

The other side burst through into my ordinary world on the wings of the strident screaming of a young child. My hair felt pulled, the soft fluff on the back of my neck bristled. My skin felt scratched, my stomach clenched and heaved with nausea. My eyes blurred in double vision, with the sight of this world and the seeing of another. I thought I was going mad.

To describe the other side is nearly impossible. Imagine that you are sitting in a comfortable chair in your sitting-room, hearing the birds singing outside your window, the cars passing in the distance, someone doing the dishes in the kitchen and the feel of your home, your family, your children and the neighbours next door a familiar reassurance. And at the same time, simultaneously, you are standing in another place, seeing another scene, hearing other sounds, another voice, another group of souls moving around you. Sometimes, even another form of life-beings, beings of light move around you and communicate, clearly and precisely but without words. You are yourself with your normal understanding and intellect, but at the same moment the other is also you, and you are inside them. Meaning communicates within you and within the other beings as water flows together where two streams meet. I can only describe it as a completely harmonious, disorientating and perfectly normal sensation all at the same time. One feels tilted yet upright, knowing yet unknowing, conscious yet confused. The experience is unnerving, frightening and yet oddly safe. One *knows* one lives in this world as well as in the other, that the

other side exists. Nevertheless, the other side seems like a waking dream, tangible, real and vibrant as dreams can never be. Both sides—this ordinary life experience, and the other more alive, brighter and broader life experience—are convergent, mutually existent.

It feels very strange to talk about the other side. Finding the words to give it the reality it deserves—so that people who have not yet woken up to its presence can see it in their mind’s eye—whilst also obeying the laws of truth, presents me with a real challenge. For years I told almost no one about these visits. They seemed even to me who experienced their reality, journeys not to be divulged for everyone’s scrutiny. Today, I still feel uncomfortable, now more with a sense of overwhelming responsibility than with fear of my supposed madness or of being ridiculed. I am now ready to talk about the precious and reaffirming certainty of life beyond life, for other people to share in this joy, though I know some people will find it strange and unbelievable. Nevertheless, the other side is as real and close as making a telephone call to South Africa from Ireland.

Before I had visited South Africa, phoning from Ireland made my hands sweat and my breath come short because I would be speaking to someone on the other side of the world and I could not picture that person’s very different environment. My son went to South Africa, and I missed him as though I might not see him again. He felt so out of touch, so distant and so lost to me. When I called him up and we talked, I felt rich with pleasure and pained with the deprivation of being unable to actually share his wonderful experiences in that strange land.

Then I visited South Africa. I saw the glories of brown, gold and orange tints that make that vast country so very special. I met the openness and warmth of its people and my connection to my son deepened in shared knowledge. Now when I telephone to South Africa, I can picture all its beauty, its pain and

even smell the remembered smells. It has become real, and distance makes no difference any more.

This is exactly how it is with my visits to the other side. At first it was shocking, frightening and strange. I didn't know that one could go there so easily. I always used to imagine that one had to be a great saint, a holy person, a clairvoyant or just a bit mad to see life beyond life. But that I, ordinary me, aged 26 years, a wife and mother of three children (the last just six weeks old), should be able to travel across did not fit with the image of a holy gifted person. Believe me, I am very ordinary indeed—I have a quick temper, I talk too much, I like to have things my way, and I am very impatient. At that age, I did not yet even really meditate. I flirted with the idea, thought I might take it up some day, but what 'it' was I couldn't have described. I thought meditating might be going into a trance, which scared me and did not really attract my down-to-earth attitude to daily life.

Yet now, and throughout the next few days and nights, there was this screaming, distressed voice around me, tugging at my arms with broken sharp nails, wild eyed in panic and screaming, screaming, screaming! I tried to shake it off, telling myself that it was my imagination, but I could not focus myself on my everyday chores. I had my children to care for, meals to cook, a household to manage and, though I went on doing all those things, my inner self was entirely wrapped up in the other side, and the insistent screams that filled my being. The voice kept on screaming, high-pitched, totally consuming my awareness. The distress was so demanding that I wanted to do whatever the wild sound wanted me to do, in order to stop it. But I didn't know what it wanted! I should say what *she* wanted, because now I 'saw' that the voice came from a little oriental girl, perhaps three years old. She was pulling at my arm, hair tangled in wild motion, her mouth stretched wide in fear, her eyes squeezed shut.

From the first hearing to the seeing of the little girl took no actual earthly time at all. I was still sitting after lunch, my children sleeping their afternoon nap, and my baby also asleep. I was in our sitting-room, reading a book. But the awareness of her dire need continued, and I went through the rest of that day living in two worlds – the here and now of a young mother’s life, and the here and now of a frantic, damaged oriental child. The evening brought no relief, neither did the night. In my sleep the screaming continued. I walked in a hot wet place of high trees and heard the banging sound of guns.

The morning was confusing, getting children up, feeding the baby, producing meals for my family. I wondered why no one noticed that I wasn’t really in the house, in the kitchen, at all. I was standing in a village of huts, in the steamy forest, listening to gunfire and a screaming child.

