



Everything I've Learned from Hallucinogens
MC Radiance

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Part 1

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Please feel free to send me your comments, critiques, testimonials etc.
My email is info@scorpiocraft.com. Hope you enjoy your read!

Part 2

1. GETTING TWISTED BY 'FRIENDS'

The first time I dropped acid was a mind opener, just not in the way I had hoped.

I went into the experience with great expectations. I was at an Ivy League college. My girlfriend at the time was, to say the least, a free spirit: a theatrical gal with huge tits, many extra pounds and a wide grin.

We found out that a certain student we both knew, let's call him B, had a pane (a sheet) of blotter acid.

Late afternoon on a Saturday when my homework was all done, the three of us sat in his dorm room. He offered me the small piece of paper. I put it on my tongue.

I felt the famous temporary zing of the chemical as it touched my papillae. I swallowed.

That was that. No big deal. I eagerly wondered what it was going to feel like.

My girlfriend then told me that she was going to wait until evening before doing her blotter. Oh. That was a bit disappointing. I would have liked us all to be on the same leg of the ride at the same time... but of course I couldn't untake my hit now.

After an hour, I was really feeling it! It was very energizing, very physical. Every cell in me wanted to be noticed. I needed to move around! So we three went for a stroll around the side streets of town, near campus.

The sun had set. B and my girlfriend K and I were all laughing it up. I was glad for their camaraderie. Until they informed me that they had both re-evaluated... and decided not to do their hits until the next day.

Um, okay. Not the end of the world. Ha ha ha~ I found myself laughing uproariously at this not very uproarious stimulus.

What I hadn't cottoned on to was how the two of them were plotting to mess with my head while I was in this naïve, defenseless condition. On my very first trip, I ran into a pair of manipulators.

It started noticing when they contradicted me after we had walked all the way around a nearby city block.

"Oh we're back here again," I pointed out.

"What do you mean?" they snickered.

"Well, we came by here before. I remember that street sign," I continued.

“No we didn’t,” they stated, deadpan.

I frowned: “Of course we did.” Didn’t we?

“No, silly, you must be tripping,” they insisted repeatedly, as if harmlessly jesting.

I knew I was telling the truth.

But what if they were actually right? According to our local consensus reality, i.e. ‘peer pressure’, I was making it all up. Uh oh. Could I really be sure now of my subsequent perceptions? I felt quite sane and in total control before... but the seed of evil Doubt had been planted...

At the same time, I did need their company. Anyone’s company! I required a guide to walk me through my first acid trip.

Yet, within two hours, my girlfriend and this dude both rather callously disappeared. Together. Yessir, they ditched me! They gaily hollered over their shoulders that at midnight they would meet up with me again at a certain frat party.

Then they were gone.

A frat party? Uh oh. I was not someone who would even be caught dead at a frat party. I didn’t think my K. was the type either. But then again we hadn’t been dating that long. She was a party girl, for sure. I began to have creepy thoughts about what she was up to with B.

I was now stranded, hyper-tense, and left to fend for myself.

So I went back to my bedroom. I lay down, and closed my eyes.

The visions came pouring through. A vivid flood! An electric torrent of Beauty! Ever morphing... yet nothing I could hold onto for more than a fraction of a second.

My inner eye eventually grew tired of the cartoons, so I set off again, out into the fresh air, hoping to find K. at the frat party with my treacherous friend.

Don’t do a frat party on acid. Big mistake. I never read that Before Dropping manual, which would have warned me to scout out a nice, peaceful waterfall with some loving friends.

Instead I wound up at a scream, stinky beer fest. Every yell amplified a million times, the music pounding like lead, the stench scraping my nostrils, no familiar faces in sight. I was feeling more and more alone in the Universe. Did I have anything in common with even one of these people?

No sign of K.

Down in the keg basement, I got myself trapped in human gridlock. The claustrophobia got worse! The body heat there was stifling; I began panicking. Sardined within the melee of jocks and rats, it would take me nearly an hour to force my way across the room and up the stairwell again, out the escape hatch.

Who among these frat blasting strangers would listen to my chemical predicament? Much less care?

I made it back to the main floor... where I discovered B slow dancing with my girlfriend. What the-

Suddenly, it all snapped into focus! That little slimeball had manipulated me into my current condition just to get in K's panties! And, to add insult to injury, the little slut was going along with the program.

Unless I was just being paranoid from the drugs...

"If that's what she wants, she can fucking well have it! See if I care!" I roared to myself after pulling the dagger out of my back.

I stormed back to my flat. I lay down, furious. I was done with this stupid trip! It was time to come down.

No one had warned me that acid doesn't work like that. Once the train has left the station, it's a six to eight hour non-stop ride, baby, before you can step off again.

I stared at the ceiling, praying for sleep, to little avail.

The visions flooded back. My body was stuck in 4th gear. The acid had probably been cut with something impure like strychnine: it had a metallic, speedy feeling. I had no choice but to surrender to the cartoons... and allowed their amazing beauty to distract me from the tight knot in my stomach.

At 3:30 a.m. our loud communal hallway phone jangled. [K was fond of phoning after parties, a habit which really alienated my sleeping flat-mates.]

K asked me, "Can I please come over?"

I rolled my eyes, quietly churning with mixed emotions: jealousy, disappointment, uncertainty, exhaustion. Still, I couldn't wait to hear her alibis in person.

Once in my bedroom, however, and warm in my arms again, Ms. Party-girl claimed that she was sorry for deserting me, she just didn't know where I was, etc.

Call me a wuss, but I forgave her... We made love. Everything felt right again. The healing energy flowed between us.

Cuddling afterwards was exactly what the doctor had ordered for my trip wind-down. We drifted into sleep peacefully...until the phone clanged like an alarm bell at 5 a.m.

I knew exactly who it was. I scrambled to the receiver like a linebacker, trying to minimize the number of rings so that my roommates wouldn't all murder me the next day. I couldn't believe my nightmare was going to begin all over. It was, of course, that weasel, B.

"We've gone to bed already," I spat. "What the hell do YOU want?"

"I want to talk to K."

"She doesn't want to talk to you."

"Please just let me talk to her for one minute. Just ask her if I can talk to her for one minute. Just one minute. One minute. Please?"

"This is bullshit."

I left the phone dangling and returned to my doorway. "B says he wants to talk to you..." I left the ball in K's court to see if she was, of her own free will, a traitor as well. It was a major acid test (pun intended).

She took the motherfucker's phone call!

