

(Birthday Report)

In the couple of weeks after the performance I had several strong reactions. The first was a sense of deep satisfaction: "I needed to do this, and I did it." A major related point is that I successfully worked against a big deadline, something which has proved my undoing many times in the past.

A second important thing is that I found myself saying "The seeds are planted. Nature will take its course. I have only to water and to wait." I am sure this comes from my deep sense that I am being led into the work of a decade; that something larger than I can fathom is active, which will involve many of us in times to come.

AN AVOCATION AS A "NAMER"

A third important thing is that, in my post-performance high, sitting in my meditation space, where much of the event was gestated, I accepted the vocation of "a namer." I hardly know what this means, at this point, but it feels like a profound step in my development. I do have some idea.

Partly this step came from a dialog that grew increasingly sharp within me in the weeks before the performance. One side said, "Well, what if the earth is a single living organism, so what? How does this pretty sentiment matter in the lives we live from one day to the next?" The other side of the dialog was the Gaia Troubadour himself, singing about our place in this wonderful living system. I believe the "namer" has accepted the assignment of trying to answer the question "So what?"

It is clear to me that I am a namer *in community*—that the movement of transpersonal energy I seek to notice and to name can best be appreciated by a *group* of people. What's more, for my own growth, this needs to be a prayer group, a place where some of us gather regularly, open our hearts and our intuition to each other, and to the pain and beauty of our life on this planet. My tentative name for this group is "The Com-

pound I." It will be months before I start recruiting participants. In the mean time, I would *love* to hear from those of you who find this idea intriguing.

TENTS...CANOPIES....SAILS!!

Oh, and the tents. I did get a new rush of tent energy. I want to "fit out" for travel the *Prairie Schooner Galactica*, which consists of one part sail (read "tent/canopy") and three parts imagination. The original idea came to me a few summers ago when a canopy I had erected lifted in the wind and tugged at its moorings. I was already sailing in my imagination when this happened, and the whole thing of journeys, voyages, working without familiar landmarks, having faith, and the promise of new vistas all came together.

Sailing has always been magical to me, using wind to move across water; accepting two turbulent elements as givens and accomplishing something in that context. What a wonderful metaphor with which to inspire journeys of the imagination! What a fertile juxtaposition with the image of a tent, which, when it is up, is supposed to be fixed. I need these mind bending, reference-shifting, metaphors to do my work. Obviously, things are developing nicely; I am steering at a distant shore, navigating with the aid of intangible and unpredictable elements.

Again, talk to me about this stuff, if you feel so moved. This is something that has much more meaning when it is shared. I am exhibiting my foolishness in hopes of striking resonant chords in some of you.

DREAD AND OPTIMISM

One of many important events which has helped me assimilate the meaning of all of this was a chance to watch the videotape of the event. Ian still has the tapes because he is planning to edit them, but I borrowed the raw footage for a week. There is one point where the Gaia Troubadour is talking about how we are thriving as a species right now, expanding our influence across the face

of the planet, and how, knowing what he does about population swings, he can see a population crash coming. Ian slowly pans the camera across the audience — you. Your faces show me the reason I launched this performance. You were *all* intensely involved. What you were hearing is not news to this crowd; it was not the simple *information* which held your attention. What my speaking these things did for all of us was to *provide an opportunity* for us as a community to really dwell upon the larger-than-life realities within which our daily life takes place. And I felt I could do this, I felt I could direct your attention to universal laws so large and powerful that their action is not stopped by the agonies of populations, I felt I could do this because I have been gifted to see a larger pattern within the operation of those laws, a pattern of wholeness which offers meaning and hope to us as we move into, and eventually through, a difficult time in the life of our species. I saw in your faces on the videotape a dread at the picture that was offered but simultaneously a deep hunger for an optimistic way to think about this grim aspect of our future. This is my give-away gift, most of all, I realized. I offer a vision of our future, and a vision of our whole life as a species on this planet, which just might sustain us through a time which we all dread.

I offer this as an act of love, a response I feel to love flowing into me from all directions, sustaining me, animating me to be my best. This is my fulfillment. Hopefully it has some relevance to our lives in the late 20th century.

And what's next? I'm not sure. Writing this and sharing it, for one thing. Beyond that remains to be seen. It depends a lot on what opportunities my community presents me with. The Gaia Troubadour is yearning to have you draw him out. Yearning to respond to impulses in the outer world, as well as impulses from my inner world.