

## ECHOES OF HEAVEN

Transformation. So many powerful ideas focus on the transformative nature of this existence we share under that sun. I want to resume where I left off on the previous pad – that is, a discussion about my hike to heaven.

When I returned to “Earth” after my peaceful visit at the top of the world, the echoes of my experience found me. I didn’t realize that the place I had found was heaven until I heard these echoes. Again, I am speaking in metaphor here – I feel I have to clarify that due to my recent life changes and the way my writing was used to vilify me. I know very well that I was in New Hampshire and that the place I found was just ‘a place’. But it was also heaven, from my perspective. I want to tell you why I think so. I’m not going to keep arguing my sanity. Just listen, if you so choose, to my words. I have more space with which I can use to elaborate now – and I’ve had time to consider what I experienced. Forgive the reiterations – I need to start from the... a... beginning.

Silver Lake State Park. I found it while exploring my new home here in Nashua, New Hampshire. It caught my attention and so I visited, in curiosity, the park when I had a free afternoon. A beautiful day – clear skies, 70s. Nestled against a hill, the lake was busy with happy families cooking and sharing time. I decided to look for a spot to take pictures of the scenery, so I walked a path leading up the nearby hill. A nice hike, but I hadn’t found a good spot yet so I kept up the hill. I came to a fork at the path, and chose the path leading further up hill, hoping to find a good vantage from height. Real quick, this entire account is as accurate and clear as I can make it – I will provide perspective after I give the facts of my hike.

I reached the end of the path up the hill but noticed a deer trail through the brush, leading yet further up hill. I picked up a broken pine branch to help navigate the brush, and I cautiously proceeded along the deer trail. I stopped a couple times – as my imagination told me perhaps this was unsafe – but felt pulled towards what I knew would eventually be a great vantage for photos. I emerged from the brush to find a huge, empty field on the side of this hill I’d been climbing. I could see the hill’s crest at the opposite side of the field.

The field was peaceful, wildflowers and tall grass swaying in the wind. The expansive blue sky meeting the hill’s crest called to me, so I continued upwards. I reached the crest, and I was at the top of the world. A massive field of young corn stalks spread out across the flat hilltop.

Surrounding this hilltop were massive northern pines but I was almost level with their height as the trees were below this hill, so my view was not obscured by them. And what a view it was. A massive, calm, deep blue sky sat just above me with an occasional lone cloud drifting towards the horizon. Clouds so close, at this height on this hill I was sure I could touch them. The sun blazed just above my head, but not in an oppressive way. I was not uncomfortable in its warmth or brilliance, I was simply consumed by it. My companion, sharing with me this cornfield atop the world. There were no people, no sounds other than the wind in my ears and the rustle of the new corn stalks – each perhaps only two or three feet tall. I leaned upon my walking stick... and lost myself in majesty.

After some time of just watching the beauty around me; of admiring the precise rows of cornstalks, of watching the darting birds dance around me in pursuit of a snack – surely performing a little for their lonely spectator, of just being... I had to ask:

“Who’s there? Who did this, who brought me to this place? What am I to see here – anything? Or am I only here to bask in serenity?”

Am I alone? I mean, there were no people – and there were plenty of critters – but was this beauty truly just for me? Or was I sharing it? What is my purpose here? So I asked – I spoke aloud to the top of the world.

“Who do I thank for this? You, Ra? Ist, are you singing with me up here? Horus, did you lead me to this place? Thoth, did your wisdom find me here?”

I could hear only the wind as it rippled the stalks – like a whisper of love.

“Or was it you, Christ? Is that your love I hear on the wind? Elohim, is that your embrace I feel in the sunlight – or is that the hands of Aten? Or is it you here with me, Melchizedek? Has your inspiration shaped this timeless nursery of light and life?”

Powerful names. Ancient names. Names that hear for words that speak them.

“Is it just me, then? Are all of us not one, the stalks and the gods, my love for this place and your love for me... perhaps it is you, Mom, that shares with me this hill.”