I immediately went back to bed, seething. K returned in a minute, though, perkily relaying a message: B had invited us over to his dorm room for a late night spliff.

I should have gone there just to smack him down. What nerve! What gall! K said that she would go along with whatever I decided. I told her that we were going back to sleep, and that was final.

Within a couple of days, she finally figured out for herself that B was a weasel. But after my debut episode on acid, I wasn't so sure that she herself was not weasel-ish too!

So what did I learn from that night? I learned that sometimes smiling faces have hidden agendas. And I learned that if I would ever undertake an acid trip again, it would be under positive circumstances, among experienced people who could be TRUSTED.

[FYI. Acid was first tested by the most advanced manipulators in the world: the CIA.]

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2. THE FELINE TRIP

You might think that after such an inauspicious start, I would have been scared off hallucinogens for good. But that's not the case. Young and curious! Two more times during college I would trip the light fantastic.

Once, I was visiting my old friend, A, in Philadelphia. We had pored over Carlos Castaneda books on shamanism when we were teenagers. Now it was vacation time. One evening, we went to visit some of his bohemian friends in their Victorian house. In their low-lit living room, it was suggested that we could all drop acid together.

Given my first experience, I was more than a little leery (Leary?) about "doing it" with total strangers.

But A. assured me that these folk were not manipulators, they were all good eggs. Plus, he had already tested the stuff and it was mellow acid.

This was to be my Cat Trip.

After dropping, I started bonding with a black feline that belonged to one of A's friends. That may sound like no biggie to some of you readers, but let me tell you, to me it was Unprecedented. I had been deathly allergic to cats all my life. I often could not even enter a house of cats because the allergic onslaught would begin before I made it to the front door.

But among cats, this cat was different. And that night, I was feeling pretty different too. As I tuned in on him, and the cat tuned in on me, we could see just how smart we were in each other's eyes!

And I started to see what the cat saw, or, more exactly, how the cat saw. Cat-ness.

Given what we have all seen in the way cats strut and prowl and slink around, the rest of the evening's lesson should not prove too surprising.

The group went out for a lovely evening stroll down hilly but empty avenues whose red brick sidewalks were lined with magnificent oak trees.

My feet became AWARE.

I didn't know that feet could become aware. I noticed, probably for the first time, that I was walking on Mother Earth. I could even sense Her ENERGY, not as an intellectual thought in my head, but as a tingling through the soles of my feet. My soles were the connectors. I was like an antenna, roaming Her surface, making reassuring contact with Her every second or so, and transceiving information back and forth through my feet. I had cat paws, you might say.

Soon my gait began to change. I had to adjust my pace, my hips, my legs and all of a sudden... I was deep in my groove.

My “groove”? What ridiculous hippie talk. ‘Far out, man, groovy!’ blah blah.

Beyond semantics, this was indeed a big moment for me. I was having an overdue healing experience. Simultaneously with the gait adjustment, it hit me that for many years, I had been walking all WRONG. Stiff. Awkwardly. Not naturally.

And I didn’t even know it.

I had a flashback to the moment the problem had started. I had been a kid bouncing gaily around my driveway one day, when my father had reprimanded me about it.

“Stop bouncing like that when you walk.”

And being an obedient little boy, I stopped. Just to please him. I subtracted the spring from my step. I deleted the joy from my feet. I negated the naturalness from my movement across the planet’s surface!

In effect, my father’s bad advice had thrown me physically off balance. And I had submitted to it! The years had passed, and this unease had become one more sad, underlying cause of how awkward I felt about myself. I had given away some of my power, some of my innate joy. I had let someone intrude between me and my own feet. In a way, my body had become not-mine.

That evening in Philadelphia, however, I reclaimed the pace of my walk, my very own groove, my naturalness. I was back and present. In musician speak, I was walking “in the pocket”.

My musical endeavors with other hep-cats would soon be improving after that groovy, rhythmic experience.

[Also, not surprisingly, my relationship with my dad continued de-volving. My tardy rebellion from parental authority got more and more pronounced, too, both verbally and otherwise.]

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3. TACTILE SENSATIONS

Visuals have been rare during my trips, and rarely do they come except with eyes closed. This renders the term Hallucination almost irrelevant to my personal experience.

Hyper-aware would be a more accurate term.

Hallucinogens put me INTO my body, like slipping my soul into a cool new spacesuit. I started feeling every cell, all the way down to the tips of my extremities, and more. This contrasted sharply with my usual body sensation: how out-in-the-ethers I felt, being a daydreamer all the other days of the year.

You could say that mind-body split has been a big challenge for me. A split that needed healing.

[I do understand that other self-experimenters have different metabolisms from mine, not to mention different life lessons to learn, so it's normal if they get different results than I ever did.]

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4. APHRODISIAC EFFECTS

There was one trip I took with a conga-playing friend at college. We jammed for quite a few hours at his place and had a pretty good time, but nothing extraordinary happened. No breakthroughs of any importance.

Anyway, around 1 a.m, my percussionist announced that he was exhausted and was going to bed. I couldn't believe it! I was flying high as a kite! and would continue to be flying for many hours yet! But my bud was bailing on me in order to crash out.

Oh crap. Oh well.

I went home. Everyone in my house was fast asleep. What to do?

I lay in bed, of course, far too high to sleep. How was I going to occupy myself, all wound up with nowhere to go? I figured if I jerked off, it would help me to unwind and maybe doze off.

That's not what happened. Not at all! The acid latched onto my libido and became a relentless skyrocket aphrodisiac.

It was a long night of self-appreciation, one might say. I discovered that I could masturbate and achieve orgasm seven times in one night, all by myself. (A feat that I have never come close to, neither before nor after.)

Is such a kinky lesson valuable? I don't know. Still, the aphrodisiac properties of hallucinogens were unexpected, and very intriguing for a Scorpio like me. I couldn't wait to try dropping again, but with a willing girlfriend on hand.

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5. THE TIME WARP EFFECT

Sometimes a trip can be a non-event. I dropped once with a bass player in New York City. We jammed deep into the night to a drum machine. His recording deck was rolling, taping the results.

The hours went by. It wasn't Jimi Hendrix quality music, I knew that much. More hours dragged by...

Our sense of time stretched and warped and eventually went right out the window.

When the first rays of dawn were peeking in we realized that we had physically slowed down to turtle speed, down to slug speed... we weren't even managing to get out a note every ten seconds.

Fortunately, the tape had run out long before, so the evidence was gone.

