

Temple of the Nine Dragons

A SOHA Story

By Gnostic Nick

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Dedicated to Randy

Thank you for leading me to the pagan goddess of Spring, to the Sanctuary of Healing Arts, for encouraging me on this quest, and for being the first male friend whom I can be vulnerable with.

I. The Threshold

I know a place where dragons dwell.

Here, where the negative-carbon Bhutanese brought the terrifying beauty of the soaring air serpents into the fecund forests of the hills of western Oregon. Here, where hugging happens not out of obligation, but by a natural confluence of inter-pumping hearts beating together like the drums of our rituals. Where God in me bows to God in you, making the magnificent mirroring. Here, where the progeny of The Ottoman Empire embraces the offspring of the Greek philosopher, pride evaporating in the warmth of brotherly love.

Only after accepting that language will fail can the witness begin to tell what happened there.

And so the holy serenading sermon begins, passing into us through song, through medicine, through shaman. All of these lessons, all of these counselors, human and plant alike, all creating this impetus to grow, heal and progress, and so many reaching out so desperately and grasping so tightly onto ‘what was learned,’ in the need to capture it.

I ask all of my holy brethren to please have faith, loosen your grip and accept this insight:

*What was learned is ingrained in us
on a level that's deeper than thought.*

The constant crafting and reshaping of our consciousnesses, the lenses through which we uniquely conduct the One Holy Light, can never be captured in word. *Truth is greater than language.*

Our inability to adequately express the lessons that we've learned doesn't mean that we haven't learned them. Any sense that we have of failing to express a truth doesn't make it any less true, and doesn't mean that we don't possess that truth. The crafting continues regardless, for knowledge isn't lingual first, but second, our thoughts of knowledge being like the echoes of the source sound of intuitive knowing, beats reverberating.

*Strangers become mirrors before they become
characters. Even beasts have a place in the temple.*

II. Arrival and Omens

The arrival is not merely logistical. It is initiatory, full of confirmations that The Way arranged itself long before the travelers were aware that it was there. Doors open, presenting the communal path.

Saint Michael welcomes me to the temple, and shows me the path around the realm, and calms my terror over the approaching Amazonian plant spirits by asking me if the fear is coming from my gut or my mind. I realize that he's right. It was always all in my head. My guts have been pulling me here all along. Everything aligned to usher me into this healing pagan paradise, in fact. Only the spiritually blind would fail to see the metaphysical causality of the last minute obligation cancellation and the unforeseen windfall that permitted, then paid for, my passage into this wondrous place.

Whilst nuzzled by one of her cats (I've been surrounded by the feline force lately), his wife helps me develop a healthier attitude towards money, just before I pull the money oracle card. When it comes I shall be like that tribal leader from *Lawrence of Arabia* who exclaims something like: "Despite my wealth I am poor, because I am a river to my people!" The difference with me is

that all people are my people, they just don't know it yet. All are of the Infinite of the One.

The messengers come before the medicine, as if the land itself is testing whether the visitor remembers how to read the non-lingual alphabet of creation.

The toxin-protected newt tingles my hands long after holding and flipping him to admire his red-orange belly before happily setting him upon a mossy log, knowing that he appeared to assuage my fears of the coming ceremony, a comforting messenger of God, felt in the full force of unspeakable knowing. I tell Saint Michael that I may be immune to the newt's toxins, for countless hours of my formative youth were spent swimming in the Noyo River in the land of my birth, when I regularly hunted for the newts, plucked them from the river, and felt their natural divinity before returning them to the holy water.

And the messengers continued to come. Just before ingesting the spirits of the Amazon, it was a wood beetle that calmed me, crawling to me while I shook imperceptibly in my nest. Before drinking of the tea made from the flesh of the gods it was a centipede, that which I once feared; I brought him outside and placed him in the sun,

silently thanking him for helping me remember that I'm always okay. Nothing threatens eternity.