After lunch, I sat down with the newspaper and opened it in the middle. There, standing in blind, mouth-stretching panic was the oriental child of my inner vision, in the village that formed my inner landscape. Instantly, as I gazed in shock at the photograph, the screaming stopped. The relief was so enormous that I could *feel* every breath that I took flowing smoothly in and out of my lungs. I read the article. A little child, the journalist reported dispassionately, had been taken for sport by soldiers in Cambodia. The journalist had taken her picture as she was running screaming from the noise of the gunfire. He too had run, but returning the next day, was told how these men had played catch with her, then for a joke and with laughter, had torn her in pieces, arms and legs wrenched from her little torso. They shot her mother after raping her, gunned down the rest of the villagers, those they had not tortured to death, and left the huts in flames. He had got this story from a wounded ancient who crawled out from his hiding place to tell of his horror.

I stared and stared at the photo, bile rising up in my mouth.

But the child, I reasoned, had gone, was dead, released from suffering. The silence was so loud that it hurt. And the release of tension made my muscles tremble. I thought that would be the end of it, that I had simply, for no reason that I could find, been transported to Cambodia in soul-sympathy with the troubled times. I could quite well believe this. I had always thought that people could *feel with each other*, so, with a strong imagination, why could one not feel with someone unknown on the other side of the world?

It was not, however, the end. The screaming started again, as soon as I sat down to breast-feed the baby, and my milk would not flow. So I had a baby screaming here on this side too! That night I could not sleep for the sound, the feel of the scratching little hand on my arm. I became quite distressed too, tossing and turning in shared agony. I thought I ought to tell my husband what was happening to me, but I didn't know how to say what filled my inner eye and ear.

So the next day I struggled to fulfil my daily chores and made an appointment to see the priest. He was an older man, a little odd but he had an open heart and mind. We had known each other for a long time so I felt he could be trusted to listen and to advise me.

I had absolutely no experience or reference for dealing with the child's need. I simply wondered if there might be some connection between me and the little girl from a past life. In my early adolescence I had come across Joan Grant's books. I found them fascinating and read them all, finding a special relationship to her far memories of Egypt. The book I liked the least was entitled *Return to Elysium*. I could not connect to these accounts of Greece, set in another world above that of the earth, finding the story alien and perhaps invented. It did not tie in with my personal picture of life after death. Her memories of the Native Americans were delightful and exciting, reading like a true

adventure. But her lives in Egypt rang a bell, and I could connect to this particular concept of reincarnation as though I already knew all about it.

I walked across the road to talk to the priest, hearing the screaming continuously. He listened as I told him what was happening in and around me. I asked him if this was somehow connected to reincarnation. He did not answer me as I expected he might. He asked how old my baby was. Then he smiled, and said that the child in Cambodia had found an ear in me because I was still open to the world from whence we come through the birth of my baby. He said that she needed my help. He said that she could not go into the light without being made whole again. Then he asked me if I could go back to the village. I felt quite surprised. I had never left it since the screaming started. I was living in two places at once.

He told me to go back there deliberately, look for the place where the killing had happened and find the pieces of her body, put them together as in life and make her whole again. Then, he said, I should dig a hole and bury her. I should do all this, he said, with great love, devotion and no fear, nor should I hate the soldiers. They would find their own judgment. Then, he continued, I should stay to watch the little one walk into the light.

I had no idea how to do this. What he recommended would need a body, arms and legs. Would I have that on the other side?

That night, after feeding my baby, a bald-headed, sweet little boy, I lay in my bed next to my husband and let myself travel. Actually, that is such a bad description of what happened. I knew I was lying in bed, but simultaneously I was walking in the damp hot undergrowth, pushing my way against some unidentifiable resistance that dragged at my feet, always trying to put me back into bed at home. To say that I could smell the jungle is true and untrue because I couldn't smell it with my physical nose, but rather with another sense that *felt* the odour

of decaying things. It was this sensation that weighed down my feet.

However, I walked straight to the spot where the child had died, the screaming and tugging leading me on. There was blood on the dark earth in splotches, and the soldiers were there, holding the little girl by her arms and legs and pulling her into pieces! Their laughter was terrible, grating and cruel. I could see them clearly, detailed, their uniforms dirty and irregular, bayonets stuck in their trouser legs, in pockets with straps. But I experienced my own person as being like a ghost, transparent and vague in outline. The best way to describe my sense of physicality is that it was like the Cheshire cat in the story of *Alice in Wonderland*, there and not there, fading into only a face or eyes, unless I concentrated on having the rest of my body present. I tried not to be afraid and knew myself to be getting clearer in outline. At the same time, I could see the little girl standing whole beside me, screaming, whilst her body was being quartered.

The less afraid I was, the more solid I became. I had wondered how I was going to collect her pieces when I was only a ghostly visitor. But now I knew that I could be solid enough as long as I believed in what I was doing. So I took her hand and together we collected the limbs, tender and sweet, and put them in their rightful places by her torso. I got a stick from the undergrowth and dug into the rotting ground, and buried the body, some inner instinct telling me to do this whilst singing a lullaby. The little girl watched me, becoming steadily more quiet. Then, once the burial ceremony was concluded, she walked away, her back to me, towards something that I could not see. I prayed it would be to her angel.

