

THE ROAD YEARS (JESUS - 12 to 29)

BY

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ONE

The sands blew hot across the desert with nothing existing except He who is; the unnamable, the ineffable. On the wind came the dampness of the orchard, the dates and palms, the olive trees and the sweet oils women used for their hair. This thought of femaleness came but as the writings said the femaleness was not first, the image of He who is was first. The hot air crackled with smells as the boy sat with his knees on the sand, tucked under his robe, his head slightly bowed, suppliant to the powers. His vision was the sea, going down at the pristine moment, speaking to the sailors on board the ship moored, ready to embark. They showed kindness, a willingness to share, offered their ship for a journey. And as the ship embarked and travelled the sea, sailing day and night, there came a sudden wind, a wind of good fortune and they were brought to a small city in the midst of the sea.

Now in the shade of this cypress for a brief moment the meditation was broken the laurel smell reaching him, the sweet laurel of the women's hair. His own smell now mixing, an odor so changed and different from before. Gone now the sharp smell of youth, the young boy odor, now it was more animal. This and the laurel seemed to stir a desert stew.

On the docks before the ship on the island the city residents gathered to welcome them. One near asked the name of the city and the leader holding a laurel branch answered speaking directly to the boy who in his meditation stood staring at the laurel branch. "Beginning" he said. "Welcome to Beginning."

And inside the city as the boy and others sought advice on food and lodging the boy realized others stared at him and he was dressed in a fine white robe with a golden belt around the waist girding it and he could feel the glowing as those around him stared and waited for him to speak.

"Jesus!" he heard now.

His mouth opened but his throat was parched from the sand and the desert wind. His eyes fought to stay closed. Again his name was repeated. He blinked his eyes open, saw his father standing above.

"Come, boy. Sleeping time has passed. There is work to be done."

Jesus stood and stretched. The robe he wore now was rough and patched and not clean. His feet were shod in cracked sandals. He could still feel the softness of the white robe, the firmness of the golden belt. He shook his long hair to clear his head. His father had already started off across the sand towards the house they were building where his uncle and cousin waited beside the donkeys loaded with wood and tools. He was younger than his cousin. His job was to bring the boards and tools. As he approached the three donkeys they watched him. One made a sound of greeting. He stroked their necks, spoke to them softly, watched as his uncle and cousin climbed high onto the half finished roof. The sun parched down heavily on his back and head. The donkey's mane and back were hot to the touch, the boards even hotter as he dislodged two and prepared to carry them to his waiting father.

The image flickered in his mind. He stood beautiful in form and stature. He could feel the souls of his feet, his chest and the palms of his hands. One of the men of the city approached him, spoke and called him brother and friend.

The sound from the roof was a screech, like the hawk would make before the kill, the sound before the dive, before the talons drove their death into the prey. It jerked him away from his reverie in the hot sun. His eyes already aimed, caught the instant flash. His cousin, suspended out. His uncle reaching. The moment of stoppage. All ceased. All stood still. And then the cousin was plunging, dropping like a sling shot fowl. Falling as the uncle screamed.

Across the stretch of sand from the windows of the grain building where two Roman soldiers watched the taller of the two, a father himself, grunted in pain.

They watched the boy they had come to watch run to the two men who stood over the body of the boy who had fallen and the taller soldier said the boy must be dead after such a fall.

Jesus did not hesitate. His uncle was sobbing over his dead son. Jesus bent and gathered his cousin in his arms and hugged him to his chest and spoke words to his god. He felt the power surge through his own back and arms and chest and enter his cousin. He felt his cousin tremble and Jesus looked into the dim eyes as they slowly came back to bright. Jesus looked at his own father as the uncle took his son from Jesus and clutched his son and cried tears of relief. His father was looking over to the grain building where the two Roman soldiers could be seen.

"Go," His father said. "They saw all."

Jesus ran then. He ran down the path and over the sand past the donkeys and past the cypress tree and the date palms and as he ran the words like a chant ran in time to his steps" *No man will go on that road who has not forsaken everything and fasted daily. Robbers and wild beasts are many on the road. For the bread in the burlap sacks the black dogs will kill; for the water the wolves will kill, for they thirst mightily; the robbers kill for the garments, their greed running forth,; the lions eat those who hunger for meat, the bulls those who crave green vegetables."*

Out of breath but still running Jesus spoke to the sky" Great hardships are on the road but I will give power to walk it! For if they believe in me they will believe in the Father who sent me and his is the great power and strength. And as he stopped now, bent over, his hands on his knees, gasping for breath an old man in rags appeared.

"The name of this city, boy, is Habitation. I speak truly for we inhabit because we endure."

"Justly," Jesus said between breaths. "Everyone must endure his trials, cities are inhabited, and a precious kingdom comes from them because they endure in the midst of apostasies and the difficulties of the storms. This is the way, the city of everyone who endures the burden of his yoke of faith will be inhabited and he will be included in the kingdom of heaven."

The old man was suddenly joined by others. Now with his breath returned Jesus nodded to them as friends.

They heard how they would travel in the bond of faith and forsake everything as was said. They would evade the robbers because there would be no garments, the wolves because there would be no water, the lions because there would be no desire for meat, the bulls because there were no green vegetables.

A great joy spread over all of them as Jesus moved through and past them and continued to his mother's home.

He told her of the nine gates and she sighed and asked him about the tenth.

"The tenth is the head."

She smiled, touched his hair, told him to hide in the barn and she would later bring food.

Mary Magdalene heard of the incident, the boy falling from the roof then being brought back to life by the one who knew demons, her own Jesus, from listening to one of the Roman guards as he told her uncle of how two other Roman soldiers had witnessed the entire happening. The soldier knew of Uncle's friendship with Jesus and offered to share the pieces of silver he would receive if he found the boy and brought him to the authorities.

"They will pay you to bring Jesus so they may talk with him?"

"They have said this."

"You believe no more will be done than talk?"

Mary was packing one of the caravan wagons with wool blankets and rugs. She acted as though she had no interest in the conversation. She smiled as she listened to her uncle tell the soldier he knew not where Jesus was nor did he want a share of any pieces of silver.

"Your friend is in trouble again," her uncle said when the soldier was gone. "He argues with the rabbis and now he performs magic."

"What kind of magic?"

Her uncle had a twinkle in his eye.

"Nothing too unusual. He brought someone back from the dead."

Mary ripped off the leather apron she had worn to keep her dress clean while she worked and gave it to her uncle.

"I must go to him."

"Of course you must."

He smiled after his niece as she ran off into the night. She was a good girl. He cared for her greatly.

Jesus was in the barn and had taken care of the donkeys after his father returned. His mother had come out with a plate of lentils and cabbage and some sweet tea. The

soldiers would learn where they lived and come to find him. He must watch the house and run if he saw the soldiers arrive. She and his father would stall them as long as they could.

Jesus was not afraid. He imagined the soldier prostrated on the ground attempting to worship him. He caused them to stand and depart from him in peace. They were perfect individuals and could dwell all together, joined with the mind, the guardian which was provided, who taught that the power exists within, that it is extended to the Tri-Powered One, the One of all those who truly exists with the Immeasurable One, the eternal Light of Knowledge that appeared, the male virginal Youth, the first from the unique Tri Powered One who truly exists, and when he was stilled, was extended, became complete and received the power from the All. He knows himself and the perfect Invisible Spirit. And She who knows became the perfected one and joined the Tri-Male and began empowering individuals, the individual on one hand, they are together on the other hand, since she is an existence of theirs and sees them all truly. She contains the divine.

When she knew her Existence and when she stopped, she brought This One, since he saw them all existing individually as he is. And when they become as he is, they shall see the divine Tri-Male, the power that is higher than God. He is the Thought of all these who exist together. If he ponders the great male, the procession of these, he sees it, he sees also those who truly exist and the procession of those who are together. And when he has seen these he has seen the Great One, and if he sees her he sees all of the hidden ones and there is the abundance of each one of them.

Jesus looked up then. He had been sitting in the straw, stroking one of the donkeys and speaking. Now he looked up and saw Mary. Her eyes were wide as she listened.

"What are you saying?"

"This is concerning the invisible spiritual Tri-Powered-One, hear!"

Jesus trusted Mary as he trusted no one else. It was as though she were the twin side of him, and had always been. He had no fear of judgment as he continued, still stroking the donkey, his eyes focused past her.

"He exists as an Invisible One who is incomprehensible to them all. He contains them all within himself, for they all exist because of him. He is perfect, and he is greater than perfect, and he is blessed. He is always One and he exists in them all, being ineffable, unnamable, being One who exists through them all - he whom, should one discern him, one would not desire anything that exists before him among those that possess existence, for he is the source from which they were all emitted. He is prior to perfection. He was prior to every divinity, and he is prior to every blessedness, since he provides every power. And he is a non substantial substance, since he is a God Force over who there is no divinity, the transcending of whose greatness and beauty and power is the calm of peace."

Mary reached out gently, touched the hand that stroked the donkey's neck. Jesus blinked his eyes, came back to her.

"We must go. The soldiers are not far behind."

"I'm not afraid."

"No. You are not afraid. But I am afraid for you. Please. For me. For your mother and father."