*Omens abound, for everything is
a signifier, and nothing is only itself.*

We lay eggs in our nests, here where the wild turkeys tease the outermost fringes of domesticity. Is that not the holy heart of humanity returning to its core truths, where wild spirits are held by the communal fire, nature nurtured, but never tamed? Those who protect such spaces protect the power of healing for the whole of humanity. *It's coming.*

By dedicating his land to the healing of his holy brothers and sisters has the keeper of this realm crossed over from the moral ambiguity of ownership into the honorability of guardianship. The maestra calls him a steward, and I think of how humanity developed the mind that it has for just that: stewardship: protecting and partnering with The Holy Mother in the service of all of life.

Maybe if this story serves enough people he'll invite me to be one of his 'artists in residence,' for when he tells us that we've been called here in order to join his family I'm surprised at my lack of doubt. It's strange how comfortable I feel here.

III. Opening the Vessel

The first opening is tender, almost floral, and it begins before the mind is aware that it's there.

Blue Lotus cracks my heart open, and what leaks out Maestro Cacao collects and carries forward. They introduce me to the drums and usher me into song and dance. Something is coming. Soon I shall have to face my fears. But I'm grateful to the plant allies for welcoming me. They help me open up and accept the place, a critical step in allowing its offered lessons in. My dreams are vivid, as my new teacher foretold. They tell coded stories of the coming participants.

The next day the deeper plant intelligence enters, twining separate traditions into a single ascent.

The little holy children entice the serpentine vine of Amazonia to hold hands with San Pedro, and together they cleanse my lens so I may hold it to my third eye, my sight piercing the firmament.

Melody becomes the first architecture of safety.

The music of the priestesses of the temple provides cover for our feelings at first, for none may hear our outpourings. But then the music is

more than cover, for it engulfs us all in a shared sea of holy water. The maestra is the mast around which we craft our vessel, upon which the holy children paddle us all out to The Sea of Source.

From my nest aboard The Ark I spread my wings unseen, soon taking flight to join the swift encircling the dragon dome before soaring out into the crisp, cool morning air through the ritual of guided breath. Inspiration in, epiphany out. Hold it for as long as you can, ten percent deeper, twenty percent deeper even, the flagging of our inner flames awaiting their oxygenated renewal.

Expanding lungs are fuel for the inner fire.

Language is lent to what the body is learning.

The maestra speaks of neuroplasticity, the pliability of the walls of the portal stretching to meet the greater requirements of the increasing luminosity shining from my breast, like those paintings of Christ with his heart enflamed, his halo burning bright in his mind's reflection of his perfect fidelity to the Spirit dwelling within us all.

The old books and theories arrive, not as abstractions, but as lamps held up to experience.

Huxley's theory of the reducing valve of consciousness that narrows perception for the

sake of the survival of the embodiment of energy into mass comes to mind. Being privy to the full field of perception pervading the realm of pure light isn't always conducive to our sustainment.

Within that widening aperture, thought condenses.

Whilst conferring with the Amazonian spirits my thoughts weren't necessarily different, but more massive. They were of greater gravity, and held more water. It was a wonderous feeling: I needed nothing, and that's all that I needed. There was nothing to achieve but to receive the present.

At the heights of my ecstasy, I think:

I accept it all. I have submitted.

Bliss does not erase the world. It reveals which parts of the world were there in the first place.

The magic medicine makes my mind vibrate at such a high frequency that no trouble, no narrow perception of the ego-self can cling to it, and every illusion of division drops into oblivion beneath me. Only the permanence remains, and it's of such a blissfully-shimmering, holy substance that my heart overflows once again, washing even the memory of every worry away.

Serpentine movements become embodied truths.

At one point I sense that I'm the serpent, the cobra rhythmically dancing side to side, and that the priestesses are the snake charmers. I'm being pacified, and brought into balance with the whole.