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6. VOMIT: PAIN BEFORE PLEASURE

One of the trials of eating either magic mushrooms or acid is a very tight stomach for the first half an hour—and sometimes worse. In fact, back in NYC I remember one trippy hash brownie party that arrived hard on the heels of a spaghetti-and-meatball dinner.

I had never eaten hash brownies.

My mind felt so spinny. I had to sit and do the New York Times Sunday crossword, just to try to remain grounded. (I even completed the whole thing! which never happens normally. Correct answers, too.)

My friend sitting next to me had fallen silent. He was sinking deeper and deeper into the couch.

Another concerned guest asked him how he was feeling.

He apparently couldn't move to respond. He opened his mouth... and abruptly projectile-vomited his entire supper. It was a fire-hose stream. Like red paint spraying all over the carpet, all down his shirt and pants!

Like in that one Eminem video.

Poor bastard swore off hash or anything after that!

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7. THE EARTH IS A HOTTIE

I had figured out that the optimal environment in which to ingest this chemical was Nature. Under the trees, by a river, in the mountains, etc. Somewhere peaceful.

Sure, the Big Apple had some trees, but come Fall, the leaves in the city mostly turned brown, shrugged, gave up trying and just died.

I longed to witness the autumn foliage in its full regal splendor. I remembered all the reds and oranges of the maples, the brilliant yellows of the oaks, but how would that look while tripping?

So one autumn I organized a solo motorcycle trip up to the woods of Vermont. I was very excited at this prospect. A friend of mine knew a Montessori kindergarten teacher who lived up there. Far out in the boon-docks actually. Over the phone, the kindergarten teacher agreed to let me stay for a weekend, as a favor to her friend. I wondered how my gal pal had described me on the phone to this lady...

That motorcycle ride was the longest I had ever undertaken, and it was rough: it started to rain just as I hit Albany, and it didn't let up for the next 6 hours of the ride. I was one sodden, unhappy biker by the time I dismounted at my destination: the kindergarten teacher's bungalow in the hills.

[The drizzle promptly stopped. Murphy's law, eh?]

The teacher turned out to be a short Plain Jane, rather homely and very straight-laced. Knowing her crazy redhead friend back in Brooklyn, I was somewhat taken aback. I decided to play everything super-safe. But our conversation ground to a halt within a few minutes after I asked her what kinds of music she liked.

"I don't listen to music," she answered softly.

What? What?? How could anyone not listen to music? That was unthinkable. I quickly ascertained that my acid-fueled adventure plan would have to be a totally covert operation.

The next day, the rain clouds were gone. She and I went for a trek across the mountains.

I had six hits of blotter in my wallet. More than enough, right? While we were hiking through the woods, I surreptitiously ate two of them.

An hour passed. Nothing.

Wondering if the hits were all bogus, I ate two more. Another hour passed. Not a damn thing!

Well, obviously, I had been robbed. I ate the other two for no reason and griped to myself about dishonest people. I resigned myself to enjoying nature the regular way.

The kindergarten teacher lived close to a Vermont ski resort that hadn't opened its doors yet. She was very shy and not too communicative. We chatted politely here and there as we hiked past dainty waterfalls, rugged outcrops and slopes of grass. I took some photos.

Then, out of nowhere, Bam! It all hit me. All of it.

Instantly, I knew I had to be alone. And badly!

Fortunately, she let me wander off by myself. There was not a soul around for miles, apart from her.

I found myself a perfect spot. So I lay on my back in the fresh mountain air on one of those lush, green ski slopes. The foliage around me was orange, red, ochre, incredible! I tried to take it all in but failed.

I closed my eyes... and felt a familiar surge of erotic energy rising from the ground.

Suddenly I knew that Nature was a She. Absolutely. She was not just a mother, but a vast Sexual Being of planetary size. Erotic energy swirled through my veins! I was awash in delightful physical sensations. It was as if the Earth was making love to me!

My back arched up, repeatedly spasming with pleasure. The more I arched, the better it felt. I sensed the kundalini stirring in my tailbone.

When I at last opened my eyes again, I was surprised to see small, multi-colored beads of luminescent energy crawling through the branches and trunks of the trees. It seemed as if the beads were slowly oozing in the sap, up and down the xylem and phloem tubes.

What was going on? Was I witnessing tree spirits, or what? I didn't know. And I didn't need to know. I was already agog from the fiery display of the fall foliage, so this extra surreal level just zapped it.

I really was in ecstasy on every level...

While I was trying to come down later that day, I was bursting to tell somebody! Anybody! I needed to share the joy! Instead I bit my tongue.

Back at the kindergarten teacher's cabin, I finally could not contain myself any longer. I took the risk of spilling the beans to her.

I suspected that she would kick me out on the spot for my illegal shenanigans! In full poetic flight I stumbled to explain what had just happened in my world.

Errare humanum est.

I guess 'stumble' was the operative word. The bummer began...

She was indeed pissed, but not for the reason I expected. It turned out that the kindergarten teacher felt I had unfairly cut her out of the whole acid experience. She would have been more than happy to experiment!

My jaw dented the floor when it hit.

“I... I had no idea you would have wanted to participate! Or do anything like that!” I apologized profusely to this odd little woman who didn’t even like music...

She got so peeved that she wanted to have sex with me! She didn’t get any less upset after lights out when I refused to crawl into her bunk to do my duty. What was I to do? I wasn’t in the least attracted to her: her gap teeth and her double chins, her beady eyes and her extra tires. She certainly wasn’t bothering with any feminine teasing or seduction to get what she wanted. She just expected it. Demanded it.

Later I found out that my NYC friend had volunteered me to be this woman’s plaything for the weekend.

“Sent up to me like a present, all wrapped in a big bow,” was how the teacher understood the situation. My friend had pimped me out!

To my surprise, I found the pimping offensive. (But if the teacher had been gorgeous, would I have been offended? Oh dear. I hate to be so shallow, but the story would probably have ended differently.)

Anyway, I slipped off early in the morning to avoid any further male-female awkwardness...

Back on my 750 Sunday afternoon, I got the legal adrenaline rush.

I loved those dipping, diving mountain roads—this time unhampered by rain. It was heavenly! Visor flipped up, motor cranking, wind on my cheeks, I eased the steely mass of the bike low into every alternating curve. Sidling it back and forth, in no hurry, driving in zen mind. I was having a long overdue blast of freedom.

HELL yeah. That’s as fun as it gets - on your own!

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8. SHROOMS AND THE SOIREE

My most conservative friend in NYC was an account exec for direct marketing. Weekdays he was running around in a 3-piece monkey suit. Weekends were all about football and beer.