I was once more in my bed, exhausted and weak as if after a storm of tears or a raging temper. I thought I ought to be covered in sweat from the effort of digging, but of course I was just lying

in my bed. But I felt stiff, my feet stretched as far as they could, my knees rigid, my hands folded over my breasts. It was an effort to move my muscles. The bliss was the healing silence all around me, the sound of my husband's breath, the little snuffle of my baby and the patter of the rain on the window. The girl from Cambodia had gone into the light. Though I did not see its brightness or colour, I knew that she was safe and at peace.

But I was very shaken by this experience and did not want to read the newspaper for some years. I was also puzzled as to why she came to me. What connection did I have with Cambodia? How did she choose me? Would it happen again? Was it just a one-off? Was I perhaps actually a bit mad? My husband seemed to have noticed nothing strange about me. I asked him if I had been weird during the last few days and he was surprised by my question!

My Spiritual Upbringing

Though not a religious person and with the usual arrogance of youth, I had grown up in a family that lived according to the teaching of Rudolf Steiner. This great philosopher and visionary had lectured and taught in Middle Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, holding courses and seminars on just about every subject, but especially on social renewal. He formulated a new approach to education, created new art-forms, influenced modern medicine, agriculture and science. Most people who followed his teaching did so because they were drawn to his enlightened attitude towards the spirit, which he termed 'spiritual science'. His insights and knowledge of life beyond life, of what he called 'the spiritual world across the threshold', opened up new vistas in the materialistic world of the early twentieth century. He began his mystical teaching within the Theosophical Society, but branched out with his own fol-

lowing and formed the Anthroposophical Society in 1924. Growing up with parents whose essential outlook was formed by Rudolf Steiner's thinking could not but influence me. However, the philosophy was never forced upon me, nor was I reproached when I grew older and rejected my parents' beliefs. Essential to Steiner's teaching was the dictum that human beings should be free to think their own thoughts. The reality of the spirit demands freedom.

I had always known my angel, a guardian who watched over me. Not that I paid her much attention, unless I was in trouble with fear or anger. Then I sometimes felt her presence more powerfully and consciously. But as a child, I simply accepted the reality of guidance and protection. I never saw her, but I knew she was there all the time.

My parents told us, by means of stories when we were very young, how in former times, human beings saw spiritual beings behind every living created thing. The myths and legends of gods and goddesses, fairy-tales and stories demonstrated that once upon a time, human beings and spirits spoke to each other. I grew up in a world where the Creator Being made the world in seven days – days being symbolic of aeons of time – and that humanity was the last and greatest creation by God, in his own image. This meant to my childish mind that we could also be like God one day, if we were holy and good enough, and that we would all find a new Paradise one day, once we would truly understand how God and human beings are one, father and son, mother, brother and sister.

Elves, dwarfs and fairies peopled my childish world. As I grew older, I lost sight of them, and enjoyed the 'real' world very much. But an upbringing such as I had had caused me to ask questions. Now, because I was growing up and not a little child any more, my parents – my father in particular – explained the myths, the spirits behind matter, in a different way. He told me

about angels, archangels, nine hierarchies of angelic beings who work to take evolution forward towards redemption, of sub-human retarding beings whose work is to make humanity non-human, non-thinking machine-like creatures, and that inasmuch as God existed so did the Devil. My teenage ears heard these things and my teenage mind scoffed at them. Such ideas! You had to be a bit daft and romantically imaginative to believe all that stuff, I thought, and argued as all adolescents do, with my 'out-of-date' parents. But my father simply said that the world had to evolve from somewhere and something. It was not logical that it arrived out of nothing. And that being so, who created the something? I could not get my head around these thoughts and so left it at that.

But in the back of my mind a feeling continued that behind matter there had to be a guiding principle. Science never quite answered my questions. It was simply too pat for me, to talk about molecules, atoms, etc. Who made them? Besides, I knew without a shadow of doubt that beings existed around and outside me. Whenever I felt in real trouble, moral difficulties, emotional mires, I could ask my angel and a resolution would well up in me. I would know how to go forward once more. When I became an adult, I spoke of this to my parents, and they told me to read Steiner. I would be able to learn how to *know* the spiritual world. We no longer needed to blindly believe, they said. We could, as modern human beings, learn to see and think and understand the world of the spirit. This was a bit much for me at the time. I did not want to read Steiner. I wanted to be an ordinary worldly person. So I put it all aside and did not think about it very often, the exception being when I was in trouble – and then the warmth of my angel would surround me, if I asked for help.

As part of my upbringing, I went to services in the Christian Community, an independent Christian Church. But once I

turned 13, I was asked if I wished to be confirmed. This was not something I desired. I found priests and the institution of the Church a difficult thing. If we were all made in the image of God, how come some were more qualified to spread his word than others? And who ordained – authorized – these people to do so? It certainly wasn't God, or a spirit! It was just another human being. So what gave the priest the right to pull me into a church? He was really only another man, after all. So I refused, and no one forced me to reconsider.