I rock with the slightest of horizontal rhythms while listening to the honey-voiced priestesses perched at the apex of their overlapping arts. Once more does the image of the swaying cobra come into my mind's eye, and I'm reminded of the premonition that I'm Dionysus reincarnated.

The mystic medicine man in me is fascinated by this art of entrancement unfolding all around us – the diversity of harnessed forces and expressed elements playing off of one another, continually gaining greater cohesion in growing demonstration of the lesson that the whole is becoming much more than the sum of its parts.

And still the revelation refuses to remain private.

The synergistic force of our collective field of consciousness opens the portal to the unparalleled power of shared healing. For, where once I thought in terms of 'my healing,' I now know that it's always been *our* healing. Wellness is wholeness.

Upon the broadening blank canvas of our collective consciousness do we paint in

partnership with one another, each medicine a specially-colored and textured paint into which we dip our own unique, divinely-designed brushes.

A priestess appears as the embodiment of this collective tenderness, turning song into shelter.

From the psychic ether do I propagate the cherry blossom, and she pollinates the air with saving song. When she rains roses upon me whilst exiting the temple, all despair dissolves into full-hearted hope. You can't fill a cup that's already full, and so my heart spills over and falls from my eyes. "What if a man were serenaded by such an angel every night?" I ask myself. "Would he cease to be a man, and become the blissfully conquered captive of such a siren, wishing that Ra would never rise so that he may remain in the sacred space of the temple darkness, the pregnant void of total possibility, awash in her radiant warmth?"

When she was a girl her mother grew roses outside her bedroom window. Honey-sweetened rosewater, she is. She sprinkles it around the temple, keeping our fear of the bear at bay.

She intends to embody love. Mission accomplished.

The song of gratitude goes on forever, but it's not long enough. By the end of every night the

exhaustion is supreme, and yet serene, with no strain in it. The earth is my body, the water is my blood, the air is my breath, the fire is my spirit.

“Don’t forget,” the shaman says, “rest is the reformation of the flesh around the lessons of the medicine.” Remember: the body keeps the score.

The teaching of water then carries the vision east.

We speak of water often, for its nature holds a holy lesson: The Source of Life, effortlessly does it change forms in response to its environment, enacting the same evolutionary intelligence divinely ingrained in every biological form that’s sustained by it, every being formed from the ‘random and accidental mutations’ that are anything but random and accidental. This natural, easy progression is what Taoists call *effortless action*.

Water is content to sink into the lowest of places, to be solidified and icily encased in the mountain, to rise above all fixed sense of itself and become the cloud that rains itself back into the rivers and the lakes, forever running to and from the Sea of Source, in and out like the breath, the cycle of eternal renewal, the constancy of change that permits the endless possibilities of life. Is that not existence, the Infinite of One?

IV. The Bear in the Temple

No temple worthy of the word temple teaches only through sweetness. We invite the darkness to know the light, the fear to know our courage.

Some people are so imbalanced within, and face such a constancy of fear and uncertainty, and entertain such uninhibited conception that the medicine unleashes an unplacatable monster. So it is with one of our brothers, whom the little holy children tease until he can't take it anymore, and the burrow of the den is uncovered, the bear bursting forth. Shadowy forces dance at his feet as he tears through the temple. "Have no fear," I hear, "they're here for him, not you." I can feel the distress of my holy brethren, and wonder if I'll have to uncoil and strike in order to protect them.

All are ill at ease, the healing ceremony turning traumatic. I realize that if the container cracks, this could turn tragic. Thank God that the container holds, but only because all of us press against the plaster. And so, even as the growling, lashing, bellowing bear claws at the narrowing seams between us, and it seems we may come

undone, our loving, trusting reliance upon one another keeps the healing space fully intact.

The crisis gathers in waves: prophecy, discipline, danger, and the miracle of not fleeing oneself.

Doors open all around me, showing me the path, even as the tormented bear cries out: “Why won’t the door open?!” When he flees what for him are the crushing confines of the inner sanctum, and howls at the moon outside, I’m reminded that I was told that this was coming, having heard the howls from the forest earlier.