Jesus let himself be pulled up by the girl. He let her lead him outside into the warm night. And then the two of them were running across the sand.

TWO

The caravan would leave soon to travel the first night in the cooler darkness while the road was lit by moonlight. Mary did not tell Jesus of her plan until they reached the rear wagons which were ready and loaded.

"I placed the blankets and rugs in this one earlier. It will be perfect."

They had caught their breaths while moving through the throngs of travelers and animals. Her uncle was busy with the lead men and did not see them as they passed. The small fires in the circles of stone were mostly extinguished now. The burnt smell hung in the night air as Mary climbed up into the wagon and beckoned Jesus to follow.

Once they were inside and snuggled down into the blankets and rugs Jesus knew the plan before she spoke. He had felt what she had in mind before they reached the caravan but once they were inside the city and he saw the long line of carriers and travelers and heard the sound of the cows and the sheep he knew. He knew she wanted him to leave his land, his parents and go to the East. He knew this and he asked her not to speak as his own mind spoke in stead. He listened carefully now knowing...

It is not impossible for them to receive a revelation if they come together. It is impossible for the individuals to comprehend the Universal One, the one who is situated in the place that is higher than perfect, yet they apprehend by means of a First Thought - not as being alone, but it is along with the latency of Existence that he confers Being. He provides everything for himself, since it is he who shall come to be when he recognizes himself. And he is One who subsists as a cause and source of Being, and an immaterial material and an insubstantial substance and a motionless motion and an inactive activity. Yet he is a provider of provisions and a divinity of divinity - but whenever they apprehend, they participate the first Vitality and an undivided activity, as hypostasis of the First One from the One who truly exists.

It seemed so clear at this moment, clear in the darkness of the wagon with the burnt smells from outside, the wool and myrrh smells inside and Mary Magdalene with her young girl smell now different as his own smell had changed, they were both changed now. Their friendship still strong even more strong now, her hand in his, he must speak to her the words he was hearing.

"He is endowed with blessedness and goodness, soon recognized as the traverse one, the one of boundlessness of the Invisible Spirit that subsists in him and this boundlessness turns him to the invisible spirit in order that it might know what is within him and how he exists."

"Who is this?" Mary whispered, her lips touching his cheek, her hand squeezing his hard.

From outside the harsh voice of the lead man sounded. His "On move!" ratcheted through the night air. The squeak of the wheels and the sound of whips immediate as he called out again.

"There is no defining," Jesus whispered to her. He continued: "He becomes the salvation for every one by being a point of departure for those who truly exist, for through him his knowledge endured, since he is the one who knows what he is. For they brought forth nothing beyond themselves, neither power nor rank nor glory for they are all eternal. He is Vitality and Mentality and Life has Vitality and possesses non-Being and Mentality. Mentality possesses Life and That-Which-Is. And three are one although individually they are three."

Mary felt him tremble then, as though a chill were upon him. She pulled her arms around Jesus and with her strength and body weight moved down towards the covered floor of the wagon and the sides swayed as the caravan proceeded and he fought only momentarily and finally gave in and allowed himself to be pulled down with her. As the rugs and blankets shifted and covered them her arms were around him now and Mary used her own body warmth to warm and comfort him. She did not want to let Jesus talk but she wanted to know what he was thinking-feeling and even now quietly, his face against hers he continued.

"It was as though I heard these things and was afraid and I turned towards the multitude and asked who gives power to those who are capable of knowing these things by a revelation that is much greater. And knowing, I knew, none is able to hear these things except the great powers alone."

As Jesus shifted his body with the movement of the wagon, the side to side sway their robes moved and each felt the touch of the other's body flesh. Mary felt the sound in her throat, the throb in her chest and body, a need to hold him more tightly to bury her face in his chest.

"And there was a great power put on me, which the Father of the All, the Eternal, put upon me before I came to this place, in order that those things that are difficult to distinguish might be distinguished and those things that are unknown to the multitude I might know, and that I might escape to safety in the One who is yours, who was first to save and who does not need to be saved."

"You mean Yahweh?"

"No. This is the Good and the Great. When she spoke to me she made a revelation and said 'no one is able to hear these things except the great powers alone. A great power was put upon you, which the Father of All, the Eternal, put upon you before you came to

this place. in order that those things that are difficult to distinguish you might distinguish and those things that are unknown to the multitude you might know'..."

"Yes, you said this. But you said she spoke. Who is this 'she'?"

"She?"

"You said she."

"Yes. The all glorious One. She anointed me. When my soul went slack and I fled and was very disturbed she gave power to me and the light surrounded me and the Good that was in me made me divine."

"Who is this all glorious She?"

"She. The female One. She said 'Since your instruction is complete and you have known the Good that is within you, hear concerning the Tri-Powered One those things that you will guard in great silence and great mystery, because they are not spoken to anyone except those who are worthy, those who are able to hear: nor is it fitting to speak to an uninstructed generation concerning the Universal One that is higher than perfect. But you have awakened because of the Tri-Powered One, the One who exists in blessedness and goodness, the One responsible for all these'."

"You are divine?"

"Yes."

"And you feel this?"

"I know this. As today when I brought my cousin back to life..."

"You mean when he fell and you took him in your arms and he breathed again?"

"Yes. I felt the great power. I spoke to the Universal One, I asked for the power to come through me and I could feel the power and the glory. It came through me and into my cousin and he lived again."

"What if he was but stunned. That the fall made him lose consciousness and when you..."

"No. He went to the other side. He was gone and I brought him back."

"The Roman soldiers believe you are aligned with demons."

"Let them believe what they want."

Mary held him tightly now. Their robes were parted and their naked flesh was heated and together as the wagon swayed and bumped through the night on the uneven trail.

"Do you believe in me?" Jesus whispered into her hair as she moved against him.

"I do."

"What I say is true. You are the one and only one I would tell what I have told to and I want you to..."

Mary put her mouth on his mouth now to stop the words, to quiet Jesus and their mouths together caused their bodies to move together and her lips on his lips became one and the power moved to them and between them and became one with them and Mary felt she truly did believe in him. She did not understand what he said or what he felt and did not know if what he believed happened with his cousin did happen the way he believed but she believed in him and had believed in him even before they had now grown past childhood and she knew he had refused bar mitzvah and she had refused bat mitzvah because he had said to her he did not want to be joined with a god so mean and vengeful as the Jewish God and she believed in Jesus then and she believed in him now and as the wagon and their bodies bounced and swayed and his mouth was on hers and

his power came into her and she felt the power of the Tri-Powered One, and the Female One and this power entered her and she knew she too was divine.

As sleep came to them Mary dreamed and saw the long procession of young women, the multitudes who had come and offered themselves to be the wife of the young man whose lineage was direct to King David. She saw the parents and the bounties, the rich gifts, the jewels, the sweet fruits, the fine linens and silks and wools. The silks had been brought back from the East by her uncle and he had given her a small roll of the spun shimmering gold and told her of the small worms that spun this fabric from the leaves of trees in the Oriental nights. Mary had sewn a vest from the silk and given it to Jesus and he had thanked her but insisted she put it on for the elegance was for her not for him and he had said he would not marry any of the many young women whose parents had brought them forth. In her dream she knew this was true but felt pain knowing she too might be passed over.

As the wagon bumped hard and came abruptly to a stop she and Jesus were thrown forward and the force of their bodies dislodged the stacked rugs in front of the wagon and the chords tying them snapped sending the tall pile of rugs forward to crash through the burlap curtain and hit the back of the driver and his son. The driver looked back then and in the first rays of morning sun he saw Jesus and Mary. He quickly covered his son's eyes and yelled for them to pull their robes tight.

"What is this?" Uncle demanded as Jesus and Mary were brought before him. His voice was gruff but his eyes softened as he looked at his niece.

"We are saving Jesus."

Day was breaking and the animals were being fed, the sheep and cattle close together, intent on their food. Desert birds dipped down in twos and threes to pick the spilled morsels from the sand. The sun was warming now but would be hot soon.

"And this means?"

"We are going with you to the East. We will work for you to earn our way."

"Your parents, my brother would have my hide. I'm certain he does not know."

Others had gathered round, some smiling and Uncle's words. They knew of Mary and some had heard rumors of Jesus. He was thought to be special, a problem for the Romans.

Mary looked down. The look showed this was true. She, of course, had not told her parents.

Rebecca, the young girl, slightly older than Mary, who was a wood gatherer, animal tender and basic helper pushed her way forward.

"They could join me. There is plenty work for three."

Uncle did not respond. Instead he motioned to one of the men.

"Zekiah, you will choose two camels and take them back."

The man moved quickly away and called to Rebecca to follow him. She smiled at Jesus and bowed her head before following. Uncle crooked a finger at Mary and led her away from Jesus and the others.

"We have heard you brought a boy back to life," A heavy woman said to Jesus then. "Is this true?"

Others crowded near to hear Jesus speak.

"It was not me but through me the Spirit reawakened my cousin."

"The Romans believe you are in league with demons," A smaller man asked from the group.

"No demons would dwell where there is the one of the First Thought. Indeed it is not me who formed such a degree anterior to knowledge. The One moved motionlessly in that which governs. There is no possibility for complete comprehension yet He is known. And this is so because of the third silence of Mentality and the second undivided activity which appeared in the First Thought as the Tri-Powered One and the Indivisible One of the divisible likenesses joined from the non-substantial existence."