And yet, under all the expected conformity, he was a mischievous jester.

There we were, near 16th street in Manhattan, on New Year's Eve. The major clubs had not opened their doors yet for the big Party of the Year, so we kicked around the area looking for somewhere to kill time.

We crashed a cocktail soiree.

We felt a bit odd in that posh loft, amid the 25 or so yuppies who were conversing oh so soberly and oh so seriously. Still, the buffet was well stocked and the punch was flowing, so the two of us adapted to the ambience.

Only I was aware that my pal had something special up his sleeve: specifically, a handful of dried psilocybin mushrooms!

We chatted with each other by the living room fireplace. Each of us parked an elbow up on the mantelpiece. My friend was munching away happily on party trail mix, picking up a peanut at a time and popping it into his mouth, and talking with his hands a lot.

It took me a while to spot what this nervy son of a gun was up to. Cool as a safecracker, he was chewing, not on cashews and peanuts, but on the crumbs of his psilocybin! His magic mushrooms were all broken up and laying cupped in his palm.

My boy was demonstrating an important principle. One that magicians and marketers use: if you don't act furtive or suspicious, nobody will look closely enough to notice what you are REALLY up to.

I was quite impressed! But we soon tired of the somber soiree vibe there.

We busted out and wound up completing our trip uneventfully over at the Palladium nightclub. I don't remember much else interesting going on that New Year's evening. I remember the dance club drinks were terrifyingly over-priced. [Especially for pedestrians who were going to have to shell out for a taxi later.]

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9. MUSIC & THE EYE OF GOD

I have only dropped acid once at a rock concert. It was in Golden Gate Park on a summer's day. [I had moved to SF by then.]

The WOMAD festival was in full swing. No bone-chilling fog had rolled in yet, so it was sunny and beautiful like only San Francisco can be. A perfect day for a trip to the heart and soul of music...or anywhere else you might dream of??

A couple of mates from Noe Valley had scored some primo blotter, or so they proudly proclaimed over the phone (in carefully coded jargon, of course). It was potent stuff!

Between acts, they tiptoed their way through the blankets and beach chairs and coolers, all the way up to those few square feet where my girlfriend and I had staked out our territory. My girlfriend was off getting some drinks when the blotter materialized.

"Here you go buddy!" whispered our mate as he nestled a small square of paper into my palm. "Happy trails!" He slapped me on the back. "Guess what? it's on the house!"

I was so busy expressing my gratitude, I was not paying as close attention as I should have.

There was no time to waste. The Stereo MC's were coming up soon. It was going to be great! The potent acid went down my hatch in a jiffy.

And Peter Gabriel, my hero, would be up later; the whole day was going to be phenomenal!

My happy sprite of a girlfriend re-emerged from the booth with some drinks, all excited to take her own dose.

Her dose? You see, our guy from Noe Valley had run into her. He had informed her that he had already handed her hit over to me.

I looked at my girl blankly. I looked down at my empty hand. I looked back at her.

Then I called our mutual friend on the cellular. A small confusion later, it appeared that the square of blotter I had taken had actually been two squares, folded over.

"Uh oh. I must have taken a double dose!"

My girlfriend wasn't too upset, fortunately. I, however, had the wil-lies... like I knew I was about to go on the hugest rollercoaster ride in the goddamned theme park.

"Well, I guess you better put on your safety belt!" warned our friend. "That stuff will kick yer ass!"

Let me tell you, he wasn't joking.

It was all kicking in hard by the time the Stereo MC's hit the stage. My favorite tune at that time was "Connected". Suddenly their hit song exploded out of the speaker towers! The crowd went bananas! and everyone started dancing and getting freaky. It was phenomenal.

I do remember, as I boogied the day away, one stunning visual. My first 'hallucination' with eyes open.

I'll never forget it. It was the 'high' point of the day. I treated it as a divine gift and a special message—just for me.

Hovering 50 feet over the top of the main stage, and extending the full width of the stage, I perceived a fantastic, glowing hologram. Hanging right there in the daytime sky was an intricately detailed, morphing, pulsating design. It was luminescent, radiant and purple. What was it?

It was an elaborate, triangular eye of God.

It throbbed its way through the entire song! I told my girlfriend about it, and she just smiled. She knew that I never had visions, so she was delighted for me.

So don't let anyone tell you that the Creator doesn't exist. Whatever name you slap on Him/Her/It, I have to maintain that a Fact is a Fact once you see it with your own eyes.

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10. PURGING SORROWS, THEN SUNRISE!

The above mentioned happy girlfriend was not always so happy, though.

When I first began dating her in Philadelphia, I invited her over to my house. Apparently, she had decided to do some hallucinogens herself, on a day when I didn't want to.

She dropped anyway... and proceeded to spend several hours locked in my bathroom, sobbing her eyes out.

I hovered nearby, set to call 9-1-1 if necessary. I'd already been through the whole suicidal girlfriend scenario, more than once.

Through the door I kept whispering, inquiring if she was still okay, hoping that she was not going to slit her wrists or do anything stupid.

"I'm fine," she'd answer, before dissolving into tears again.

By morning time, however, her purge was complete. She had achieved her catharsis. I monitored her every move, nonetheless. Just in case she wanted to hurt herself.

Instead, I remember her observing the sun rising, through my tiny bedroom window. How the moment became precious to her, priceless, eternally hopeful to her again.

It was like a wide-eyed child spotting the Easter bunny coming out of its hole. Like a fisherman witnessing Jesus Christ walking on water!

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11. LIFE'S A HILARIOUS PLAYGROUND

San Francisco is about free-thinking. It's one city where UFOlogy is rampant, for example.

I made friends with one interesting couple there: a lanky fellow, a 9-5er who played guitar to unwind in the evening; and his chunky, bubbly, unstoppable wife who designed UFO-themed t-shirts and candleholders. He was very down-to-earth. She, on the other hand, was quite adamant that she had been abducted, and even, er, probed by aliens.

In other words, a typical San Fran couple.

One evening my girlfriend and I hung out with these two. We all ate some psilocybin mushrooms and headed for the big park. Golden Gate Park is supposed to be off limits after dark, of course, but we snuck in through the trees anyway...

Whereon the UFO lady promptly hurled her entire dinner into the bushes.

That initiatory hurdle completed, what ensued was 5 hours of absolute hilarity!

We were gnomes. We were witches and fairies. We were grown-up kids. We made no apologies. We had digested a permission slip to be as free as birds, and we took total advantage of it! We sped around the bushes and trees of a natural playground, our imaginations running amok under the bright moonlight.