And then there was the curly hair hanging from the upstairs towel rack foretelling of the appeasing angel whom would rescue the group whilst our guru negotiated with the beast. A thousand times is he futilely hushed, for he hears none of it, and it takes everything that our guru’s got to keep the looming catastrophe from befalling us, deftly pulling The Sword of Damocles away with his every swipe at the single horse hair that keeps the sword from falling from wherever it may hang in the dark upon we, the attendees of this bounteous, endangered banquet.

Running barefoot to the far corner of the holy land, she’s responsible for his safety, and retrieves him. And as the impending peril continuously

rears its hideous head, and I refuse to fly into fight or flight mode, and hold my position in the container, I finally know my might and, through it, find the love for myself that I've long sought.

And yet still does the beast rage. I silently will him to stay down, else he may well be put down, for his aggravation of my burly buddy is reaching a tipping point, and I see him begin to boil over.

“Why must you impose your spirit quest upon everyone else’s?!” I silently scream at the unruly bear, unable to avoid horrible thoughts, like:
some animals need to be put down for the sake of the rest.

Corralling him so stresses our teacher that, post-mauling, she's compelled to consult her own teacher for support. He reminds her that everything she feels is there to be fully felt, to teach, and so she must remain open to all of it, no matter how dark or painful, so that it may pass through her. It's the catharsis of digging-up buried burdens so that they may be released by being fully felt. When she shares this with us, I think about how progress is provocation, how insight is instigation, and about how bears clawing at the earth opens the space for new seeds to fall and germinate into our Mother's endless renewal.

After his healing and overnight hibernation, the bear tells me that I'm an arachnid, because my legs stretch into all eight dimensions. He doesn't realize that I'm the snake that feeds on spiders, and so I know that there are actually *infinite* dimensions, and that my bite may kill a bear if he refuses to leave my pit in peace, for clearly our innumerable rattled warnings were left unheeded. He apologizes to my friend for biting his head off, and I joke that growing a new head can't be easy.

The bear becomes both comic and catastrophic, a holy disruption that no one can easily dismiss.

Who knew that bears could play the piano, and sing with such sweet melancholy? When he makes the wild turkey call in my friend's face, baiting him to fight back and taking the test of composure to its limits, it takes all of my willpower not to burst out in a fit of laughter. Refusing to react and break containment continues to reflect a bottomless well of inner strength. *The bear is here for my inestimable benefit.*

When the rampage is at its endangering heights my strength becomes a superpower, and I know and love myself more than ever. I swear that the song of gratitude sung by the priestesses is pointed towards me for my role in holding the

sacred space. When our energy ultimately shifts from defense to acceptance of even he, the wild, crazed beast that's finally, temporarily tamed by the maestra, I find that I love us all, *including* him. Only by being tested may we know ourselves. Only by being continually thrust into the flame overnight is our iron slowly forged into the steel of the sword and shield of the champions of God.

Even the beast becomes part of the ceremony's music, though not without cost.

Sweet-sounding angels pacify wild beasts, casting-out the demonic spirits with the purgative power of song. The bear reminds me that the stones on the shore of the sea are only smooth because they've been perpetually pounded by waves for time immemorial, ground against countless grains of sand. Growth is always uncomfortable, and so it is that the chrysalis must be cleaved for the butterfly to fly. Such are the growing pains propelling every metamorphosis.

What first seems like drowning becomes instruction in how to ride the arising force.

I feared that the wave was here to capsize our ship, but the holy children paddle us up its arcing ascent, all the way to its crest, and we turn around to ride it back into the reality that we're remaking.