The crowd, now gathered murmured among themselves as Jesus looked over to where Mary spoke with her uncle. She was excited now and pointing towards him while motioning to her uncle with intensity. Uncle looked this way also and seemed undecided. He shook his head and tried to argue. Mary reached out and took the sleeve of his robe and pulled on it, pleading as his eyes filled with tears.

"Are you of Sophia then, the power of the uttered sound? The zza-zza-zaa?" The heavy woman asked.

Jesus turned back to her and the group.

"She said to me 'in an unknowing knowledge you know the Tri-Powered One exists before the glories. They do not exist among those who exist. They do not exist together with those who exist nor those who truly exist. Rather, all these exist as divinity and blessedness and existence and non-substantiality and no-being existence'."

Again the murmuring. Jesus could see Uncle now hug his niece.

"And I prayed that the revelation might occur to me and She said 'if you seek with a perfect seeking, then you shall know the Good that is in you, then you will know yourself as well, as one who derives from the God who truly pre-exists'."

The murmuring was sprinkled now with "glory-glory" and "Praise be" as Uncle and Mary returned and Uncle put his hand on the shoulder of Jesus and Mary smiled at him through her tears.

"You will go with us. You will be one with us. The journey is long and hard but Mary has said, and rightly so, the Romans have ill will for you and you would not be safe. And you will work and earn your way."

"Thank you, sir."

Jesus dipped his forehead in respect.

"And Mary will be taken back to her family."

With this Uncle turned and motioned to the crowd to disperse. They seemed unwilling, wanting to hear more, but followed Uncle's orders and moved away. As Zekiah came near with the two camels Mary impulsively kissed Jesus on the lips.

"I am yours, I will always be yours."

The camel was made to kneel now and Jesus helped Mary mount. As the camel stood with her aboard Jesus made motion with the knife edge of his hand as if giving a blessing.

"I will return to you. And to them."

Jesus looked quickly to the way behind them and she knew he meant all their people.

Zekiah now led Mary away and as the two camels moved down the road from whence they came Mary looked over her shoulder one last time then with the emotion rising in her breast quickly turned back to Zekiah and followed him.

THREE

The Silk Road was known to be the most treacherous and arduous of all passageways, going through rough terrain with weather climbing to the hottest hot and dropping to the coldest cold. Robbers and murderers staked claim to certain stretches and other portions of the routes were patrolled by groups of wild animals. Uncle assigned Jesus to work with Rebecca and allowed him the rug wagon as his place to travel in and sleep. He gave restrictions on Jesus giving talks, knowing the travelers were interested in what this young rabbi had to say.

"I will only speak when you give me permission," Jesus said.

"When we camp outside of Damascus you may speak."

"Thank you, Uncle."

During work time, when he helped with animals Rebecca talked with him and laughed and watched him. Even so his mind moved to Mary, he was joined with her and even as his mind spoke inside of him he was sharing what he thought with her.

"The seeking of the perfect seeking will help know the God that is in you; then you will know yourself as well, as one who derives from the God who truly pre-exists. For after a hundred years there shall come to you a revelation of That One by means of the Luminaries so this will be fitting for you and beyond so as not to forfeit your kind. And if so then you will receive a conception of That One, then you will be filled with the word to completion. Then you become divine and you become perfect."

"You receive them in the seeking, the Existence. If it apprehends anything it is apprehended by the very one who comprehends. And then he who comprehends and knows is greater the he is comprehended and knows. But if he descends to his nature, he is less, for the incorporeal natures have not associated with any magnitude: having the power, they are everywhere and they are nowhere. since they are greater than every magnitude. and less than every exiguity."

This all came from the female all Glorious-One. Yet when he felt her separate from him he did not despair of the words. He prepared himself therein and deliberated the idea of himself in a hundred years. He rejoiced exceedingly since he was in the great

light and on a blessed path because those whom were worthy to see as well as those whom were worthy to hear are those whom it is fitting that the great powers alone lead to God.

When those hundred years grew nigh, when there was completion, he found blessedness of the eternal hope full of auspiciousness. He saw the good divine and knew of the primary origin of the blessedness, full of divinity; and the primary origin of the one without origin, the spiritual, invisible Tri-Powered One, the Universal One that is higher than perfect.

He felt the eternal Light of the garment that was upon him and was taken up to a holy place whose likeness cannot be revealed in the world, then by means of a great blessedness he saw all those about whom he had heard. He praised all of them and stood upon his knowledge and inclined to the knowledge of the Universals.

He saw the holy powers and knew he would be able to test what happens in the world. He saw and felt the blessedness and knew how it silently abides, by which the proper self seeking itself withdraws to the Vitality he could see moving. And although it would be impossible to stand he would fear nothing, but if wishing to stand would withdraw to the Existence and find it standing and at rest after the likeness of the One who is truly at rest and who embraces all these silently and inactively. And to receive the revelation of him by means of a primary revelation of the Unknown One - the One whom to know him, and to be ignorant of him - and become afraid in that place then he will be still.

As Jesus listened to these things as those ones spoke them there was within him a stillness of silence, a Blessedness and he could feel his proper self. He withdrew to the Vitality he sought and joined into it and stood, not firmly but silently. He could see an eternal, intellectual and undivided motion that pertains to all formless powers. With this he wanted to stand firmly and withdrew to the Existence, which he found standing at rest, like an image and likeness of what is conferred upon by a revelation of the Indivisible One and the One who is at rest.

This ran through him now as they stopped outside of Damascus and he and Rebecca carried the food and fed and watered the animals. She spoke to him but he only nodded or answered in single syllables.

He was filled with the revelation by means of a primary revelation of the Unknowable One. He felt ignorant of him but not of Her yet knew he had received power by him. Having been permanently strengthened he knew the One who exists inside and the Tri-Powered One, and the revelation of his un - attainableness. He knew the unknowable to them all, the God who is beyond perfection; he saw the Tri-Powered One that exists in them all. He was seeking the ineffable and Unknowable God - whom if one should know him, he would be absolutely ignorant of him - the Mediator of the Tri-Powered One who subsists in stillness and silence and is unknowable.

"Have you taken a vow?" Rebecca asked Jesus as they placed the last bit on grain in the wooden trough, Jesus looked at her as though she had just appeared from the ethos. Two small lambs crowded against each other. Jesus stroked them both and they calmed.

"No. I have taken no vow."

"Then it is me. I am not worthy of you?"

He stepped back from the lambs and let them eat. He studied Rebecca and her beauty magnified now as she smiled. He felt he had offended her. He had not meant to. His father had told him how Moses had gone into the desert and had awakened and been spoken to by God. Something inside of him awakened to this young woman. He felt her need. They had worked together and eaten together and walked the trail together for all this time and he had been so involved in his own evolvment that he had not communicated with her except in the very simplest of terms.

"You are worthy," he said.

"They say you are blessed, that you are special. And I know you come from the line of King David. And I am poor and..."

"No," Jesus interrupted. "My line of birth means nothing. A King is no greater than the beggar. The poor are many and they are who I align with as my brothers and sisters."

"You are as my brother?"

"Yes."

"Thank you," she said. Rebecca then lifted his hand to her lips and kissed its back.

As she ran off to help the other women with the preparing of the meal Jesus looked down at the place where she had placed her lips and felt the longing for Mary Magdalene. There was so much he wished to tell her, to share with her. He looked back up and saw Rebecca join the other women. He must not ignore her. He must be kind to her.

During the evening meal Uncle came to him and placed a hand on his shoulder as he told Jesus tonight he could speak to those who had been waiting for his words. Jesus thanked him and allowed Rebecca to take his plate and utensils after Uncle had left.

"They wait for you by the main fire," she said.

"Thank you."

"I have saved sweets for you. I will bring them later."

Jesus nodded, already involved in the thoughts and words he knew he must share. As he stood and walked through the wagons to the center where the big fire was being stoked he was surprised by the large number of men who were seated cross legged waiting for him. Women were farther away in smaller groups. He knew they were not allowed to join the men and this did not sit well with Jesus. As they cleared a space for him in the center near the fire he asked that the women be allowed to come forth and also hear what he would say. The men gathered and talked among themselves for a few moments and then acquiesced. When all were seated Jesus began.

"When I was confirmed in important matters the Luminaries said to me, 'Cease hindering the inactivity that exists in you, by seeking incomprehensible matters; rather hear about Him in so far as it is possible by means of a primary revelation and a revelation'."

Jesus saw Rebecca move forward and sit beside two heavy women who nodded intently.

"He is something insofar as he exists in that he either exists and will become more, or acts or knows, although he lives without Mind or Life or Existence or Non-Existence, incomprehensibly. And he is something along with his proper being. He is

not left over in some way, as if he yields something that is assayed or purified or that receives or gives. And he is not diminished in any way, whether by his own desire or whether he gives or receives through another. Neither does he have any desire of himself nor from another; it does not affect him. Rather, neither does he give anything by himself, lest he be diminished in another respect; nor for this reason does he need Mind, or Life, is indeed anything at all. He is superior to the Universals in his privation and unknow-ability, that is, the non-being existence, since he is endowed with silence and stillness lest he be diminished by those who are not diminished."