But I liked the priest. He was an open-minded, cheerful, down-to-earth humorous man, and I respected him even though he was a priest. He was entirely real and not given to airy-fairy language or actions. He did not laugh on the occasion when I told him about knowing my angel. He was also not in the slightest bit patronizing when I described, in a rather defiant tone, my experiences of warmth and of understanding solutions after talking to my angel. I told him these things because I wanted to prove that he did not have a monopoly on spiritual things just because he was a priest! He listened and said that what I felt was not at all uncommon. I have since found this to be quite true. Many people feel or talk to, or see, or contact their angel, though they may call it by very different names. This encouraged me to talk to the angels of my children as they arrived, one after the other, into my life.

When I had become an adult, a mother and a wife, my friend the priest once said to me that I would never get on with my angel as I should until I had found a bit of humbleness. He said that I had no humility. This made me absolutely furious. What did humility have to do with knowing about the spiritual world and its beings? Either it was true that through spiritual science one could learn of the spiritual world, or it was not true and one would have to go back to blind belief. My religious life gained nothing from his statement, but my angel did not go away, and

my children's angels worked with me to keep them well and safe. I always knew that I would know where my children were and whether they were in any danger. I was *told*, by that inner, yet all-embracing voice by which the angels identify themselves to me.

Guardian Angels

From my parents I had absorbed the idea that guardian angels are the nearest spiritual beings to us humans. We know them so well that we paint them, talk about them and think about them as though they look like us, except that they have wings and can fly. And they can be saviours for us in times of real need. However, we also all know that they don't respond well to bribery. Prayers have to have real meaning and contain real need. And the answers come in so many guises that we have to learn to read the riddles. It is our failure to do so which makes us think that prayers can go unanswered. Moreover, in my experience, angels don't understand material wants very well. Physical things are as invisible to them as their light is so often invisible to us. The other side is a *living* world, obeying absolute laws governed by pure creativity, unsullied by selfish wants and desires. The angels do what they are given to do, regardless of likes and dislikes. They don't have the personal feelings that we so often suffer, here on this side. So the answers to our prayers will come in ways that seem to make us more uncomfortable rather than less so! That is, if our prayers are not pure in spirit.

Apart from knowing my own angel, whom I took for granted, my first real and conscious contact with another angel was with the guardian angel of my eldest daughter. I saw her sometimes around the cradle, but mostly I felt her as a being of warmth and light.

I think it is necessary to explain why I use words like 'see' and 'hear' when trying to describe spiritual beings or the other side.

The sensation is like seeing and hearing, though it happens inside me. But it also happens outside my person, as though I have travelled a great distance and look back on myself from the other side of the world, sitting here in a chair. This is so impossible to explain that the easiest way is to use ordinary language. In this way, the other side can be ‘painted’ for those who have not yet been there consciously.

My daughter’s angel is very upright, with bright warmth that embraces her. I had such trust in her power that I knew my little girl would be safe, even though deafness and autism trapped her awareness and limited her communication skills. When she was a little toddler, I confidently let her play, inside and outside, relying on her angel to tell me if she needed help. I was always told. Once, when she had been out too long, at the age of three years, I went looking for her and walked straight to the farm. It was after working hours and no one was there. I could hear a cow gently lowing in the barn. I went in and the farmer came round the corner to stop me because, he said, the cow had calved half an hour ago, and she would possibly attack me. I told him my daughter was inside. He looked shocked, and we went in quietly. There stood the cow, head lowered, tongue working briskly to clean and warm her calf as well as my daughter, who was happily sitting in the muck, stroking the newborn calf. The mother cow was not happy to let the little girl go, showing us her horns and bellowing. And all around was such a spread of warmth, not simply because cows give great heat. The warmth was inside us, around us and coloured a glowing red.

We had occasion to be very, very grateful to her angel when on holiday in Holland. As is well known, Holland is flat and there are no hills – except for where we were staying. We had gone out cycling, my husband, myself and our three children. And of course we found the one and only hill! Once at the top, the road sneaked down to the busy main road at the foot. What fun to go

as fast as possible! We tried to stay together, calling to the children, two of whom instantly responded, but the eldest pedalled merrily on, not hearing us. She moved so quickly out of reach that, though we rode like mad, she was too far gone. It was a narrow road, with no passing places, and on one side rows of cars were parked. Up this hill drove a tanker, and down flew my little deaf daughter. There was no way they could pass each other – and if they did, she would career right out into the busy road at the bottom. I stopped my bike and called out loud for help. I actually screamed, stretching my consciousness out as far as I could, and simultaneously feeling that this concentration of widening perception was also centring me into a point the size of a pea.

The lorry and the child passed each other at the only possible place, a gap between two parked cars.

