

What is a Dream? (juvenile--1983)

Christopher A. Tucker, Sioux City, Iowa.

chris.tucker@paradoxtechnologies.org

What qualifies a dream? What makes it what it is? What could possibly be its composition? These questions are quite difficult by design, yet they are comparatively easy in the sphere of rational thought. As for me, I do not know the answers. It could be due to the fact that I do not spend my time dwelling on such topics--I just accept the dreams for what they are, enjoy the feelings, no matter how odd they may be. I can't help, though, wondering where these "mind pictures" originate from. Maybe it is just a transference of distinct images, collected in day living, from the subconscious to the conscious and visa-versa. That could be it, but it has to be more than that.

I don't know what to think or believe, but I do know that I am continually haunted by those "demons" of the night. When a topic such as this affixed itself in my mind, I was not quite sure what I should write, but I felt that I should try to communicate that part of me that is seldom discussed.

My visions on the night of October 1, 1982, were, to say the least, nightmares. So vivid and full of color were they that upon my waking, I felt that I was still beyond the wall of sleep. I wish I could illustrate my images fully, but I have trouble describing them, since they are clear in my mind but not so when I put them on paper.

I will begin by prefacing that this vision was quite perplexing, which, in turn, makes translation difficult. A good portion of it was spoken in Latin (as I understood it), so that presents other barriers, since I am not all that familiar with that language. I hope I can convey this vision in a clear diction and format; I do not want any meaning, implied or otherwise, to be lost. I feel I have covered everything needed to understand what I am about to reveal.

It was almost nightfall and I appeared in front of a church of some kind. . .a large church hewn out of grey stone that was unrecognized by me. Four tiers towered above, reaching to the sky, yet the others had fallen from the weathering of the ages. Dark,

cavernous windows glared down at me, withholding the blackness within. Magnificent gargoyles **hunched** on the roofline did no more than to stare at me with their gritty eyes. All was in an advanced state of disarray. There were loose bits of carved stone lying sporadically on the paved surface. Paving that once was neatly divided into octagonal shapes now scarred with deep crevices lead to the depths of the earth.

I made my way across the littered courtyard and inspected the rest of the grounds. It was forested with numerous large gnarled oak trees. The trees were quite dead as their barks were peeling and their large, droopy branches cried out for a saving grace that was not present in this forsaken landscape. As I moved close to one, I witnessed something I will not easily forget. For not only was the wood of this tree twisted, but there also were human faces--faces embedded into the composition of the tree. They expressed much pain and suffering as I have not seen before. As I stared at the images, I could almost see their anguished faces moving and changing shape. Then, all of them looked at me in unison. Their jaws fell open and they uttered low, excruciating moans. Moans of such a magnitude that the dusty sound rattled the bones in my ears and pricked the hairs upon my neck. I jumped back from the tree so as not to be drawn into it.

A sharp wind then whisked its way through my hair. A cold wind, carrying with it the moans, as well as the smell of the elders. An odor so pungent that I tore myself away from the tree and paced back to the front of the grey stone building. As I stood there facing the enormous structure, what I thought was a voice called from its interior. A hard, dry, crackled voice that I indeed recognized from my own past. I dare not say what the voice was, since its very mentioning sends icy shivers throughout my body, and I could lose my train of thought in doing so. The voice beckoned me to enter the chapel. I kicked up the sand at my feet and ventured slowly to the mammoth entrance.

As I moved closer, I peered through the ajar doors. Blackness belched its musty breath at me and enveloped my senses. I was now inside the church, but not by my own locomotion. It was as dark as the deepest abyss. I felt along the grainy walls and found a candle sitting on its stand by a window. It lit itself, by a means I know not of, and I followed the voice down the aisle, past rows of overturned pews, to the altar. All I had

was the lone candle to cut my way through the almost complete darkness. I managed to avoid stumbling over most of the larger debris, but I had that nagging feeling that I knew where everything was. As if I had been paraded down this eerie hall in some earlier time. I could extinguish the candle and still find my way, that's how well I knew where I was. But my sanity wouldn't allow me to. As my eyes focused on the marble altar, thunder began raging outside and bolts of lightning illuminated most of the pith in which I stood.

The sound of that familiar voice still echoed within the hall, and I noticed that it was not emanating from the altar, but instead from its side. It directed me to it. (This is the point where I fail to describe fully what I heard since the voice was speaking phrases in Latin, which I understood at the time, but upon waking I found that the words had dissipated.) Although my walking was slow, I quickly arrived at the source of the voice. It was then that I do remember exactly what was said. The same phrase was repeated endlessly, over and over, insuring my memorization. I was standing only a few feet from a large, polished, black onyx sarcophagus. I stood next to it; hundreds of decayed flowers and thirty or so exhausted candles littered its surface and the granite floor it rested upon. I set my candle in one of the copper stands that encircled the tomb and placed my hands on the smooth lid of the chamber. The voice was issuing from its interior. That voice that had dug its way through my entire mind and body was now calling to me; it repeated again and again,

"Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine."

By now I was at a loss what to do next. Terror had long been ingrained in me since my entrance into the church. I peered at the inscriptions carved into the surface of the lid. They shot through me like the lightning that was riveting its way across the frozen sky outside. I lifted the mighty lid and fearfully observed its contents. The leathery face that gazed back at me with its glassy eyes and yellowed teeth made me scream. I was still; I couldn't move. The face just looked at me, and as it opened its mouth to smile, its decayed skin cracked and split. I dropped the lid and ran screaming through the dark temple. I never heard my screams, for they were those of everlasting fright, silent screams.

I tripped several times over the stony debris. I overturned several things and billowed up great amounts of dust, but I made my way out, only to be greeted by an army of death. **Archaic** laughter **expulsed** from the grey stone church as I stood face to face with a barrage of animated bodies in various states of decay. Their gleaming white bones shone through their dripping, mud-stained flesh; they smiled wide, paralyzing smiles. I turned to run, but was surrounded, for the giant wooden doors of the church had now become the iron gates of the white marble mausoleum. Laughter continued from its interior, and I turned and faced the horde. Their eyes gaped as they lunged themselves at me and tore at my flesh.

I abruptly awoke in a cold sweat. I prayed that when I opened my eyes that I would be in my own room. Luckily, I did arise in my own dwelling. As I collected my senses, I reviewed what I had just experienced. I grabbed the notebook that was close to my bed, and as I wrote out what I felt, I realized what was in that shimmering onyx coffin, and terror struck me once again. For what I saw in the depths of that dark vault, what I heard as that voice rang through the long deserted halls of the structure, and what I read on the top of that lid all had something in common. What they revealed to me was something that I never wanted to come to terms with, they did everything for one single purpose—they foreshadowed my own death.