Fighting the wave is like fighting fate. *Let the current carry you, the tide flooding and ebbing through you.*

I pray that the shoreline of The Sea of Source be swept of old sandcastles by the wave we ride. Let us erect new castles roomy enough to provide sanctuary for every creature that comes to be cleansed in the revivifying, salty spray, *even beasts.*

We know ourselves through the trial, not the comfort. We only love the light because of the darkness, each illuminating the other. In the end, I know that the Yin and Yang love and need each other, and, arm over my face, awash in tears, I have three thoughts as I plunge into slumber:

The greatest blessings wear the most convincing disguises.

I'm beginning to doubt my doubt.

Nothing is accidental, not even accidents.

The bear has brought to bear a great test for the truth of Christ Consciousness: Treat everyone with unconditional love and you'll *always* be right.

V. The Human Circle

*In the quieter aftermath, human tenderness
returns in smaller gestures of the greatest size.*

Twice my sister expresses gratitude for being in the presence of so many healthy male influences, something that's usually lacking in her life. 'If she only knew,' I joke to myself. Many times do I laugh reflecting upon how cute it was when I gave her a tentative, one-armed half-hug, and how she playfully grabbed my other arm and pulled it around her as well, rescuing me from my uncertainty in the completion of the embrace.

*Humor makes its own entrance, folding history,
rebellion, and community into the firelit field.*

A brother tells us a joke about three men parachuting from a failing airplane with too few chutes, but only after he asks us who the three men are. I chide him about needing to work on his delivery, and the laughs of my sister and Miss Mellifluous is the priceless payment for my jest. Our joking brother was there in Antelope when Osho tried to push humanity past its conserved constraints, and the conservatives killed him for it. Now that ranch is home to a Christian school.

Could there be any clearer a demonstration of the king of the mountain type of mentality, or greater proof of the egotism and immaturity of his killers? *Wild, Wild Country* isn't a documentary, it's a training manual. Don't conflate the crimes of the few fighting for the right of the ranch to exist with the invaluable teachings for the many, else continue to have your love, potential and communal prosperity constrained like the Antelope residents. Osho wasn't against Christ, he was simply beyond the confines of Christianity.

Then comes one of the reckonings: the correction that wounds pride while widening philosophy.

Miss Mellifluous comes out to sit with me, and my pulse quickens. When she corrects my idea of sentience I ever so gradually get past my pride and come upon two priceless principles:

(1) Being mistaken, or misinformed, or faltering, or stumbling, or feeling terrified or insecure or anything else that diminishes my idea of myself can only ever threaten *that idea*, the ego. Never may such things threaten who and what I irrevocably am. For all beings, even the purest conductors of Source, even those who become the greatest leaders of their fellow holy brethren, sometimes crack and crumble. And when you

reach a point when you know who and what you are and what your purpose is deep inside your heart, you find a faith and self-love that can't be tarnished or even touched by what your mind thinks of yourself from moment to moment. We crumble so as to be able to remake a better, stronger form of ourselves. Our missteps aren't mistakes, but opportunities for growth, and nothing that we essentially are can be negated by what we or anyone else may *think* that we are.

(2) If sentience is sense-perception, and if, in the non-dualist, monist, pantheist paradigm, we're selves of The Self, existing as impermanent, mortal embodiments of the permanent, immortal One, God... if we're the Infinite of One interacting with The One that's all things at all times, with existence being a constant interaction with God, something that I'm more certain of after this spirit quest than ever before, then sentience is awareness of Self before there's an awareness of self. Awareness of self is the mental domain of man alone, at least on this planet, in this dimension. But awareness of Self is the domain of *every* embodiment of God, of *every* being existing within total Being, and belongs as much to the birds and the bees and the flowers and the trees as it does to humankind, even while

everyone's exact sense perception is special. One Being being infinite beings for the sake of being, our uniqueness evolved in service of the whole.

No being is ever independent of Being, and, thus, of any other being. The great irony, then, is that the flora and the rest of the fauna are enlightened, because they sense without the falsifying perception of a separable self. They're incapable of occluding the conduit set between themselves and God. Thus are we humans equally gifted and cursed by the mental powers that both grant and burden us with a sense of ourselves.