"He is neither divinity nor blessedness nor perfection. Rather, this triad is an unknowable entity of him, not that which is proper to him; rather, he is another one superior to the blessedness and the divinity and perfection. For he is not perfect, but he is another thing that is superior. He is not corporeal. He is not incorporeal. He is not great. He is not small. He is not a number. He is not a creature. Nor is he something that exists that once can know. He is something else of himself that is superior, which one cannot know."

One of the other serving girls brought Jesus water. He drank from the vessel then returned it to the girl, thanking her and continued.

"He is the primary revelation and knowledge of himself, as it is he alone knows himself. Since he is not one of those that exist but is another thing, he is superior to superlatives, even in what is his and not his. He neither participates in age nor does he participate in time. He does not receive anything from anything else. He is not diminishable, neither does he diminish anything. He is self comprehending as something so unknowable that he exceeds those who excel in unknown-ability."

"He is endowed with blessedness and perfection and silence. Perfection and stillness and all attributes are in the entity of him that exists which one cannot know and which is at rest."

"He is much higher in beauty than all those that are good and he is thus unknowable to all of them in every respect. And he is united with the ignorance that sees him. Of himself he is unfathomably unfathomable. He does not activate himself so as to become still. He is not existence, less he be want. Spatially, he is corporeal, while properly he is incorporeal. He has non-being existence. He exists for all of them unto himself without any desire. He is a greater summit of greatness."

"Since he is boundless and powerless and nonexistent he was not given Being. Rather he contains all of these in himself, being at rest, standing out of the one who stands continually, since there had appeared an Eternal Life, the Invisible and Tri-Powered Spirit which is in all of these who exist. And it surrounds them, being higher than them all."

One of the men in front called out to ask what they must do.

"Concerning all things you have heard certainly. Do not seek anything more but go. We do not know whether the Unknowable One has angels or gods or whether the One who is at rest was containing anything within himself except the stillness, which is he, lest he be diminished. It is not fitting to spend more time seeking."

The group looked one to another with surprise. Some questioned the meaning.

Abruptly now Jesus stood and blessed them and moved away from the fire and through the night towards the rug wagon where he would sleep. Behind him the others

began to speak, discussing what they had heard. Even the women's voices sounded. They too were awakened.

Inside the wagon Jesus stilled himself and tried to clear his mind. He heard the phrases and thoughts that were still flowing like a stream from a heavy rain. He saw gods and goddesses and demons and spirits. His soul overflowed with a desire to know itself and all there was.

He knew that the gods would give to them who served. They would come upon the land where the great men will be who have not been defiled nor will be defiled by any desire. Their souls did not come from a defiled hand but it came from a great commandment of an eternal angel. Fire and asphalt will be cast upon those men and fire and blinding mist will come over those whose eyes of the powers illuminated through the darkness. And great clouds of light will descend and other clouds of light will come down upon them.

The tarp snapped back then and like a cold hand slapped him into the now. Jesus shook his head once to clear it and saw Rebecca holding the tarp back and smiling into him.

"They all found much strength in what you said. Even now they talk trying to understand your words."

"They are my words and yet they are not."

"May I step up? I have brought the sweets I saved for you."

Jesus did not say, yes, but neither did he say, no. Rebecca was quickly up the transom and into the back of the wagon beside him. She had bathed and wore a clean robe and her hair had the odor of laurel leaves. There was just enough light to see the hoop earrings hanging near her cheeks. Her silver and copper ankle and wrists bracelets had jangled and jangled again as she dug inside her robe and came up with a small oil cloth bag. He immediately could smell the sugar dates and figs and something else he could not quite place. Her fingers dipped into the bag and came up with one of the figs. She slipped it between his lips, holding the stem and Jesus bit down separating the fruit from the stem. Her fingertips brushed his lips. As he chewed she watched him, smiling.

"I am so glad to know you. I had heard of you and when you joined the caravan my heart pounded with the thought that we might talk. I know you have spoken tonight and must be tired so I will not expect conversation but I am with open ears whenever you wish to speak."

She again dug into the bag and this time came up with sugared dates. She pressed them into his mouth and let her fingers linger on his lips. The dates were very sweet. As her fingers moved away Jesus chewed slowly. He had not been blind to the beauty of this young girl. He had seen the others looking at her as they worked. The ones who had spoken to her had not received an invite to continue. Even though she was not similar to Mary in any way when she was near him Jesus felt the longing for his friend. Now as Rebecca continued to feed him the sweets she had brought he felt this ache, this longing and he had no choice but to speak

"I have this dream where the fifth kingdom says that he came from a drop from heaven. Thrown into the sea. The abyss received him, gave birth to him and brought him to heaven. He received the glory and the power and thus came to water."

Rebecca peeled the fruit as he talked, the fruit he could smell but not name and now she placed part of it in his mouth, and the flavor was such as he had never tasted.

"And from the sixth kingdom, there was this one who loved flowers and she became pregnant from the desire of flowers. She gave birth to him in that place. The angels of the flower garden nourished him. He received glory there and power. And thus came to water."

In the darkness Rebecca placed another section of the wondrous fruit in her lips and leaned into Jesus and with her lips pushed a portion of the fruit between his lips and into his mouth and her lips touched his and her lips were sweet like the fruit and soft as spring time. Jesus continued.

"And the seventh kingdom says of him that he is a drop. It came from heaven to earth. Dragons brought him down to caves. He became a child. A spirit came upon him and brought him on high to the place where the drop had come forth. He received glory and power there. And thus came to water."

Again she placed fruit between her lips and moved her lips to his and this time Jesus took the fruit and her lips and then continued.

"And the eighth kingdom says of him that a cloud came upon earth and enveloped a rock. He came to it. The angels who were above the cloud nourished him. He received glory and power there. And thus he came to water."

His body was warm now, Rebecca had moved against him. Her leg and hip and shoulder were warm against his side.

"And from the ninth kingdom came nine Muses and one separated away and came to the high mountain and spent time seated there so that she desired herself alone in order to be androgynous. She fulfilled her desire and became pregnant from her desire. He was born. The angels who were over the desire nourished him. And he received power and glory and thus came to the water."

"And the tenth kingdom says of him that his god loved a cloud of desire and begot him in his hand and cast upon the cloud above him. And the eleventh kingdom says that the father desired his own daughter. She herself became pregnant of her father. The twelfth kingdom says of him that he came from two illuminators. And the thirteenth kingdom says of him that every birth of their ruler is a word. And this word received a mandate there. He received glory and power. And thus he came to the water, in order that the desire of those powers be satisfied."

"Is this dream you?"

Rebecca's breath was hot against his cheek.

"The dream is filled with clouds."

"But it is you. It must be you."

"I am not a king."

She whispered to him now. Her lips near his. Her arms moved around him and she kissed Jesus on the lips and he remembered Mary. Remembering Mary he longed for her even as he felt himself being laid back on the same rugs he and Mary had lain upon all those days ago. The wondrous fruit had made him light headed, as had talk of the dreams and now as Rebecca kissed him and said he would be king he listened for the voices but could only hear his own breath and feel the blood pounding in his temples.

FOUR

The dreams continued. Jesus now was older, a sparse beard had begun to take shape; from all the work and walking his muscles were growing round and firm. He made Rebecca understand that he and Mary were cut from the same bolt of lightning and would walk this world together. She said she understood and would be with him when she could and would listen to all he had to say. His friendship meant everything to her.

In the dream he saw the heavens open and the whole creation below heaven shone. The world began to shake and tremble. A monstrous snake curled through the canyons. All ran in fear and suddenly the light of a youth stood and suddenly his likeness changed and he was an old man. When it changed again he became a servant. There was not a plurality but there was a likeness with multiple forms in the light and the likenesses appeared through each other and the likeness had three forms.

The image spoke and said why are you afraid? I am with you always. I am the Father and the Mother and the Son. I am undefiled and incorruptible. I have come to teach you what is and what was and what will come to pass that you may know these things which are not revealed and those which are revealed and to teach you concerning the unwavering race of the perfect Man.

During rest the next day he and Rebecca sat beneath a Mimosa and he spoke to her:

"The Monad is a monarchy with nothing above it. It is he who exists as God the Father of everything, the invisible One who is above everything who exists as incorruption, which is pure light into which no eye will look."

"But you say this is not the Jewish God, not the one in the sacred books?"

"No. This is not a jealous God, not a spiteful God. He was not created by man"

"But we have been taught..."

"It was not teaching. It was force to make you fear, to control your thoughts and actions."

"And this God you know?"

"He is the invisible Spirit that flows through all there is. It is not right to think of Him as a god or something similar, for he is more than a god, since there is nothing above him, no one lords over him. He does not exist in something inferior to him since everything exists in him. For it is he who establishes himself. He is eternal, since he does not need anything. He is total perfection. He does not lack anything. He is the all. He is completely perfect in light. He is illimitable since no one prior to him set limits. He is unsearchable since there exists no one prior to him to examine him. He is immeasurable since there was no prior existence to him. He is invisible since no one saw him. He is eternal since he exists eternally. He is ineffable since no one is able to comprehend him to speak to him. He is un-nameable since there is no one prior to him to give him a name. He exists in all and all exists in him."