Only the wind answered. The sun, listened. The birds, hunted. And I... offered my thanks to whoever it was that led me to that place. I sat down on a slab of granite, and quietly resumed my thoughts.

Bees floated by, diligently gardening their little slice of reality. Beetles climbed me as I had climbed their hill. Time... measured only by how long it took a single cloud to pass my vision. And then... a voice. I stood and leaned on my stick as I watched a young couple approach from a row of corn. The young man peeled away from his companion to approach me. Maybe 20 years old, olive skin of – just assuming – some Mediterranean lineage, stopped twenty feet from me.

“Hey... we’re trying not to get lost – do you know of a path near here?”

A large, silver cross swung from his right ear. A Christian cross.

“No... I came up from the state park down the hill. I don’t know the paths on the other side of the corn.”

He glanced down the hillside across the field where the pines reclaimed the land.

“Oh. Okay, we’ll keep looking. Thanks.”

“Be well.”

I watched them leave, but that prominent cross stood out to me. A path? And no longer alone?

“Christ, then – did you hear me?”

Reinvigorated, I began carefully picking my way along the rows of corn while speaking aloud once again.

“A message? Or chance?”

I would brush an occasional stalk with my hand, a caress – to show my appreciation.

“This is your hill, isn’t it? Your path is to that sun – is mine not? Maybe it was Elohim, or…”

A cricket began to sing, catching my attention. Just one cricket, a chirp now added to the peace around me. A song, just for me.

“Well, if I’m the only one that can hear it, I’ll listen.”

I sat again, next to the stalks.

“Sing with us, Ist.”

A dragonfly – suddenly appeared. Flying right towards me, the dragonfly hovered about seven feet away.

“Hello.”

I watched as it landed four feet from me. The dragonfly – their nature to be somewhat erratic and twitchy – sat in front of me, stark still – facing me. I was close enough to see its eyes, very clearly, as they fixed on me. I waited for it to take flight, but it remained still. So I got my phone out of my pocket – intending to capture a picture but anticipating scaring it away with the movement.

“You want me to take a picture of you, then?”

So I did. At 1428 hours, I took a picture of that visitor to the top of the world while the cricket and Ist sang. And then it left, I didn’t see it again.

“Thank you for sharing this place with me,” I told the stalks. I told the critters.

I thanked the cricket and asked it to continue its song after I left this beautiful place. I shared some words of encouragement with the stalks, wishing them fortune in their dance with infinity, to reach the sun. I thanked my mom and whoever else had shared with me this experience. I used my walking stick to craft a symbol into the dirt where I had been sitting – a symbol that I wear on my skin, a symbol of peace, balance, and unity. A symbol of paradox. Two ankhs, overlaid atop the other, one inverted but aligned at the cross bar:

“I am grateful for this experience.”

The middle symbol is what I left at the top of the world. And then I retraced my steps, and rejoined the rest of the world at the foot of the hill, at Silver Lake.

I was overcome with emotion as I read about cultural interpretations of crickets and dragonflies. The native tribes of America believed them to be messengers between the spirit world and the realm we currently share. Crickets, specifically, as their song is that of spirit – their voice the voices of those beyond the veil. And dragonflies... cultures around the world view dragonflies as powerful symbols of renewal, transformation, and balance. Due to their juvenile existence in water and their mature existence in sky, they are considered representations of both realms and harbingers of change. Their strong flight and agile movements imply balance and power – good fortune. Isis was associated with dragonflies as she was a goddess of renewal and of the Nile. In Japan, dragonflies represent eternal love.

I believe I went to heaven, and I believe I had a spiritual experience. I certainly believe in coincidences, but I also believe in ancient wisdom. I think people that existed in nature – and we so rarely do now – I think their observations are what they are for a reason – even in faith. I think I spoke with my mother on top of the world, in that little piece of heaven. And everyone else with whom love still connects me despite the veil. I think love is the most powerful tool we have in this life – and I love the experience that I found on the other side of the Field of Reeds. I love you – sing with us, Isis. Walk with us, Christ.