Everyone's sense of humor was seemingly honed to sparkling perfection. We made each other laugh until our bellies hurt.

The running joke of the trip was about "The Comfortable Safety Zone", and how that lifestyle was like a spacecraft seatbelt that you strap on.

Okay, so I guess you had to be there... J

12. FACING THE DARKNESS ALONE

Saline is a tiny oasis hidden in the heart of Death Valley.

A handful of camper-vans in the parking lot never seem to move. They belonged to the year-round tenants of Saline.

Along the road which descends from the desert mountains into the oasis are three hot springs. The lowest of these tubs is decorated with a lovely crystal grotto waterfall and candles, and is nestled under a camouflage canopy that keeps out at least some of the blazing sun. Ringed by palm trees, a watered lawn completes this Eden.

Summer equinoxes provided the excuse for a grab bag of artists and intellectuals from Venice Beach (and elsewhere) to gather at Saline, in order to celebrate Mother Earth's rotation.

The equinox when I tripped at Saline found me sitting in the middle spa, sweating through a broiling Death Valley afternoon. My ex was soaking there also.

She heard some strange thrashing around in the bushes.

She freaked, as was her wont. So, being the man, I went off into the brush to investigate.

It was a dying hare. I suspected that it had been bitten by a rattlesnake who had left the poor bastard to croak. The hare was lying on its side, having seizures, twitching horribly. I could see the little fellow looking up at me with its pink eye, and I could almost hear him begging me to do something.

I knelt down next to him, carefully picked him up in my hands. It was clear: he needed to be released from his pain. He was begging to be put out of his misery.

I wasn't about to wring its poor neck. I ain't never had the balls to kill animals. I wondered what to do?

Finally, I shrugged and sent up a prayer to Great Spirit, asking that the soul of the hare be released from its pain.

No sooner said than done! The critter instantly relaxed. At peace, it died there in my hands.

I was sad for him, but also flabbergasted. My link to Great Spirit was that open?

This was not the first time I had been called on to release an animal from mortal pain. But the hare's death set a dark tone for the remainder of my trip. A strange omen indeed.

After dusk, I found myself syncing my spirit to the winds.

I was in command of the wind. It definitely seemed so! I could tell when a gust would blow... and how to make it stop. I was playing the wind like a musician, and it was playing me back. We were one!

As the trip progressed, I experienced a delirious regression back to childhood. This, in the company of a wacky painter friend. She was nude in a hammock. We played and frolicked around in the hammock, giggling, singing and being plain goofy.

I even patrolled the grass lawn, naming every small corner of it with a special title... much as I might have done when I was a little boy.

Later in the evening, I was forced into a more teenage consciousness. It dawned on me that everyone had paired off for the night... except for me. I began to feel frighteningly single, like the lost virgin teenager I was in high school.

The aphrodisiacal mushrooms were crying out within me. I found myself carrying a very frustrating load of angst and lust around with me even as, one by one, all my naked peoples dropped off to sleep.

Meanwhile, up the hill, my ex was on some strange power trip with her new boyfriend.

In the highest hot tub, under the influences of her shroom dose and a stunning full moon, she had turned into a full-on Witch... and not necessarily a white witch, either.

Her mission that night was to get the poor cringing boyfriend to impregnate her.

Such was the convoluted scene I stumbled upon in my own angsty-lusty condition.

The appointed semen-bearer was huddled in his tent, grateful to see me. He apparently saw me as a gleam of hope: he could use me as a buffer.

"You've got to help me out, man." I began to think he was trying to trade his girlfriend back to me.

He knew that he was no match for the madwoman. She was on a tear. She could not be denied! In her witchy vision, she was seeing all the Spirits of the Land and Air! They were all demanding his seed inside her, tonight! Didn't he get it? He and she had been chosen to conceive the next Holy Avatar! The one who would save the Entire Planet!

I'd heard all this stuff before. But this was his turn. Poor boy still in his 20's: he definitely had no desire to get railroaded into fatherhood like this. Even before Saline, S had confided doubts to me about her sanity... I told him factually that those were his problems now, not mine!

How to cope with her coercion drama? S tried to block it out by smoking copious quantities of ganja from his prized Native American peace pipe. I partook too, mostly as a gesture of solidarity, and to numb out my own angst.

However, soon the witch had received new, vital information! The spirits had informed her that I was there to confer my blessing upon her sacred Impregnation Ceremony.

I responded that I didn't at all think it was a good idea to force S into such an important decision...

That did not please the high priestess at all. She flew into a towering rage!

This scene got further twisted by the fact that I was still tripping, plus horny as hell. I knew I had to get out of their energy and mellow myself out.

Her boyfriend begged me not to leave them together. He pleaded with me not to desert him or break up the 'magical trio.'

You bet your last dime I left.

There comes a time when you just have to face your darkness on your own.

13. SPIRITUAL TRAINING

In the woodlands of South California, I encountered my first bona fide shaman.

Black Eagle was a medicine man. He ran a Native American Church and conducted traditional tribal ceremonies. His peyote-fire rituals were held inside a communal-sized tipi, next to the vigorous river that coursed through the forest, past his homestead.

His Church was regularly getting harassed by the federal government. "White man ignorantly classifies our church's sacrament as evil."

Defiantly, Black Eagle fights on to keep the tribal traditions alive. It's an old story.

The sacrament in question? Peyote. A cactus flower that smells like shit and tastes like kitchen grout. Frankly, it is awful to my senses, sacred or not.

It is hard for me to imagine the first tribesman who ingested it and managed to suppress his gag reflex long enough to experience any effects.

However, peyote is purported to have profound and uncanny healing properties. It works its magic in varying ways, depending on the needs of the person ingesting its MEDICINE.

Five of us multi-culti neo-hippie seekers of knowledge got invited to one such peyote ceremony.

We drove eagerly out to Black Eagle's farm one morning, not really knowing what to expect. We got there way too early, though. The ceremony had been delayed. It wasn't going to even start until sundown. So we waited around all afternoon with little to do there but twiddle our thumbs.

When he was first introduced to me, Black Eagle gave me a quick up-and-down. I had showed up in my velvet magician hat. I had adorned myself with various totems and necklaces.

"You take all that stuff off," he ordered gruffly, and promptly walked away.