I could no longer see her behind the truck, and the driver waved and smiled cheerfully as he went by. Then I could see again. My daughter had stopped and was holding her bike at the edge of the busy road. Over her seemed to shimmer a huge bright being. Then it was gone. I realized that I had called to her angel in a blind panic, not having enough confidence in this awful situation to talk quietly to her. I felt empty and wrong, sorry for my lack of faith in the extreme tension of the moment – and also a bit foolish for screaming so loudly in public. The great joy of seeing the angel was something I took time to contemplate only later, and then I wondered if I had imagined it. The warmth of inner confidence, however, stayed with me for much longer than the sighting.

One can appear to be either heartless or very stupid to other people when one enters into a mutual pact of responsibility with the guardian angels of one's children. I trusted them absolutely and let my eldest daughter experience the world without hovering over her, trusting also the angels of my two younger

children. We worked together. Certainly, on the occasion that my daughter was knocked off her bike the driver of the car that hit her needed more comfort than she did. He did not think that my faith was of much use! However, she was quite unharmed and learned from this experience to look out for road traffic. But he was very angry with me for letting a deaf child loose on the road, though it was a cul-de-sac. He did agree that he should have been more careful, and that short of locking her in or putting a big sign on her back saying 'I AM DEAF' we would have to rely on angelic intervention! He left the house after a calming cup of tea, still muttering that I was relying on a figment of my imagination.

It was the building site foreman who shouted at me, the time she walked happily up a ladder and on to the roof beams of a half-finished village hall, because I had told him she would be quite safe. He wanted me to call her down. I explained that she was deaf and that she would come down by herself. But he insisted that I got her down. I went with him, and saw her playing on the pointed bit where the roof beams meet. I must admit I was a bit scared, it was so high up. I told him to climb the ladder and wave to her, smiling. He did this, and she looked at him, stood up, held up her hand as though grasping the hand of another, and walked down the sloping beam to the foreman on the ladder as though along a smooth broad path. He was as white as a sheet when he brought her to me and she was as happy and rosy as an apple. But the man had stopped shouting. He had seen her holding the hand of someone.

My eldest daughter has always needed her angel. And without fail her angel arranges things, so much so that now, in her adult life, when her handicaps could be such a stumbling block for her, I do not worry. The right people and the right circumstances always turn up and she learns and manages herself well in daily life. She has become a skilled potter and paints remarkably

mature and original paintings. People who meet her are touched by her warmth and do not find it difficult to make contact with her, though she can only communicate through a limited sign language. Behind her stands her bright warm angel.

The angel of my second daughter is very different. She is silvery and musical and dependable. I used to let my children sleep outside in the pram when they were very small, and as we lived in the country it was quite all right to do this. But even in the country there are hazards. One afternoon I saw a few bees buzzing around her pram. When I went to look, she was fast asleep and under the pram hood a queen bee had gathered her grape-cluster of workers. They hung quietly above the sleeping baby's head.

I knew she would be quite safe. That is, my inner self knew this, but my outer self was not so sure. I felt that God helps him who helps himself. We are not supposed to take angels for granted, and if the angel had led me to see the bees then I would need to find a way to remove them. Being practical is not a denigration of the spiritual world! I fetched the bee-keeper from next door and he collected them in his net without my daughter even stirring. The silvery light had been so constant that I didn't worry at all. I still put her out to sleep but I did put a net over the pram hood. The guardian angel's might should not be abused, I think.

The angel who guards my son is powerful and unapproachable. I have always felt in awe of him. He watches over him and talks to him directly. He has always dealt out consequences instantly and my son called them 'God-deeds' as soon as he could talk. Whenever he stepped out of line, he would receive a reminder, such as hurting himself or dropping his toy, or some other small consciousness raiser. He understood their meaning from when he was very small and still lisped. He would come with a scraped knee and say through his tears: 'It wath a God-deed, Mummy, becauthe I teathed my thithter!'

Later, as he grew up, we sometimes communicated through his angel. I had made it a conscious habit to speak to my children's angels before going to sleep, and when they were adults I still went on doing it. I always knew how they were and, more often than not, knew which one was at the other end of the telephone line before I lifted the receiver. With my daughters, the communication was easy and smooth, telling me little things like their health and their state of mind. With my son, it was of decisions, confrontations and inner turmoil. On one occasion, when he got mugged in Johannesburg, I knew before the phone rang. I had a tremendous headache and felt dizzy with anxiety.

After this happening, I decided to pray openly and directly to his angel. By this I do not mean that I prayed out loud, but I made an inner effort to ask his angel to stand over him as protection against the darkness in the world around him. Then the phone rang, from somewhere in Africa: 'Mother, please stop it. I can't sleep any more. You're taking away my freedom, and I have to live my own life. I can *hear* your prayers!'

Clinging onto someone so strongly through their angel is quite possible, but not very forgivable. So I stopped, and we went back to the usual conscious concern. But then he made his choice of a career – he joined the military. He had always said one day he would fly aeroplanes. I realized that it was not my place to interfere. Bringing one's children up to become free individuals will always hold the risk that what they do and think may not be along the lines you might want them to do and think. So outwardly I accepted his path, but inwardly I struggled for real acceptance. I tried to address his angel and experienced a barrier, high, wide and deep, as though he spoke: 'No more. Beyond this you may not walk.'