And *that's* the great gift of the entheogenic medicines bequeathed by The Holy Mother to man: the ability to remove ourselves from the conduit, and thereby better receive the holy communion with God and one another, the sense of separation washed away. Like the dog, God spelled backwards, we're already enlightened. We just need the medicine and union that allows us to forget that we aren't. As Ram Das says, in a line that I've heard several times whilst here: *We're all just walking one another home*. We're walking one another back into the white, holy light from which we came, where all sense of separation dissolves into the infinite oneness that we are.

The correction becomes a larger lesson of learning.

Above all, I'm a student, for, as Aristotle said, the truly educated never stop learning, and know that everyone and everything is their teacher.

Only the foolish, limited teacher fails to find that they're equally the student, and that it's the tyrannical teacher whom believes that it's a one-way street; that they're the only ones doing the teaching. When the teacher fails to be equally the student, when the bridge moves in only one direction, those on the receiving side slowly close themselves to the reciprocity of all learning.

In my head I hear the lesson:

They know what you don't know. You know what they don't know. Thus does ego speak not out of a sense of service, but to prove its superiority, and does wisdom listen without objective or condition, for the sake of everyone.

The mirror, the lens, the ego, and the light gather into a single metaphysical grammar.

Ego is the reflection of what we project upon the looking glass of existence. We craft, cleans and polish the lens in the temple, and through it does the holy light shine. It's similar to electrical theory: the best conduction comes when you get

out of the way of the conduit between yourself and the energy source. So let us conduct as clean and potent an energy as we can. For, perhaps if we project enough pure light in the combining of our rays we can burn through the looking glass and remake reality as we see fit, like those cruel kids who send smoking ants into full retreat with the malicious use of magnifying glasses. It's the same reason that inspiration is the source of all creation, because it comes from conducting Source. It's also the reason that we know in the heart before the mind, because thought is slower.

From there the critique widens beyond the self.

Modernity is the deluded deceiving us into believing that sensing indistinction is delusional.

The answer isn't an ideology, but a path for all.

The Tao encompasses all whom are folded into the overlapping Way walked by everyone.

The lessons pour-forth from the inner temple.

All things spring from the center, that which is everywhere and nowhere at all. *It's all for the IS.*

VI. The Teaching Beneath the Teaching

The temple's pagan and Christian echoes begin to speak to each other, exposing how ancient symbols survive beneath a human history of appropriation.

When the Christian Esther found tradition too constraining for the truth that she was conducting, she was necessarily reborn Eostre, the pagan priestess. And I'll never fail to be amusingly disturbed by the irony that Christ, too, was a pagan before the emperor turned his teachings into a religion, and that even a shallow dive into the history of Christianity reveals the indisputable fact that everything the self-labeled 'Christian' believes originated in Christ and the religion that empire made of his teachings is but the poisoned fruit of the Tree of Knowledge whose roots penetrate so deeply into the wisdom of The Holy Mother that 'paganism' actually means *provenance*.

As you near the pure gnosis at the center of the heart, you approach the Christ dwelling within us all. To confuse that universally-accessible sagacity with personhood is the vainglorious foolhardiness of idolatry. Before the arrogation, Eostre was the goddess of spring and dawn representing fertility and renewal, the root of

‘Easter.’ She’s associated with the spring equinox, and is symbolized by rabbits and eggs. Is it a coincidence that we build our nightly nests around the maestra, and so often speak of being reborn in this temple, and engage in ritualistic worship until sunrise, and that I keep seeing my own oracle card “The Arising” in my mind?

Healing, then, is not a product but an ecology.

Provide the perfect environment, the ideal confluence of renewing forces, and you can heal almost anything. For medicine is, first and foremost, born of the endlessly bounteous bosom of The Holy Mother, but blossoms with music, fruits through the cultivation of artistic sensibility and its compelled creation, and only finds its fullest, ripening form through communal love.

And so the communal ceremony renews us all.