"Then Adam and Eve came from him as the writings say?"

"All Adams and all Eves."

"All came from him?"

"He was the spark, the light, he always was and ever shall be."

"All animals?"

"All there is. The rocks, the sea, the sky, the oceans."

"And the Femaleness?"

"The Femaleness is in him and part of him. He is immeasurable light, light which is pure and holy and immaculate. Time was not apportioned to him since he does not receive anything from another. His perfection is majestic and unknowable. He is pure immeasurable mind. He his life giving life. He is blessedness giving blessedness. He his knowledge giving knowledge. He is goodness giving goodness. He is mercy and redemption giving mercy. He is grace giving grace not because he possesses it but because he gives immeasurable, incomprehensible light."

"He is female also?"

"He is all. In my dreams I hear of the alien things and they are not entirely alien but they come from the female. The things she produced as she brought down the race from the Pre-existent One. So they are not alien but they are ours. They are indeed ours because she who is the mistress of them is from the Pre-existent One. At the same time they are alien because there was no intercourse with her when she produced them."

"I don't understand."

"When you come to these detainers who take away souls by theft in that place and you understand that place to which you must return is the place from which I have come. I will call on the imperishable knowledge, which is the female, which is called Sophia, who is in the Father and who is the mother and she is female from the femaleness. And who am I myself and who through the imperishable Sophia through who you will be redeemed and all the sons and daughters of He-who-is these things they have known and have hidden within them. As I tell you this you too must keep these things hidden inside you and you are to keep the silence."

"But I am afraid."

"No. There is no thing to fear. There will be seven women as disciples and behold all women bless those who understand the powerless vessels and the strong

perception within them. There is the spirit of thought, the spirit of counsel, the spirit of knowledge and their fear when passed through the breath was but ignorance and when all comes forth through Him there is no need for fear but only peace."

"When I hear you speak such I believe you, I feel truth to your words."

"Women must cast away the cup of bitterness. The perishable has gone up with the imperishable and the female element has attained to this male element."

Jesus allowed her to kiss the sleeve of his robe before moving away. They were close to Baghdad now and this evening Uncle had said he may speak to all of those who were in frenzy to hear the words. As the final distances were travelled before camp Jesus did his chores and kept his mind free. He did not know what he would speak but knew the words would be right and true.

Later, as though awakening from his own dream Jesus, in deed, found himself before those amassed.

"I will speak these words now that you are seated, men and women and children hear me!"

He had come while they still milled about with much chatter and excitement and when he had appeared Uncle had come forth and quieted them.

"Who are you, young rabbi?" A man near the front asked. Others told the man to be quiet that he must hold his tongue.

"I am Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph and Mary."

"Yes, we know. But who are you?"

Again more sounds of those around this man trying to still him. Jesus waved a hand in supplication.

"I am he who received revelation from the One of Imperishability; he who was first summoned by the One who is great, who passed through the worlds. The knowledge which I have been given is unique in understanding, produced only from above. That which was revealed to me was hidden from everyone and shall be revealed as time sees right. They will say of me he came to open our minds to save our souls. I speak in order that I may come forth. Pay attention in order that you may see me for who I am."

The man and those around him made sounds of understanding and approval.

"If I have come into existence then who am I? My brother James and I were nourished from the same milk. Nor is he a stranger. He has seen the path but he has said of me, that I will lead."

"This virgin you hear about, I proclaim to you to tell you these words which I speak. When you hear, therefore, open your ears and understand and walk. It is because of you that they pass by, activated by that one who is glorious. And if they want to make a disturbance and seize possession let them stand alone. And those who wish to enter, and seek to walk in the way that is before the door, open the good door through you. And those who follow, they enter and you escort them inside and reward those who are ready."

"As I kissed James my brother I took hold of him and said, in the dream I revealed all those things to you, I revealed to you those things the rabbi's did not know, leaders who called themselves with the spirit, I said we must walk separate from them, we have their blood but we are not them, we are blessed with the true spirit and must be exceedingly joyous."

"Renounce the difficult way, which is so variable, and walk in accordance and become free. The true God will not judge you for what you have done but will have mercy as you repent and profit from all and move on. Pay heed to your hearts, not the false rules those who have controlled you have laid down."

"I proclaim to you these true words I speak. When you hear, therefore open your ears and understand and walk accordingly! The inheritance you have been promised that was boasted to be great is small. Those gifts are not blessings. The promises are evil schemes. They have used you to further their own dominions."

"The true and real spirit has compassion. Your inheritance is not unlimited nor does it have a limited number of days but it is eternal. And to the small children will it be revealed by you and the power of the spirit that those who wish to enter will not enter due to fear but will enter because the door is a good door and there is peace and love and goodness to be beheld."

"Renounce this difficult way which is so variable and walk in accordance with him who desires that you are free and will pass every dominion. He is not a judge to bring down fire and wrath for what you have done or thought but One who is merciful. You have judged yourselves and been judged by those who have no right to judgment. You have oppressed yourselves. Behold him who speaks and see him who is silent. The Lord has taken you captive from the Lord, having closed your ears, that they might not hear the sound of the true inner truth. Yet you will be able to pay heed to your hearts. You have been promised a house that their God has made, and you were promised an inheritance through it. There will be doom to destruction and derision of this house and those who are in ignorance. Too long have we been held prisoner."

As Jesus turned now and walked away the listeners sat in stunned silence. They did not understand all that had been said but felt the meaning. One now turned to another and implored the meaning, asked for explanation, was afraid of what he thought was said. Soon all were talking among themselves trying to decipher what they had just heard which made them feel at once uplifted and yet still afraid. Had they been told the words pounded down on them for so long were not true? Was the true God a good and kind father? Was the wrathful god of the Hebrews a creation of men in control?

Jesus sat outside his wagon in the darkness waiting for calmness or inspiration. He thanked his God for the words and thoughts and knew in his deepest soul the words were good and true.

From the shadows a figure seemed to flicker in and out of sight as the background fires snapped up and down in the light wind. The figure was moving away from the fires and coming this way and Jesus watched through half shut eyes as he continued his meditation. As the man came nearer he became recognizable as Zediah, the head herdsman who had taken Mary back after they were discovered stowed away in the wagon. He had said little to Jesus during the journey but had seemingly watched him, at times, when he was performing his chores. Once Jesus had caught part of a conversation as Zediah and the two hired herders had argued vehemently over something and he had heard his own name mentioned numerous times. When the three men noticed him the two herders had glared his way while Zediah waved an arm at Jesus, signaling him to continue on his way.

"Good evening, Zediah," Jesus said in greeting as the man stepped out of the shadows.

"May God be with you," The head herdsman answered bowing his head with a slight nod.

"You were with the others while I spoke."

"What you said gave us all much interest."

"I am glad."

Jesus slid down from his seat on the wagon. He had grown to the point where he was almost at eye level with the herdsman. He smiled but saw concern on the other's face.

"Is something troubling you, Zediah?"

"Your talk has caused a few of the men to feel spite for your words."

"Spite? What words have I said which deserved spite?"

"They feel you have questioned Jehovah."

"I have said there is one God. I have said nothing against any name for God."

"They feel you are opposed to their religion."

"I oppose no religion. Those who believe will believe until they awaken."

"You are saying their/our religion is wrong?"

"I say what men have created to enslave other men is wrong. To believe in a Superior power that has no definition, no rules of harsh punishment, but only goodness, this is of which I speak."

Zediah's face brightened in the darkness. There almost seemed to be a waft of candle flame in the wind lighting his face.

"This would be quite good if it was true."

"It is true. I promise you."

Zediah pushed a finger to his lip in thought, took the lip softly between his teeth, nodded to himself, tried to smile but then some warning voice of many years of castigation brought his eyes to a squint.

"Please take care Jesus. Mary asked I protect you. I will do this."

Zediah gave a quick nod of his head now and moved back towards the weakening fires.

Jesus looked heavenward. Above in the night sky the stars blinked and shined and covered him like God's own blanket. This was one of those times when he felt abutted to adulthood. He no longer felt himself a child. Had not felt a connection to childhood since his moments with Mary and then the connection he now had with Rebecca. He was not a man yet but manhood surrounded him and many of his thoughts were from the other side of adulthood.

Later as his breathing returned to normal and his mind began to lose the whirring and spaced separation caused by his talk he became aware he was not alone. At first he thought it was Rebecca in the darkness but then he could smell the rugged crustiness and dried sweat and onions of Mary's uncle.

"Good evening, Uncle."

The sound of the shifting of robes and the muffled creak of sandals in the sand as Uncle came around the edge of the wagon caused Jesus to squint into the darkness and see the smile on the older man's face.

"You have made cause now it seems."

"What cause have I done Uncle?"

"You have caused them to question their religion?"

"And is this bad?"

"I believe we have all questioned the God we were given many times in our private moments."

"I do not wish to offend."

Uncle snorted in the darkness, his private brand of a quick laugh, a mixture of horse and camel Jesus thought.

"Who is it you wish not to offend? One of us or God?"

"The true God cannot be offended. He does not take offense."

"There is no blasphemy with your God?"

"He is all and everything. Why would he take offense?"