I felt shattered and also reproved. Would we find nothing more in common? The loneliness hurt. I couldn't talk to his angel any more. However, the next time I met my son I was

deeply impressed by his uprightness and confidence. I did, it is true, feel on the outside, knowing I could not understand his life's mission fully. I also felt very ashamed of my fear on his behalf.

I know he has chosen his destiny and trust in him, his judgements and his understanding of truth. He has become *himself*. I do not try to talk to his angel any more. Sometimes he approaches me, powerful and huge, but in some odd way reassuring too.

Music of the Spheres

Talking to my angel and those of my children was not quite the only contact I had had with the other side before the eruption of the little girl. When I was 16, I entered into a phase of deep unhappiness with myself, my life and my ideals. Though outwardly things were fine, I was happy at school, loved my home, had many friends and read voraciously, wanting to know everything I could possible learn to know, my inner aims were unclear and I felt I did not really know who I was or where I was going. And then I travelled one night into another space and time.

There was no darkness, only light. This is not a true description, because the light of the 'sky' was actually a kind of blue that was so deep it had gone beyond darkness and become light again. And in that shimmering background twinkled millions upon millions of stars. As I rose up into the sparkling lights they moved into a three-dimensional spiral and showed their colours. They whirled into enormity, each star-colour filling the whole of space yet always giving way to another star-colour's light. Their light was shaded into all the hues that ever existed.

These colours were brighter than any I have seen in the light of day, except when seeing the after-image of a colour in our physics lesson at school. We had to experiment with the magic of the eye,

that it creates its own light with which it can see. You look at a colour, for example blue, without blinking, then transfer your gaze to a white sheet of paper. Instantly, shimmering and glowing, the colour of orange lights up on the white sheet, taking the exact shape of the blue circle painted on the other sheet. But the blue is flat and dead paint compared to the living orange complementary colour that the eye produces on the back of the blue dead paint. Such were the colours I now saw.

They shimmered and blended, one into the other, through the other, over and under the other, yet never lost their differentiation or singular identity. Myriad is too few to describe their number, a multitude not seen here in this world, and each colour resounded in a tone particular to itself. These tones harmonized into music that I cannot describe in words, but its beauty made me expand and grow and thin out with longing to join the coloured music and dance with the tones. They were moving in a form that held meaning, as though it were a kind of living writing. The harmony of the spheres that Shakespeare refers to must be something like the music I heard, and saw. The tones narrowed themselves into a meaningful formation and the meaning told me: 'Not yet. It is not the right time.' I pleaded with the manifold coloured sounds and as I pleaded, they danced into a closer and closer pattern that pushed me inside myself. I shrank into a tiny focus and found myself in bed, stretched out, arms folded over my breast, feet so cold and lifeless, muscles so stiff that I could hardly move. It was painful to find myself still alive. I wanted so much to return to the living vibrant colour and ringing tones of the other world.

The Discipline of Meditation

The experience of being a conveyor to the little girl was very sobering. The absolute power of it reminded me of the reality of

the spiritual world, which the colours and music of the spheres had taught me ten years ago. I asked the priest for some guidance, perhaps he could recommend a meditation, and he helped me to find the path that suited me. From that time on, I mostly managed my meditation, not always as faithfully and completely as I aimed to do, but by and large I stuck to the path. And I did not want to cross over again. It had been as terrifying this time as the first time had been blissful. I did not want to be a bit strange in the head, and I wanted to understand how to control such experiences should they ever happen to me again. This was the reason to begin a path of meditation. Moreover, I had recently read Joan Grant's book called *Far Memory* in which she describes some part of how she trained herself to see clearly and remember accurately. She would test what she saw, and if she could shift the picture, or change details, then she knew it was only a dream. But if she could change nothing, no matter how hard she tried, she knew it to be a true memory picture. I decided that if ever I travelled across again, I would apply this technique.

Echoes of a Past Life

Not that I could, or even can, remember my past lives. But that I have lived before I do not doubt. It is a simple certainty inside me. Not so long ago I visited Rhodes. There are many ruined castles of the Knights of St John, an order linked to the Knights Templar. They were the world's bankers of the Middle Ages, amassing untold wealth and lands across the whole of Europe and the Middle East. On entering the city of Rhodes, I felt as though I would faint. Nausea choked me, my head began to pound and I thought I had sunstroke, despite wearing a sensible sun hat. My husband left me sitting by the roadside for a while, and when I felt a bit better I ventured up the street that lead to

the castle of the Grand Master of the Order. The nearer I got to it, the more ill I felt. Inside the castle I could hardly control the urge to vomit. So we walked down and caught the bus home.

No sooner had we cleared the ancient town walls than I instantly recovered. The choking sensation, as if a rope were strangling me, had completely vanished. We laughed it off as something weird and wonderful. Then we saw, on another outing, a ruin on the hillside. We climbed up, stepped over the wall beside an old and disused well, and I fell down almost in a faint, struggling for breath, as though choking and drowning simultaneously. My husband dragged me over the wall, and instantly I could breathe again.