The power of this transformative experience is impossible to define or capture with words. The triumvirate of holy medicine plus ceremony plus community opens a portal to God, and She sits here beside us, His great, loving grin joyfully creasing Her/His brow. For the environment the maestra makes creates a communal channel for the conducting and converting of source energy that can’t be replicated by even the best of my

solo journeys. This is native healing. This is ancient medicine. Eostre is a force of steady, iron-clad guidance. When she later tells me that I'm an enlightened being it's an invaluable confirmation that I'm indeed on the right path; that I've always been on 'The Way, The Tao' unfolding before me.

From that testimony, an assignment takes form.

Now I know my mission with the medicine:

I shan't try to direct its unfathomable force, but to hold as open a space as possible so that what I most need to know may naturally arise to fill the void of my absolute allowance. For if you hold enough space every truth shall arise to fill it.

And because the revelation must be carried forward, the hand is called back to the page.

The maestra reminds me to pen with ink before passing my premonitions into the digital databank, for gnosis flows from heart to hand, from the core to the consciousness to the ink. So it is that runes run into the ink penned to page, these letters like spells cast upon the unclosing consciousness, so long as I spell them correctly.

I am the sagacity of the penniless scribe that knows and counts a wealth beyond measure.

VII. The Temple Carried Forward

A vision of another temple, seeded from this one.

Studying the ways of the maestra, I can't help but think of the evolution of my own temple in the redwoods; my spiritual sanctuary and writers' retreat. 'Redwood Log Temple' flashes into my mind. I see wildcrafting, hemp grown for textiles, large solar yurts set upon permanent foundations dotting the descending hillside. I see holy brothers and sisters coming, practicing pottery and living architecture and sculpture, and everyone taking and planting their own seedling beside their yurts, in the making of their own unique, holy space, digging their own fire pits, encircling them with their own sacred stones pulled from the river.

I see massive compost mounds inoculated with mycelium, the undergrowth of the fruiting flesh of the gods eventually bursting into magical medicine above ground. I see orchards and gardens and goats that are never killed, but that are treated like fellow holy beings as they munch back the forest, keeping the grassland open, constantly fertilizing our cultivations with their nitrogen-rich excrement. I see the exploration of every form of artistry. I see the ancient roundtable

symposiums of my classical Greek forebearers reborn around the fire, folding into the wisdom of the natives of every primeval corner of the planet.

The personal vision expands in scope.

Being in The Ark, and riding the flooding tide of entheogens from the ceremony to the Sea of Source and back, I think of old ships, and that the paint is peeling from the derelict vessels. Let us deconstruct them and build new vessels that may accommodate everyone is our collective journey, for all are chosen, even as few choose the choice.

The symbols keep following, even after leaving.

Moths keep making their way into my bedroom, posting-up in the corners of my doorway and closet. They alight upon every threshold. I'm told that they're signs of transformation. It makes perfect sense to me. I told my brothers and sisters that we're all moths to the flame of the temple because we're here to carry the fire forward, blazing a path for everyone.

After the maestra compliments me and confirms my path, I float back to the high desert like the cloud that carries the water of this valley back into the mountains, so that it may rain upon

the Cascade Lakes and run back through its riparian replenishing of the land once more.

What remains beneath the temple can't be spent.

I'll never forget my time at SOHA. I'll never forget how everything I've felt coming crystallized in the sacred ceremonies, alluding to priceless treasure. I'll never forget the dawning of the divinity in all, or any of my holy brothers and sisters. I'll never forget the maestra, the keeper, the birdcall, or the music so sweet that I can taste it on my tongue as I write this reverential record.

There's an uncountable coinage of spiritual treasure buried beneath The Nine Dragons, and I'll always remember assisting in the summoning that unearthed it, and helped sing it into the sweet song of honey-lipped Ms. Mellifluous and Eostre, the maestra who brought me fully into the fold.

If there's a story that can heal the world may this story be the one that heals the world for you.