Chastened, I understood that I was indeed going to be the humble on-looker here. I would be witnessing their ceremony. No, Black Eagle was not interested in what I had accomplished spiritually or in what I might have to offer creatively. He was the teacher here, this was his domain. We were the tourists, the students. And to him I was just a flamboyant dilettante who needed to be seriously humbled before Mass.

We got no explanations from Black Eagle about the upcoming ceremony. I did not know what to expect. I wondered how long it might last. 3, 4, 6 hours, maybe? Were we going to trip hard on the peyote? (And especially, where would we crash out afterwards?)

After sundown, everyone was finally called into the tipi. 15 or so tribal members rounded out the circle of power. We five strangers were asked to maintain silence throughout. Everyone in the tipi was reminded that nobody would be allowed to leave until the ritual was complete. Above all, we must never lie down inside the wigwam. [It was a very strict church. Not unlike a zen monastery.]

That sitting rule was going to prove my penance.

One of the youths from the tribe was our appointed 'Fireman'. His job was patiently to feed and stoke the fire, to lay logs in such a way that the burning embers would fall into sacred patterns on the sand at the center of the tipi.

During the first phase, the ashes would delineate the earth circle, with the 4 Directions signified. Then he'd create the sun and the moon.

Eventually the design would consolidate into a large thunderbird design, wings outstretched. It would take a lot of skill and artistry on the part of the Fireman to make all this happen.

Black Eagle led the Native American songs and the prayers. We all ate peyote paste at designated intervals between prayers and songs. The prayers were impassioned pleas for Great Spirit to give guidance to each member of the tribe...

Every member's problems were indeed dissected in gory detail for all to hear. It was almost uncomfortably personal, what with all the drug problems, delinquencies and so on.

The peyote quickly made me sick to my stomach. I could not handle more than that first pass of the paste.

My buddies however didn't seem to be having any problems with it. In fact, I could later see that they were mildly tripping. I however was not tripping at all.

After a couple of hours, I vomited into the sand in front of me. Nobody even blinked. This was not unusual... for novices. The Fireman sprinkled some sand onto my vomit; the moment passed, the embarrassment forgotten. According to their Way, this was merely a medicine to instigate my own healing processes.

I begged to differ. After hurling, I didn't feel healed, I felt like a hard boiled egg, one that had been spooned out and all scraped raw on the inside,.

The 5 hour ceremony I had planned for in my mind was turning into a marathon that would last a brutal 21 hours. I hit the wall mentally more times than I could count. My patience ran out... then ran out again... then ran out again. I had to catch many second winds, third winds, and more. I think all of us visitors wondered if we were ever going to be let out of there alive!

* * * * *

There were two particular series of events during ceremony that knocked me for a loop.

The first involved the young Native American kneeling just to my right.

While a sacred tobacco cigar was rolled and passed round, he began to get very pale and sweaty. He was wobbling badly on his haunches. I could tell he was in trouble. His best friend, across the tipi, went into protective mode.

“Black Eagle! Please! G needs help. This has happened before to him. He nearly died. We need to leave the circle. We have to get him over to the hospital. He needs a blood transfusion! I’ll take him there. Please, Black Eagle. Please.”

The kid would have had better results pleading with a brick wall.

Black Eagle was silent for a few seconds. He then picked up his prayer from exactly where he had left off. He held aloft the fat tobacco cigar that he had rolled and continued: “This mighty tobacco shall make its appointed round. No one can break this circle. It is like a locomotive. No one can stop this sacred tobacco from completing its rounds,” he stated bluntly.

Me? I wanted nothing more than to put a steadying, comforting arm around my neighbor. What could be more natural than compassion? The youth across the tipi seemed to agree. He protested more. But he was snubbed.

The fire medicine is not about soliciting compassion from others, you see. It is about the Self finding strength within.

“This fire ceremony is the most powerful medicine there is,” Black Eagle proclaimed. “It is the strongest medicine that I know! It has worked for thousands of years. It will work now. G will dig down deep inside himself. He will do this work. On his own.”

I was in shock. Black Eagle was going to let this poor kid slide into a coma? Possibly die? I sat on my sore heels, rubbing my ankles, shaking my head, glancing sideways at the wet, ghostly pale red face next to mine, feeling guilty about my unhelpfulness.

Before the ritual was over, that Native American teenager would indeed purge. He’d upchuck the blockage. A great glob of weakness was ejected onto the sand in front of him.

I saw him outside after the ceremony closed. He looked refreshed, radiant even! The color had returned to his cheeks. I couldn’t believe it. I asked him how he was feeling.

“Never better!” was the cheery reply...

Amazing. Black Eagle had successfully challenged everything I thought I knew about caring for and healing human beings.

That was the first of the shattering events. The second event was this:

Somewhere in the 16th hour of the ritual, I was too tired to care any more if I toppled over asleep. I kept fantasizing excuses to get me out of

this sadistic prison. I was parched, but the only liquid available was the peyote juice, which looked like iced tea but tasted like Drano, and only made one thirstier.

I pined that I hadn't eaten since the previous morning! I was starving and sore and self-pitying and my stomach hurt so bad that I didn't know if I could keep food down, even if I were to locate any.

In the 16th hour, food was finally brought out on trays. Ah the smell! The food dishes were carefully blessed. The food was talked about. Oh, Creator, our gratitude for the food.

And... none of it was served.

No, we were required to sit there and see it, smell it, desire it, and then destroy our desire for it. The food offerings would in fact remain untouched for 5 more hours until the ritual was over. [Had I really once complained about the length of a Catholic Mass?]

5 hours? Now that's borderline cruel. I thought I would lose my mind! Never before had I been required to wrestle my desires and needs so hard to the ground. Never before in my life had I needed to come up with so much mental endurance.

When we all finally stepped free from that tipi, it was quite a moment! Stepping through that flap, I felt like I had been released from jail! I was reborn! Life around me was so beautiful... My senses were truly heightened to new levels of appreciation. The birds were singing exalted songs. The trees were swaying in time to the winds of creation. Shafts of sunlight were focused upon the faces of native families who laughed and hugged each other. Among picnic tables laden with great piles of food, we could now eat.

It was all a blessing, an obvious blessing from the Creator. And I had survived their Spiritual Boot Camp, this Peyote Ritual for Building Patience and Self-Control. Hallelujah!

One peyote ritual was enough for me this lifetime. But those locals would flock to this 'celebration' on a weekly basis. Indeed they looked forward to it! And they even cherished that bitterest flavor under the sun, the taste of a peyote button.

You know what? I bet if I had pursued such a Tribal Path as Black Eagle's, if I had patiently purged all my resistances and intolerances in that tipi, over time I bet that I too would have come to cherish that bitter medicinal taste.