Uncle pulled himself up on to the edge of the wagon. His heavy bulk made the wood creak. He slapped the wood beside his legs and Jesus moved up beside him.

"I am not a religious man. I have seen too much to believe in a God."

Jesus did not speak. He stared straight ahead and listened to the camp being gathered and tidied up for the night.

"You have been speaking of God since you were a toddler. Many say you are the Messiah. I was told you brought your cousin back to life."

Jesus still sat quietly.

"Mary told me of this, said you believed the power of your God travelled through you and into your cousin and brought him back to life. Mary believes the cousin was simply stunned and when you held him he started to breathe again. I have seen such things happen."

"He had gone to the other side, Uncle."

"You believe this?"

"Yes."

"And you believe you have this power?"

"Blessed are those belonging to the Father, who revealed life to those who are from the life, through me, since I reminded those who are built on what is strong, that they may hear the word and distinguish words of unrighteousness and transgression of law from righteousness, as being from the height of every word having been enlightened in good pleasure by him who the principalities sought. But they did not find him, nor was he mentioned among any generation of prophets. And from my mother's womb I came unformed by the seed of man."

"You believe this?"

"Why would my mother lie?"

"And your father has fathered your sisters and brothers."

"Yes."

"But not you?"

"I have been given the power to see with a new light even brighter than the light of day. I have heard what the priests and people say and I have understood their fear and ignorance. I try to help them and lead them into the clear way."

"You, not yet an adult, know the truth?"

"Many receive my words in the beginning and they will turn from them again because they have done what they wanted. They praise the men of the propagation of

falsehood and they cleave the name of a dead man, thinking they will become pure but they will become greatly defiled and they will fall into a name of error, and into the hand of an evil cunning man and a manifold dogma and they will be ruled without law."

"Is this a Roman?"

"Some of them will blaspheme the truth and proclaim evil teaching. They will say evil things against each other. Some will be named: those who stand in the strength of the past texts, of a man and a naked woman who is manifold and subject to much suffering. And those who say these things will ask about dreams. And if they say that a dream came from a demon worthy of their error, then they shall be given perdition instead of incorruption."

"You speak of Adam and Eve?"

"Evil cannot produce good fruit. For the place from which each of them is produces that which is like itself; for not every soul is of the truth, nor of immortality. For every soul of these ages has death assigned to it in view because it is always a slave since it is created for its desires and their eternal destruction, in which they are and from which they are. They love the creatures of matter which came forth with them."

Uncle dropped down off the wagon then. The back of the frame sprung up quickly but Jesus did not seem to notice.

"The immortal souls are not like these. But the long hours to come will see the immortal soul resemble a mortal one. It shall not reveal its nature, that it alone is the immortal one, and thinks about immortality, having faith and desiring to renounce these things."

"I believe I understand."

"People do not gather figs from thorns or from thorn trees, if they are wise, nor grapes from thistles. For, on the one hand, that which is always becoming is in that which it is, being from what is not good, which becomes destruction for it and death. But that which comes to be in the Eternal One is in the One of the life and the immortality of the life which they resemble."

"Because of the upheaval tonight I was going to ask you not to speak to them again but I realize you must speak. As you have spoken now I know you must continue. We are moving into dangerous areas now. You may be called on to fight. If so stay close to me. I must keep you safe. I promised Mary."

Uncle put his hand on the shoulder of Jesus and squeezed the shoulder with kindness. As the man moved off towards the dying fires Jesus heard his own mind continue:

"Others will change from the evil words and the misleading mysteries."

What was the meaning of all this? Better to not think and make logic out of that which came to him from the Great Stream. Mary had asked two men to watch over him. This was good of her. But was it not enough that his touch with the force of God was his protection? His mind continued.

"Some who do not understand mystery speak of things which they do not understand but they will boast they know the mystery and truth is theirs. This haughtiness shall grasp at pride to envy the immortal soul which has become a pledge. For every authority wishes to be the creation of the world in order that those who are not having been forgotten by those who are will praise them and though they have not been saved nor brought to the Spiritual Flow will wish they had become the imperishable one."

For if the immortal soul receives power in an intellectual spirit they must take care to not join those who misled them."

Even as Jesus climbed up into his wagon and slept among the blankets and rugs his mind continued:

"The many others who oppose the truth and are the messengers of error will set up their error and their law against the pure thoughts as looking out from thinking good is evil or evil is good and with this propagate harsh fate. The stones they cast out come back to bruise and cut them. The house built on untrue bricks will collapse down on them. They block the race of immortal souls. And even though they be forgiven of their transgressions, into which they fell through their adversaries, whose ransom was slavery and they were freed yet created an imitation remnant in the name of a dead man of the first-born of unrighteousness in order that the light which exists may not be believed. But in so doing they cast themselves out into the darkness away from the sons of light. They will not enter nor do they permit others the approval of their release."

With the words came the dream visions and although he slept his sleep was fitful and disturbed and he saw Mary walking through fields of fire and Rebecca holding on to his robe as he tried to move through sand as deep as his knees with smoke filling the air around him and eyes wanting to open but would not as he stumbled forth.

FIVE

The Silk Road was even more harsh now with deep washed out ruts and boulders strewn across the route from land slides and floods. Where before the going was slow it was now the pace of a snail as they moved upward but made detours continuously. Rebecca and Jesus walked together as all wagons were in need of lightened loads to traverse the impossible terrains. Numerous sightings were made of rough dressed men watching the caravan from outcroppings of rock or high clearings. Jesus had spoken in Rhagae and would speak again in Bactra but now as he moved Eastward his thoughts seemed jumbled and his words unclear. In the cold night Rebecca had come to him for warmth and she asked him to speak to her to calm her fears to give her hope.

"The thoughts seemed clouded. The words would not be clear."

"Please. I must hear from you. I feel dread from the road ahead of us. I am afraid."

Outside the wagon the rain had begun to pour down and suddenly all was lighted with the crash of thunder and a streak of lightning. Rebecca jumped hard against Jesus and hugged him, burying her face against his chest. The lightning seemed to jolt his insides. He felt his voice begin to speak without his control.

"There are those who think that they will perfect the wisdom of the existing brotherhood and reveal through the wedding with the sisterhood the incorruptibility of the spiritual fellowship. And there shall be others of those outside our number who name themselves bishops and deacons as if they received authority from God. They bend themselves for the judgment of the leaders. Their spirits run dry."

"But if they lead the multitudes down the wrong path how can they be turned?"

"For their time they will determine a proportion in their error and they will rule. But in the completion of the error the never-aging one of immortal understanding shall become young that they shall rule over the rulers. The root of their evil will be plucked

out and put into shame and that shall be manifest in all the impudence which it has assumed of itself. And such ones shall become unchangeable."

"We must not trust the religious leaders?"

"Those who teach the untruth, who run with the tides of hypocrisy, who try to convince all of the false words, words proven wrong over and over again which they say to trust in faith, those we must ignore until they are removed from their self appointed thrones."

"But who do we believe?"

"We believe the true inner self. We believe what the God Of Good speaks through us."

Again a crash of thunder, a bolt of lightning. This time Rebecca did not cower. The strength of Jesus was within her.

"We leave the blind alone! The spiritually blind. They know not what they are saying and what they do is for self pleasure or self glorification. There will be those who innately have and they shall be given substance. They feel inside the truth and they walk with us and are with us and they will be immortal."

"And I am with you?"

"Are you?"

"Yes."

"Then you are. It is a choice. The choice is each one's right. Sheep have no choice but to follow. We do have the right. We may hide in the shadows and let the ones in control continue their falsehoods and we may try to believe what they wish us to believe or we can decide to believe in the true Spirit the Spirit which flows through all."

"But they have told us what to believe.."

"Yes. And saying it over and over does not make it true. In our deepest selves we know God did not send a flood to destroy life, that no man was made to sacrifice his offspring, that no one was swallowed by a fish and lived again. They created a God of jealousy and rage, a God with the foibles and fallacies of Man. They whipped us with this image of a Superior Being who was not superior. They made us tremble and walk in fear. The one true God is kind and loving and wants goodness for us."

"And he will stop the wars and killing and all the evil?"

"Man does what man does as Nature does what Nature does. We will do better to be better and trust in the Spiritual Flow."

"And you are the son of this God?"

"I am."

"And should I worship you?"

"Let yourself instead be filled with the Spiritual bliss. I am no more than a door, to be opened. A door does not wish worship. Do you not desire to be filled? If your heart is drunken do you not then desire to be sober? Henceforth, waking or sleeping, remember you have opened to the Spirit, and we have spoken and you are blessed. You have been healed when you were ill, their poisons have been let out. Blessed are all who will awaken for theirs is the kingdom of God. Therefore I say to you, 'Become full, and leave no space within you empty.' "

His arm was under her and for a short period of time he thought she was digesting what he had said. In time as he listened to her breathing become even and unhurried the storm passed and there was left but a gentle rain. When he knew Rebecca

was asleep he carefully removed his arm from under her and sat up in the darkness and tried to understand his own thoughts or the Universal thoughts flowing like a strong river through his entire being. He did feel special, not only because of what his mother had said to him since birth but because of the knowledge of himself inside himself. He felt the pain of his people, the helplessness. He was one of them but he was not. He was free and they were not. He was with the one true God and they were not.

