

AGAIN LAST NIGHT

Lion Goodman

It happened again late last night. I awoke with a start, feeling as if a great weight had been pressing down on me, like a huge cement block had somehow been laid on top of my entire body and was slowly crushing the life out of me. I was covered in my own sweat, so I got up, washed myself, and began to walk the quiet country road. I've been doing that a lot lately. More and more often, in fact.

You see, there are these bright flashes of colored patterns that seem to open up right in front of me. And the fact that the clouds above me seem to part and dissolve when I look into them intensely. And then there are the voices. And the lights. I want to talk about the lights.

I'll be walking along (it almost always starts when I'm walking), and suddenly a point of space about ten feet in front of me and belly-button level will begin to vibrate and shimmer – not with any particular color at first, simply as if the invisible essence of the air itself gets set in motion. Do you know how the desert shimmers? Or the highway on a hot day? Or city lights through heated smog? It's like that, except that it's so close, it couldn't be caused by heat reflection. Even at night it happens, and this shimmering space moves along in front me. If I turn a corner, it precedes me, sometimes sooner than I know I'm turning. I don't even want to think that it may be leading me. No, that is too much to consider.

I adjusted to the presence of this shimmering space. In fact, I began to enjoy its company. I am not what you'd call a social creature. I've been called a loner more than once. But it bothered me when it began changing. No longer a shimmering stuff, it began to take on an amorphous color. Sometimes rose, sometimes a violet hue or a bluish tint. Then pulsations began. Calmly at first. Rhythmic throbs – reminiscent of a heartbeat. Then the thing was vibrating more rapidly. Sometimes it repulsed me, making me feel sick to my stomach. Other times it attracted me, and I got rushes of energy up through my body, like pre-orgasm shivers. Those changes began accelerating. New rhythms appeared, and new colors, orchestrated in unbelievably complex patterns. I became mad with excitement and confusion.

This changeable thing (I cannot name it because it is not a something, but a growing process) appeared only when I was alone. As if the presence of others inhibited it, or inhibited my ability to see it. Yes, I think the latter, because at times in a bar or dance hall I would catch a flash of it being there – just under my ability to perceive it. When I wanted to be rid of it, I would go to crowded places. But mostly I desired its company and wanted it near me always.

It was as if it were *teaching* me -- not in the sense of school learning (which I always despised), but in the sense of a teaching machine, one that takes me as far I'm possibly able to go, then stretches me a bit further in order to expand my limits, until I am going further out than I thought possible. The patterns were getting far too complex for me to comprehend. I was experiencing sensory overload – it was just too much, too fast. At one point, I almost screamed with confused frustration, and then, suddenly, in a completely unexpected way, it collapsed up into simplicity. I was hearing and seeing patterns at ranges and with perspectives I had not previously known.

This comprehension spread throughout my auditory and visual world. Music has since taken on new meaning, as if my attention has more depth. Beethoven and Haydn are comprehensible now, and the simple beats of rock, which I formerly enjoyed, seem juvenile and stupid. I notice moiré patterns on fences as I drive or walk by. A yard of green grass undulates with the wind like a field of ripe wheat. Colors are bright, the world sparkles. I can actually comprehend the songs of birds, not with any anthropomorphism, but in pure appreciation of patterns, pitch, time intervals, and echoation. How did I miss these things before? Was I completely blind and deaf and dumb?

The conversations of people around me seem so inane, so empty and nonsensical. They carry no meaning, no breadth of character. I am frustrated by my attempts to communicate this to anyone. I feel so alone, yet so alive. And I cannot reconcile these opposites.

And then three weeks ago, a door opened. My teacher, this movement, this mad machine, was performing in myriad color pattern changes, like a sophisticated kaleidoscope. I was doing my best to observe with focused attention. Quite all-at-once, the mandala-like patterns did a sort of dimensional flip, and the amorphous mass of color turned into a narrow, horizontal, beam of neon-like blue light. *A narrow, horizontal, neon beam of blue light.* Another dimensional flip. Horizontal collapsed in on itself and became vertical. It stretched above and below my transfixed vision. Color slowly changed to violet, and like an opening slit, widened to a body-wide opening into – what? I saw what could have been described as a road, if it had had substance, but it did not. I saw what would have been sky if it had had depth and color, but it did not. I saw what could have been called a mountain if it had had mass, but it did not.

I stopped and stood silently, peering in through that doorway. My peripheral vision saw the world around me, but my attention was captured and drawn into this other world. It stood waiting. Inviting.

My next thought was that I didn't know whether my eyes were closed or open. I shut my eyes but it remained there, completely, within my vision. I saw this opening so clearly that I was spinning. I knew I could walk through that doorway. I knew that there might never be another chance. I vacillated. My lessons flooded over me, urging me to take this leap. My mind screamed with resistance. I felt frozen in indecision. Should I enter an unknown world or remain here in this known world? Leap or crawl away?

If there had been a way for me to know what awaited me, I might have walked through that door. The complete unknown was too much for me to face. I stood watching, waiting, ashamed at my inability to jump forward, as the door slowly closed, collapsing into a shimmering point of space, and disappeared. I realized then that I had blown this one and only chance -- that I would never see this teacher or this teaching again.

And for the past three weeks I have been looking in vain for that friendly shimmer in front of me. I have tried every method I knew for enticing it back into my life. And I have felt incredibly and unutterable alone. That's the worst part. I feel like I have lost the best friend I've ever had. It hurts. I've been crying a lot, grieving over this unnecessary loss.

And late last night, it happened. While I was walking. There was a point of space in front of me that began to vibrate, and shimmer....

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