This time, we decided to test it out. I told him that I felt I was being strangled and drowned upside down in the well. Together we climbed over the wall, and this time I was expecting the terrible sensation. Though I wheezed and broke out into a sweat, I tried not to panic but simply to explore the awful feeling. It was exactly the same, but now I could hold it in place as an *other time* experience and not my actual in-this-life death. It was truly horrible, but interesting too.

When I got home, I asked someone who knew a great deal about history and did not laugh at the idea of reincarnation whether I could have been experiencing death in a past life. He told me something about the Knights of St John in Rhodes. He explained that if a member of the order betrayed a trust or revealed a hidden secret in connection with their initiation rites, or did not follow his vows, after sentencing, he would be taken to that particular castle on the hill and choked with a rope whilst being drowned upside down in the well. Whether this was a past-life experience or my picking up on the distress of somebody who had died in this terrible way, I cannot judge. But it made me think of Joan Grant's many remembered lives.

The Power of Evil

I did not find my way across to the other side again for many years. That is, not in a fully conscious sense. But when I was 33, I did, in a state between waking and sleeping, find a new understanding of the truth of Evil, as well as of the reality of reincarnation.

Evil came to my knowledge in full power when my children were still in nursery school. We lived at that time in Hertfordshire, in a lovely village with friendly inhabitants, and we were very happy indeed. Our family was close, we enjoyed each other and the warmth of the home. My husband was working as a lorry driver and I supplemented our income by working as a charwoman. I enjoyed it very much. I loved making things shine, polishing and tidying, which is, I know, a very unfashionable thing to which to admit! But I derived great satisfaction from the simple ordinary day-to-day activities of housekeeping, whether for my family or for someone else. I had few ambitions and just wanted to live life as it came along. Having three children is quite time consuming and I was always busy. And my husband enjoyed driving lorries. He was often away, doing runs to the Continent. Our three children were happy, too, the school they attended providing them with interests and friends. I too gained many friends through my children and was hardly ever lonely. Our neighbours couldn't have been better. Not being able to drive, and my husband so often absent, I could always find someone to help out with trips. We were rather poor, but the shopkeepers helped out too, letting me pay at the end of the week. I felt extremely fortunate to be living in such a warm and supportive environment. Life was good and very ordinary indeed. No highs and no lows.

Into this nest, as we lay sweetly sleeping, Evil intruded. This was the first time I consciously experienced myself to be in

another place, whilst being in my own familiar home. I was able to be a witness to my own spiritual activity, an observer of the following events, whilst also being the protagonist. Therefore the appearance of evil had a definite *physical* place in which it made its stand, on a high hill. Planted on the top were three stone rectangular altars, the middle one a little bigger than the two that flanked it. To say these blocks were planted is quite accurate because I could see that they had roots that went deep into the mountain, so deep that I could not see their end. They were standing on the hill as though they were teeth in a jaw-bone. The sky behind them was dark and restless. From these altars emanated darkness.

This part is very difficult to describe in words because though darkness is correct it was not black and opaque, but streaming and vibrating as light is to our open eyes. But instead of revealing things to us, as light does, I saw that the running darkness obliterated things, wiped them out of existence.

I saw three beings flying from these altars to our house. Again, flying is a poor word, though correct, to explain the movements these beings made as they slid, crawled or slithered through the dead air. I saw them from my bed, through the walls of our house. Solid as the walls were, I could see through them. The beings were cloaked in flowing darkness, thicker than the streaming murk, and had human-like shapes but with heads, bodies and arms that were broader than human, almost wing-shaped. They did not appear to have legs. Their bodies faded into the general murkiness of the moving darkness. I knew that the three were making for my children. I also knew that I could not allow them to enter into the house, because they wanted to enter into the souls of my children. I was as frightened as I had ever been, with a fear so cold and paralysing that I could not move my limbs. But I knew that I must move, must make my way into the children's room. What I would do after that I did not know.

The odd thing about this seeing was that I was aware of lying in my own bed in the other room next door to my children, yet I could see through the wall into their room where they lay in their beds, and through the curtained window out towards the mountain – which I knew in waking reality was not really there at all. I was, just as had been the case when my daughter almost died on her bicycle in Holland, both stretched out to the horizon, and diminished to the innermost centre of my being.

I succeeded in getting to their room against a tide of fear that wanted to engulf me, wanted to push me back. I felt so cold and lifeless that I thought I would never manage the few steps I needed to take. (I was, throughout the experience, physically still lying in my bed, as was my husband.) Finally, I stood in the middle of the children's room, and saw that my husband had wandered in behind me, sleepwalking. I tried to wake him up, knowing that to be in this state made him terribly vulnerable to the awful beings. He would not wake. He slowly slipped down to his knees, then on all fours, then on his belly on the carpet between the children's beds. He drooled at the mouth and snorted peculiar sounds, pawing at my feet and legs as though trying to pull me down. I was filled with anxiety, overladen by compassion for his state of being, but I could not help him. If I were to help any of us, I would need all my strength to withstand the terrible figures that approached so frighteningly silently. Eventually, as I did not bend to him, he just lay there. I was now so afraid that I wanted to run, run anywhere to escape from here.