How could he tell them to become full that they may not be in want? They who are in want cannot be saved. There is good in being full but not in want. When in want those in power control. They smell the weakness like spilling blood. To be full in Spirit is to not want. To seek while full is to find. There is temptation in emptiness, in lack of Spirit, and when the temptation comes the weakness fails all and they are at mercy to the wicked. To understand to not spare the flesh for the Spirit is an encircling wall, to understand how long all existed before those who walk the earth now and how long all will exist after those are gone. To know that the life is a single day and sufferings one single hour. Scorn death and take thought of life.

Jesus could see his own death like the fall of a stone into the deep darkness of a mountain lake. Yet the stone gushed up and into the bright light and was reborn. Surely they must be made to see death is only a stage, a room to be in before moving to the next. They had to be sober as to not be deceived. Understand no one will persecute, nor will anyone oppress. The wretches, the unfortunates, the pretenders to truth, all these falsifiers of knowledge; they sin against the Spirit and will they learn to listen? How can they bear to sleep when they must awaken to find the spirit? His mind raged on now. He would not sleep. Rebecca slept. She was not Mary but she was more beautiful it seemed each day. He was fine with the feelings he had for her. These were not the same feelings in any way he had for Mary but they were good feelings and he was comfortable with them. Rebecca was his advocate. She supported him even as they fed the animals or brought the food or walked the rutted road.

Jesus reached a hand to her hair and stroked the long fine mass that at times had the odor of sea weed mixed with hot desert wind. In her sleep her hand reached up and held his. A spark shot through him, like the flash of the lightning during the storm. His mind raged again.

Woe to those who stand in need of grace! Blessed will they be who have spoken out and obtained grace for themselves. Be like foreigners; of what sore are they in the eyes of a city? Why are they disturbed when they cast themselves away on their own accord and separate themselves from their own city? Why do they abandon the dwelling place of their own accord making it ready for those who wish to dwell in it? Oh the outcasts and fugitives. They will be caught in their own web. Or do they think God is a lover of mankind or that he can be won over by prayers or that he grants remission to one on another's behalf or that he bears with one who asks? He knows the desire, also what the flesh needs. And do they not know the soul needs the flesh and the flesh cannot exist without the soul? For without the soul the body does not sin, just as the soul is not saved without the spirit. But if the soul is saved when it is free of evil and the spirit is also saved then the body becomes free of sin.

He knew he must let them know they must not make a desert within. They must not be proud because of the light that illumines but must be themselves. Jesus heard in himself "Peace be with you from Peace, love from Love, grace from Grace, faith from

Faith and Life from the Spirit of Life." With this his mind became still and he lay back down and let the hand of Rebecca which held his cross over his back and rest on him. Her breathing became his breathing and soon he too was asleep.

SIX

The dreams worsened as they slowly made their way up into the higher elevations. The voice came from the echoing depths.

I am a Voice speaking softly. I exist from the beginning. I dwell within that silence that surrounds everyone. It is the hidden Voice that dwells within my incomprehensible, immeasurable Thought within the immeasurable Silence.

He felt as though he had descended into the midst of the underworld and shone down on darkness. He poured forth the water. He felt hidden within the radiant waters. Was he the one who gradually put forth the All by his Thoughts? Was He the one laden with the Voice? He felt that through him would Gnosis come forth. To dwell in the ineffable and unknowable ones made him perception and knowledge, uttering a Voice by means of thought. But He is the real Voice. It cries out to everyone, to be recognized by the seed from within. The Thought of the All. The joining of the unknowable and incomprehensible Thought, to be revealed among all who recognize after the seeking. And in this all are joined by virtue of the hidden Thought and the exalted Voice, even a Voice from the invisible Thought. And it is immeasurable since it dwells in the Incomprehensible One. It is invisible to all those who are visible in the All. It is Light dwelling in Light.

Even as he walked now, or worked, even in his waking hours the dreams kept on. He saw himself asking if their hearts were drunk, if they then desired to be sober. They were ashamed, waking or sleeping. Their own shamed state punishment enough. Their own woe. But they too can have life, can be blessed. Woe will be theirs who rested with their sickness, blessed are those who will be cured. They have choice. They can be full.

In the growing cold as they moved upward the animals struggling in the harsh conditions, Rebecca came near him as he found words coming from his walking dream.

"You speak of being full?"

She carried a bundle on her shoulders and walked solidly under its weight. Jesus came away from his dream now.

"Become full in order that you may not be diminished. Those who are diminished do not see. Those who are will. Fullness is good and diminution is not. It is fitting to be diminished while you can still be filled and to be filled while it is still possible to be diminished in order to fill yourself more. Therefore become full of the spiritual flow but be diminished for a reason, for reason is the soul."

"So our forefathers and our mothers and our villages must be left behind? We must walk this road to be protected from the Devil?"

"There is no Devil. The temptation is not from a Satan. The road you walk is the good and pure and fine road. To love the flesh will abound with love of spirit and the sufferings all have known and will know shall not be founded in fear even if accused unjustly or shut up in prison for the flesh is encircled by the spirit and the spirit connects to the all. If you contemplate the world how long before you and after you does it abound? You will find that your life is a single day and your sufferings one single hour. You must live life without fear of death."

Later as the caravan rested for the day Rebecca brought them food and they sat near the animals under a stand of trees.

"The hypocrisy comes from the evil thought, the thought to gain from trade and bargaining with lies. Cut off the head of reason and so goes the prophecy. We must do our work and speak truth and know that hypocrisy is the weed that strangles the palm of honor. To lie, cheat and steal, six days to repent on the seventh does not balance the scales. It is like the date palm shoot whose fruits pour down around it and they bud and the leaves go forth and strangle the date palm causing it to go dry. Instead when there is the single root and the fruit that grows is picked and collected by many harvesters this would be good and new fruit would come from the new plants these harvesters would plant and harvest in return and the land would be bountiful."

"And this is as you said 'the planting of the word'?"

"Yes. To be zealous of the word. The Word's first condition is faith; the second is love; the third is works. From this comes life. For the Word is like a grain of wheat. When it is sowed and believed in it will sprout and from this one many grains will grow and as it is worked more will sprout and there will be much to sow. It must be found through knowledge and in the knowledge there will be faith and in the faith there will be love and in love the work will be fruitful."

"But the Word is not the Book?"

"The word is in the Spiritual Flow. The pages of men's writings are men's writings. Their thoughts and wishes are maneuverings for control. I say to them be sober. Do not go astray. Be saved to be yourself. Your houses have no ceilings. Find the great light. Pay attention to the Word. Understand Knowledge. Understand what the Great Light is. No one will persecute you, nor oppress you, other than your self. The wretched, the unfortunates, the dissemblers of truth, the falsifiers of knowledge are all sinners against the spirit. They will not listen, they sleep in their hooded beds, they refuse to wake and believe it is easier to sink into defilement than to open to the light and walk straight ahead. They have been in rule, they have reigned and their law is the law of grief and sorrow."

Jesus was aware now of the others gathered around. They had come in twos and threes through the wind and now were hunched in their robes listening. Some had looks of mistrust or disbelief but many were expectant and hopeful believing Jesus would give answers to their fears and miseries.

"I feel your tears and your grief and your sorrow. Now, then, those of you who are outside the inheritance of the Spiritual Flow, weep when it behooves you and grieve and proclaim that which is good. The pain is your brother as the joy is your sister; when one walks beside you the other awaits just ahead."

He felt the wind then. It hit hard and quick and then backed off before turning to the left and sweeping behind. He heard the camels and horses and sheep calling out as though awakened by evil demons. The eyes watching Jesus widened. They wanted magic, sorcery, a sign. One of the embers from the fire, a long thin branch, burning, twirled in an eddy of wind, twirled and dipped and then hung suspended directly in front of Jesus lighting his face. Then with a quick snap the wind jerked it away. This seemed enough. The group gasped and made sounds of joy, nodding and telling each other, yes, yes, he's the one.

When the call came for the caravan to break its rest and move on Jesus and Rebecca moved with the others to prepare and make ready. As Jesus pushed one of the camels from behind to swing him around for his rider Rebecca asked him if what she saw was magic.

As he slapped the camel on the backside he turned to her. He was about to speak when out of the dust and the wind he saw two of the herders approach. He felt their intent and told Rebecca they would talk later.

"Was what I saw with the burning branch magic, sorcery?"

"No," He said. "Now go, please. The women need you."

She reached a hand out and touched his robe in thanks and then hurried off. The two herders, rough, grown men, came past the two wagons starting out and moved through the roped coral as Jesus quickly began to take up the rope and wind it into circles around his palm and elbow. Their faces were wet from sweat and their beards were filled now from the blowing dirt.

"You are the one they call Son of Mary?" The heavier of the two said.

"And Joseph."

"The one who believes he is God," The other sneered.

"No. I am of God and with God."

"But not the Hebrew God. You denounce our God?"

"There is but one God."

"We have heard you deny Angels and Satan and the religious works given to us by God himself." This again from the one with the sneer. He was slim but wiry. He would be the meaner of the two.

"Have you not come to hear me speak with the others?"

"Why would we want to hear the words of one barely older than a boy?"

