing behind her. The clouds are on the run and as they pass in front of the sun then move on, the filtered light emanating from the stained glass has a surreal effect as it settles on Sophia's presence. She talks, "You have all come from other conflicts?" There's a mummer in the room of agreement. "We have a cross section of many cultures, beliefs, religion and spirituality. We have young children, I see some my age, and some Dimitri and Alexei's age." She turns and looks at them and Dimitri feels her love through her eye contact. "And the adults are here to support us, the youth of this small world present in this church. I see some young ones with no parents am I correct in my observation?" There are heads nodding in agreement. "Please, is my English good? You can understand?"

There are many years in response, so Sophia continues, "this Sky Pilot we have all been exposed to..."

There is a disruption as a throat is cleared and a voice is heard, "I'm here amongst you. I am you and I am not you."

The glare of the fractured light bathing Sophia lessens as the clouds continue to move. There is a silence, Sophia is slightly shaken by this phenomenon that seems to be taking place.

Lesya whispers, "continue Sophia, use your wisdom now."

She clears her throat, "we are a community of rekindled souls brought here to rebuild what has been destroyed."

She unconsciously giggles, not knowing why. She feels a sense of empowerment maybe that's it, a small release of joy that all gathered under the safety of this church are listening to a twelve year

old girl.

Can I be considered a girl on her way to developing her Womanhood? And the boys? Are they developing into being men? And the adults, are they supporting the youth with their wisdom that they have developed over time as they navigate their way through old patterns and behavior? I must continue with whatever energy is coming through me now. Is it pure consciousness?

Sophia closes her eyes, takes a breath and smiles. With nothing to hide now, all there is, is for her to speak. "We came here to convert this church and basement into a living quarters while we rebuild this village from the rubble. So, we might consider our new realization that all of us gathered here are to work as one. One helping another, one feeling another, one listening to another, one understanding another, one willing to change, one willing to allow and accept, one willing to love - another. As we rebuild for the next generation to come let us self govern with the youth in the position of leadership. Let the adults offer support when needed, like a

silent board of directors. And since all we have right now is this church, let us start here and together we can transition into a new age of thought. We can enjoy new foods and customs from each other and appreciate life differently. After all we came together by choice. Isn't that what Sky gave you all? A choice to be in another realm? And you chose to come back to try this experiment again. With a new energy. At least that is what I have been told, by Sky. The phantom sky thief? Sophia laughs at that thought. He steals souls and what does he do? Returns them here?"

Vladimir speaks, "if you don't mind, he said he releases them into the darkness of the universe, where the stars shine and other planets exist. Beyond that he doesn't know what is "driving his engine".

There is a huge laugh that shakes the building. Heads turn around, back and forth, and up towards the light filtering through the stained glass window again.

“Well put Vladimir. It’s all a mystery. My plane is floating around somewhere in the universe. I decided that this realm is worth living in. It definitely isn’t boring, and this young woman has given me hope and joy.”

Sky moves out of a pew and moves forward visible to all, and yet seemingly formless. For he has shed all his pretense as to what the mystery is all about. Sophia blinks, her jaw is slackened, then she smiles.

“It is you, all this time you have saved me from thoughts that do not serve. You showed me how to be a conduit of energy to flow through. You showed me how to vibrate with gratitude. You showed me a higher frequency to operate from. You showed me love.”

Sophia awakens this morning and looks out her bedroom window. The sky is red, but not from the

sunrise. The clouds are gray but really she knows that it’s smoke from burning cities. She looks around her bedroom and feels safe from fear, from victimhood, and from ignorance. She isn’t feeling any kind of suffering. The dream seemed to speak to her being. She is inspired now and leaves her bedroom. She enters the kitchen and sees her parents preparing a breakfast.

“Доброго ранку!”

They look her way with smiles on their faces. “Yes it is a good morning,” says her father, “we are still here.”

“Доброго ранку!, my dear,” greets her mother, “how did you sleep?”

“I dreamt about you and papa. It was a beautiful dream.”

“Then make it a real illusion,” says her father.

The End



Acknowledgements:

"What would it take for us to reach out to those who have terrorized us and say: 'You must have suffered deeply. You must have a lot of hatred and anger toward us to have done such a thing to us. You have tried to destroy us and you've caused us so

much suffering. What kind of thinking has led you to take such an action?"

From - Calming The Fearful Mind by

Thich Nhat Hanh (A Vietnamese Buddhist monk)