I saw the three beings, the central one with a cloak over his head and face, the two on either side with shapes for heads but no faces, only pockets for eyes. The place where the faces should have been was white, like a pale two-dimensional shadow, sickly and glowing. But the eye pockets were worse, raying out darkness as a lantern rays light. The dark rays were the means with which they could penetrate into any material thing and so follow

in order to inhabit their chosen object. They searched for the children, not finding them as they slept peacefully in their beds, unconcerned within a cradle of bright light.

But they found me, and they found my husband, lying unconscious on the floor. I tried to outstare the glowing darkness, but my soul was so thin with the effort of remaining upright that I could not do it. I knew I would soon crumble, as my husband was flattened already. I needed help, support, courage, something onto which to hold, to cling. The shelter and protection around my children was for them alone. I knew that I had to find my own strength.

From somewhere deep within me a memory stirred, like a small song. A verse from the Old Testament filled my mind and so I tried to recite it, with stiff lips. As soon as I began, the central Evil raised its bowed, covered head and I saw its eyes through the covering, the dark rays from the eye pockets burning through the cowl. I thought I was blasted away, so I sang louder, my lips starting to move more freely. And I raised my hand to above my head where I could see a gleaming golden thread rising into eternity from my fontanelle. Whether the golden thread came from my head or began in eternity I do not know. But the Evil hated it, trying with its dark light to cut the cord. The other two writhed against the house, trying to push through the walls. The central figure grew and grew in proportion to the growing confidence in my voice. Then all three vanished. The altars on the hilltop began to sink, disappearing into the earth and my husband began to stir.

I found myself in my bed, my husband by my side. Once again I was lying cold, stiff, my hands crossed on my breast, and I ached with cold. I lay, waiting for warmth to fill my body and recited over and over again: 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. My help comes from my Lord. He that keepeth me will not sleep.'

These were the words, no, rather the content of the words that

had kept the Evil out. But that the beings were real, were present in the world and could do harm was a compelling truth within me.

After some time, I got up and checked my children. They slept peacefully and soundly. The hill in the distance was gone. So real had the hill been that I opened the curtains to check, though realizing that this was nonsense as it was pitch dark, in the early hours of a winter morning.

I thought a great deal about the thread of light from my head to eternity, or from eternity to my head. I think everyone has such a thread, a lifeline to the spirit, but knowing of it and finding it is the big secret in our time. The Evil does not want us to know it. Perhaps we can only really use it when confronted by the great lie that the dark rays from dead eye pockets show to us.

I know this was a real experience because of the position I found myself in on coming back to ordinary consciousness. It was the same as on the previous occasion, the posture of the physically dead or someone undergoing Egyptian initiation. By now I dreaded another such experience. I felt quite unequal to it, not knowing what I should do with such knowledge. So I decided to keep it to myself. I did not want to be thought odd, or that people should laugh at the truth.

Some weeks after this terrible confrontation, we went on a Sunday outing. We often drove out at weekends to explore the area around us, enjoying the lovely countryside. And so we took a turning to High Wycombe. As we drove over the hill and looked down its steep incline to the town below and saw the road's rise up the other hillside, I realized it was the mountain I had seen in that awful night. I said nothing to my family, but sat stunned and fearful in my comfortable front seat of our Ford Cortina. We drove on and up the hill, stopping at a sign that indicated a pavilion or temple. My husband wanted to go inside, but I could not bear to do so having read the description in the

brochure that we picked up at the entrance, which described what its function had been some centuries ago. It had been a centre for a Satanic cult, whose rituals were carried out by means of sexual orgies, in which the perpetrators hoped to raise the Devil. I insisted we left at once, much to my husband's annoyance. The vision I still bore of those terrible beings was too close for comfort and I did not want my children to be in their vicinity a moment longer.

I had learned something that I never forgot – that Evil works primarily on earth. It works through human beings who do not raise their unconscious actions, thoughts and feelings into a real and wakeful awareness. It is dreadfully dangerous to sleep away one's life. One lays oneself bare to become tools of the forces of Evil.

When I had almost completed the manuscript for this book, I gave it to my daughter to read. She came back to me with it in her hands, and said that she recognized the three evil beings. She had suffered from terrible nightmares whilst we were living in Hertfordshire. She would almost wake up and see the three dark beings trying to get into her room. So afraid was she that she would scream, and thankfully I would always come to comfort her. But the worst part of these attacks was the fact that the beings still remained, in the curtains and the clothing that hung in her room. They never quite left her. So she took a book of prayers that belonged to me, and put it under her pillow. I found that book and, thinking it unsuitably adult for a child of seven, offered her the christening gift from her godfather, a bible. This she gratefully put under her pillow, to hold on to when the beings attacked. From then on the dreadful creatures faded away. She had not been able to describe what she saw that made her so frightened because she could not find the words, but my giving her the bible had been a hugely comforting talisman. She said she had entirely forgotten this episode in her life until she read my manuscript.