It's a long way from my Western sweet tooth.

* * * *

14. ONE SHORT, BAD EXPERIENCE

Every person has a different metabolism. This fact was proved to me one afternoon. Three experimenters, including myself, set out to test the effects of *Salvia divinorum*.

Not much is known about the plant. It is allegedly used by the shamans of Central America.

Our giant glass bong awaited on the table next to a fourth friend, who would be our 'designated driver'. Each of the three experimenters would smoke one bowl of the *Salvia divinorum*. We would all compare notes later.

D was a hippie keyboardist. He smoked first.

Results: he got pleasantly stoned. He remained totally functional, walked around, talked on the phone, etc. Within 20 minutes he announced that all the effects had worn off. He shrugged his shoulders and continued his workday.

E. was a body-builder.

Results: he soon decided he wanted to crawl off to bed for a nice nap.

I was last. Thank goodness I had a 'spotter'. No sooner had the smoke hit my lungs than a dark curtain came down.

I couldn't move. I couldn't hold the bong. My spotter caught the lighter before I set myself on fire!

Everything went black. I was disoriented. My body was paralysed. I wanted to speak and could not. I had gone into a mini-coma. It was fucking scary. My mind flailed, desperately seeking something to hold onto as I slipped into The Utter Void.

It's hard to describe the place where I went. It was a gigantic Black Space, but not at all like outer space. I intuited that it was also a vast, cylindrical skyscraper. And the building was Time Itself.

I could sense the whole Construction of Time was turning, every so slowly, like a monstrous galactic calendar.

But it was also a terrifying Void.

What rescued me was the sound of music coming from the other room. I was still able to hear it, although I couldn't see anything. Like a metaphor for my life, it was one tiny thread, but the only thread I could grasp there in the Void.

Plus I was aware that this terror would be over within half an hour... The anesthetic of the Salvia did wear off, as planned. My friends softly chuckled at my discomfort. They probably thought I was exaggerating my report...

Believe me, I wasn't laughing. Trips don't always end with a Hollywood rainbow, believe you me.

* * * *

15. TRIPPING OVER THE COPS... RIGHT INTO JAIL

I've shacked up in some odd places, no doubt.

In 1999, a commune was my home. Many called it the psych ward. It was supposedly a spiritual center. It was a fascist rip-off and a noble halfway house. It was by far the cheapest rent in town!

It was the "Yesss Center" of Venice Beach, and it was all of the above and more.

Its mastermind was a looming, barrel-chested, white-haired Viking. He believed himself a cross between his Indian guru Osho and shock radio jock Howard Stern. He was the landlord, and he was a monster when crossed...

Which seemed to happen on a daily basis.

I trusted there was a cosmic reason why I had washed up into such strange living arrangements. There was learning, and even teaching, to be done there. I was fascinated by the characters on parade: it was like a crazy theater with no borders. Constant drama. People were living all on top of each other like sardines, so it was a real pressure cooker.

I became a big brother of sorts to several delinquent kids, as well as an artistic inspiration to more than a few. I myself experienced a major creative renaissance while living at the commune. Writing and drawing now took the place of my traditional guitar-slinging...

I even had a stroke of luck: I met my next girlfriend.

She was quite happy living out of her van. H kept all the craziness of the commune at a stiff arms length, thanks to owning her own wheels (a rare commodity among the bohemians). She understood that Mobility was an empowerment, one which I was sorely lacking. She was my escape route.

Another van dweller who was peripheral to the commune craziness was a guy, O.

What a character! He was a Native American who had connected fully to his shamanistic tradition. Yet he was also a mythbuster. He had explored many contradictory things, but he was usually leading the rebels... Albeit with a good heart and a perceptive mind.

H and O were my company on the fateful night. Here is the tale of a mushroom experience that would impact my life for years to come...

We three arrived at a beach in Malibu one winter evening. O parked his van and we all climbed out. He and I ate our little shroomy friends, smiled and prepared for lift off. [My girlfriend would not be partaking, thanks very much.]

I sat on the sand and meditated.

The stars unreeled... and some fun visuals began to titillate my senses. The visuals (eyes open) came in as Mayan and Aztec constellation designs. Lots of rectangular spirals, flowing into linear geometries of colored light. They were not exceptionally vivid, but beautiful nonetheless. And I felt a certain validation, for I had spent a lot of time and energy tapping into Mayan culture and history.

Later in the night, it was dancing time. We moved into the physical to ground ourselves once more. O cranked up some tunes. H led us in the body motion and we started a commotion! It was super happy times to be dancing on our Beach Blanket Babylon.

* * * * *

The next day, I woke up back at the commune. All I had to remind me of our fun time was the shake in the baggie from the night before. Some crumbs, maybe a stem: the dregs.

I left it in my jacket pocket. In the afternoon I jaunted off to visit the fabulous new Alex Grey exhibit at an art gallery in Santa Monica.

Alex Grey is a visionary artist-teacher. Throughout his work, he weaves spiritual symbology and psychedelic perceptions of body energy. He even recommends viewing his amazing paintings under psychedelic "influence" in order to gain the most insight from them.

I thought about it, but I never did finish off the last dregs of my shrooms...

I should have.

The evening was fresh and foggy in Venice. Kind of mystical. I was chatting to H about nothing in particular as she sat in her brown hippie VW van, the side door of the vehicle slid open. I stood on the sidewalk,

wearing only shorts, flip flops and a loose jacket. I leaned against the metal roof in my long black hair and beard.

Ain't no doubt, that there's a hippy!

Which was probably what the pair of cops were thinking, on that slow night in Venice, when they stopped their Ford Taurus at the street corner and trained their big spotlight on me.

Was I aware that Standing-While-Hippy is quite similar to Driving-While-Black? No I was not.

My straight-as-an-arrow girlfriend and I were soon spread-eagled up against the wall. She yelled at me. The cops slowly got the picture that she was out of the loop so they freed her.

But me? Possession of class A narcotics.

Can you believe my ingenuousness? The cops sat in their patrol car with my baggie, scratching their heads. They finally asked me what the stuff was: so I told them. The Whole Truth. As is my wont.

That's magic mushrooms, sir.

I was aware that the shavings in my baggie might cost me a fine, or a slap on the wrist maybe. Perhaps a parking ticket kind of fine.

The rest of this magic mushroom story led me into mind-blowing terrain.

Those handcuffs hurt. I couldn't believe my ears. They were threatening me with \$10,000 bail! A felony on my record! 10 years in jail! They made it sound like I had just murdered somebody!

Frankly they mind-fucked me, terrorized me until I was seriously quaking in my flip-flops. My whole world was about to collapse over a few crumbs of a plant that they couldn't even identify on their own?

So now I was just an insect caught on the omni-present, legal spider web.

I got booked. I sat in a holding tank for more than 36 hours awaiting trial... Awaiting the judicial spiders.

Jail is hell. That's all I'm going to say on that subject.

My judge downgraded the terrible crime I had committed to a misdemeanor, and lowered the fine because it was a first offense. I was supposed to feel grateful when I limped away from the courtroom ONLY \$500 lighter with ONLY one year's probation.

And if that would have been the end of the punishment, I would have licked my wounds and my life would have gone on.

* * * *

But instead, after the sentencing, there's the Stigma to deal with...

The court had branded me with a scarlet letter that just would not disappear. Post 9/11, employers got very paranoid. The world became all black or white, all good or evil. According to background-check databases, my name kept falling into the evil, black side. I was now someone with a question mark in the "addiction" department.

A good candidate for our position, sir? Maybe not. Next?

You can't compete against the Stigma during stiff economic times.

But capitalism always has an answer, even for such Stigmata. Somewhere between petitioning the Pope for a Holy Dispensation and bribing a minor official to cook the books in your favor is a strange process called expungement.

Expungement is a legal procedure whereby you get to pay for your crime TWICE. More exactly, you pay a court ordered fine, and then later you get to pay a lawyer an exorbitant fee to wave his magic wand, so Poof!

The spider web never caught you. It never even happened! The Stigma is erased.

Then employers might read through to the end of your job application. You might even be able to land yourself a permanent position! You might eventually become able to repay whoever fronted your lawyer fee. You might even earn enough to fix all the credit cards you maxed out while failing to get re-employed.

Here's what you need to know about the lawman and hallucinogens: Be flush with disposable income before you get arrested.

Here's an even better idea: Do not get caught on that spider web, ever!

And of course, after your expungement goes through, remember that the content of this entire chapter NEVER EXISTED. Poof! (It was fiction, anyway, right?)

* * * *

16. COSMIC JEWELRY: BREAKTHROUGH!

After being dragged backwards through thorny legal bushes by The Man, you would think that only a fool would ever want to trip again.

Paint me as fool, then! You see, my all-time favorite and most memorable psychedelic experience was yet to come...

It was my Buddhist friend X's idea. He was a goth DJ in the San Francisco Bay Area. He and I embarked on a road trip. For X, it was a personal mission: he had heard a calling from deep inside, telling him to go visit Chaco canyon and de Chelly canyon. [Two amazing sites located within the Hopi and Navajo nations.]

So we packed for a week, and he drove us across those dry and endless Southwestern states. We memorialized in photography much of what we saw on that journey. In fact, I would use some of those photos as backgrounds for my artwork which can be found online at

http://www.scorpioncraft.com/banners_masterpage.htm

On the north lip of the Grand Canyon I ate one small mystic mushroom. I was very careful about quantity. I had no intention of altering my perceptions more than one notch away from normal in such a precarious environment. Better safe than sorry!

Encountering the Grand Canyon is like landing on Jupiter. The scale is staggering. No other place on Earth leaves you dangling off the end of a billion year timeline like that.

Others have poeticized on its merits at great length, so I won't. I just sat there, cross legged, meditating atop my own gigantic boulder.

I tuned my senses to the rock face opposite me... and waited.

Not surprisingly, the scene in front of me began to subtly saturate with rich golds, crimsons and purples. The uppermost layers of rock directly opposite me turned into a mural: a very detailed painting of a royal court with elongated, highly stylized figures... I remember one distinctly female face. She was ancient, part-Oriental and part Native American. Her eye fixated me in her eternal gaze.

Yes, Mother Earth was strangely beautiful.

The lower reddish outcroppings of the cliff, far below our strata, turned into an alien city, a space-cathedral, a geometric sky fortress. I almost expected to see some Blade Runner taxis fly by, or to see space pods pop out of Star Wars landing pads. It was like a massive sculpture, even though it was also only one small canyon, branching off the main canyon.

To me, at that moment, it seemed worthy of a whole graphic novel! I wished I were more of a painter: I wanted so badly to capture the moment better.

Beyond the reservations in Northeast Arizona, we decided we would swing back through the Grand Canyon and would eventually camp inside Zion National Park. I saved the lion's share of the shrooms for Zion, where I would split them with X.

We camped out under the stars in the dark canyons of Zion. At least a trillion gazillion points of light filled the sky that night! Like a reminder that we should all look up sometimes.

[Urban lights wash out the majesty of the sky until we forget the cosmos. We focus fiercely on our own feet, on navigating the merely terrestrial, on our egos, until we lose our natural sense of universal proportion.]

X and I laughed our cosmic asses off in Zion.

Then we had an intense philosophical heart-to-heart for a couple of hours.

After that I had to close my eyes... And Lo! the visions came, and for the first time in my life they were as vivid and as bright as day. Visions with a capital V!

I felt like a conduit. I was a channel between the galaxies and the Hopi craftsmen which we had so recently visited at De Chelly canyon. My third eye opened up all the way.

What can I even say?

I saw geometries of cosmic jewelry! Great churning vistas of necklaces, bracelets, and crowns! Intricate, ever-shifting sculptures of light and rock and ice, of sky and earth and metal! Every moment a brilliantly composed painting! Gemstones of every hue encrusted on every gilded or silvered objet d'art imaginable! These precious stones were shining magnificently with an inner light, like nothing a human could design! Oh, the colors! Oh, the beauty!

The jewelries undulated, curled as they approached me and then disappeared away, evolving into each other but not so fast that I couldn't follow. I could truly appreciate!

It was staggering.

It was so breath-taking I could not speak. Even now, anything I write does not do that mystical experience any justice. There are no words, really, for such dimensions.

I knew one thing though. I felt truly sated! The divine had blessed me with an incomparable Gift that night, proved its connection to me and so much more. The cup of my soul brimmed over with joy.

* * * *

17. KNOW THE RIGHT MOMENT TO STOP

And in conclusion, I have a prediction:

The ecstasy I experienced in Zion canyon will likely be my last journey into the hallucinogenic sphere. I can not imagine topping such moments! My mind and heart have learned everything they yearned to during my years of exploration into the psychedelic realms.

My trip is complete.

My spirit is pleased!

* * * *

THE END

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