"I have been blessed with a certain knowledge. Others have asked me to share with them and I have."

"You have blasphemed Jehovah."

"This is not true."

"We have the right to kill any and all who deny our God," The heavier one said.

"No. You have the right to kill no one."

The mean one quickly whipped out his dagger. It appeared as though by its own brand of magic. Jesus did not step back.

"Say Jehovah is the one true God. That his word is law."

The caravan was moving now and the three of them were facing each other in the swirling dust.

"Say it!" The man yelled drawing his dagger back.

"You may believe what you are told to believe," Jesus said. Still he did not move away.

The man cocked his arm quickly then and stepped with his leg and turned his hips to make a downward thrust of the knife into the chest of Jesus. In this instant the heavier herder seemed to stumble or fall or jump between them. His movement knocked Jesus out of the way and his own chest received the knife.

"WHAT IS THIS?"

The boom of Uncle's voice turned Jesus as the big man, now on horseback burst out of the storm of dust just as the two herders locked now together by the weapon fell heavily to their knees and then the heavier one with the dagger deep in his chest continued down trying to pull the instrument out as his blood spewed and flowed around him.

Jesus had never seen Uncle so angry. He stood over the two men yelling and cursing. The dying one lasted only a few moments and Uncle shouted to the other to bury him and then take his goods and leave the caravan. He then reached down and jerked Jesus off the ground then slung him up behind him on the horse and slapped hard with the reins to spur the animal away from these two herders and back to the caravan.

"What would you have done?" Uncle yelled back over his shoulder as Jesus held on.

"Why would they want to kill over their God?"

"Men do this. Holy wars are a continuum."

"It's not right." This more quietly, almost a hoarse whisper as they slowed nearing the caravan. Rebecca was in the center of the walking women. She raised a hand to him but Jesus did not see. Instead, in his inner eye he saw the herder taking the blade meant for him. Would the blade have struck his heart had the herder not taken it in his chest? Did he, Jesus, cause this death to happen? If he did he felt no remorse.

Uncle pulled the horse to a stop and Jesus jumped down.

"Find yourself a horse. You are now a herder," Uncle said. He then galloped away towards the front of the caravan.

Rebecca had left the women and ran up beside Jesus now. She asked if there had been trouble.

"Yes," he said moving towards the horses which were being kept together by a string boy.

"Those two men. They were hired. They are not good men."

"Only one lives now."

She saw the look on the face of her friend.

"Did you kill him?"

"I don't know."

Jesus quickened his pace to catch up with the line of horses and when he reached them he jumped on the back of an Arab near the rear of the tether.

"What are you doing?" The string boy called to him.

He told the boy Uncle had requested he now take a horse and work as a herder. The boy came back and cut the Arab loose.

"What of the other two."

"They are no longer with us."

Jesus looked back and saw Rebecca rejoining the women. That was good. He had man work to do now.

SEVEN

Jesus enjoyed the horseflesh between his legs and took to the herding of the animals with ease. The two goatherds and the stringer helped and the four of them did better work than the lazy herders before them. Zediah and Uncle would ride by and laugh and shout at them to keep up the good work, that the caravan would be soon in the high mountains and fresh water and green grass and trees would be theirs. As they climbed the mountain roads the small white pebbles kicked out and rolled downward as though wishing for the sea. Through the scrub pines scurrilous men in soiled rags watched the caravan inch its way upward. The one or two on horseback road the short legged sturdy ponies with no saddle or blanket, only a rope tether. The ponies seemed sure footed and needed very little guidance from their riders. This made Jesus remember a group of nomadic spiritualists he had made friends with and talked to in the desert. The group spoke only Aramaic and had no use for a god. They stated they all knew the way and practiced knowing their inner selves.

"Who were these men?" James, his brother, asked that evening.

"Travelers. Men of Spirit."

"Religious men?"

"They do not believe in religion."

"With deception did they deceive you? Did they fill your ears with lies, close your hearts and turn you from the traditions of your father?"

"They talked of the immeasurable mind. Of life-giving life. Of a blessedness giving blessed one. They said knowledge would beget knowledge. Goodness would return goodness. Mercy would father mercy. That grace comes from the incomprehensible light."

That night as Jesus sat in the darkness reliving his talk with the men of the desert the image of Her came forth. She came before him in the shine of his light. She was the forethought of the All - her light shone with his light- the perfect power which is the image of the invisible, virginal Spirit who is perfect. The first power, the glory of Sophia, the perfect glory of revelation. She blessed Jesus and praised him because thanks to him she had come forth. This was the first thought, the image, she was the womb of everything, of it was she who was prior to them all, the Mother-Father, the first life, the Spirit, the Tri-Male, The Tri-Powerful, the Tri-Named androgynous One, and the eternal among the invisible ones, the first to come forth.

He had sat in the darkness and welcomed the vision, had felt no fear. He had requested only that he be given foreknowledge. And She consented. And when the foreknowledge came forth, and stood by the forethought; it originated for the thought of the invisible, virginal Spirit. It glorified in him the perfect power and that of Sophia for it was for her sake that it had come into being.

And what of eternal life? He questioned. And the invisible Spirit granted.

And what of indestructibility? And indestructibility came forth and stood by thought and foreknowledge.

And what of truth? The invisible Spirit consented. And in this consenting truth came forth and was glorified.

He listened to the hollow voices in the deep cave as they echoed upward: "This is the pentad of the image of the Invisible Spirit, the thought and the foreknowledge, and the indestructibility and the eternal life and the truth. This is the androgynous pentad."

And he again looked at Sophia with the pure light which surrounds the Invisible Spirit, and with the spark there was conceiving. The spark of light and the blessedness and the greatness conceived in the pure light. And the visible, virginal Spirit rejoiced over the light which came forth, that which was brought forth first by the first power of forethought and it was anointed with goodness until it became perfect. And it stood in attendance and poured out and immediately when it had received from the Spirit, it glorified the all with the perfect forethought for the sake of the blessed Ones.

If asked for a description of the vision there was no visual he could give. There was no physical form he could describe. And yet he saw her clearly. That deep inner self, the true center of his being, this is where he saw the vision of Her and all visions, even his dreams.

Throughout the day as they moved slowly upward, the creaking and grinding of the wheels, the straining and cracking sounds of the wagons, accompanied each section gained. The breathing of the animals and the men and women became shortened and more hurried as the air became less fulfilling with the new heights. Jesus began to feel light headed at times.

Two of Uncle's scouting men returned with wooden casks that made everyone joyous.

"We have wine tonight!" Went out as the call. Even the women slapped each other on the back.

"You will have some of the grape tonight," Zediah said to Jesus as he rode up laughing.

"My father does not allow it in his house."

"You are not in your father's house," Zediah said, laughing again and giving Jesus a hardy slap on the shoulder. He rode away towards the front, with renewed energy.

Jesus thought of his words as the Arab stallion he rode continued upward. Even the horse seemed to take on new energy. When Jesus had mentioned to Joseph the fun their neighbors seemed to enjoy when wine was passed around his father had scoffed at the idea. He had said that wine was from the evil side. That it was filled with spirits and these spirits encouraged infidelity, and violence and lust.

As he rode the word "lust" echoed in his mind. He heard the voice from the hollows: "The holy Spirit completed the divine that the virginal Spirit would be honored with the mighty voice. That divine truth would be over everything. That the three, will, truth and life would withstand. That the four powers, understanding, grace, perception and prudence would spring forth. And that conception, perception and memory would rise to the top. And with this would be understanding, love and idea. And from this would come peace and perfection and wisdom. And Lust?"

The Arab stallion snorted then breaking Jesus out of his thoughts. Ahead there were three of the rough looking men on their ponies between two stands of pine. Seeing Jesus they called out to others and turned their ponies and moved quickly away over the rough terrain. Jesus did not know whether to follow them or turn back and tell Zediah or Uncle. Almost as though in answer the voice inside started again: "From the foreknowledge of perfect mind, through the revelation of the will of the invisible Spirit the Perfect Man will appear. The first revelation and truth shall follow. It will be he whom the virginal Spirit will call the mighty one and by the first light will invest him with powers. And the invisible Spirit will give him the spiritual invincible power. And he will be glorified and praised and he will know lust."

"What is this lust?" Jesus shouted from horseback. He turned to see the others of the caravan moving up towards him. Somehow he was on point now. Zediah waved him on. The voice took this as a signal to continue: "Sophia conceived a thought of herself and the conception of the invisible Spirit and foreknowledge. She wanted to bring forth a likeness out of herself without the consent of the Spirit, there had been no permission granted, there was no consort nor consideration

"And though the person of her maleness had not approved and she had not found agreement she brought forth. And because of the invincible power which is in her, her thought did not remain idle, and something came out of her which was imperfect and different because she had not created it from consort. And it was dissimilar and had another form.

"And when she saw the consequence of her own lust, it changed into a form with eyes like lightning fires which flash. She had no choice but to cast it away from her, outside that place, that no one of the immortal ones might see, for she had created it in ignorance. And she surrounded it with a luminous cloud and placed a throne in the middle of the cloud that no one might see. And this she called lust."

And when they made camp that night, high up in the mountains, still below the tree line but high up where the wind blew cold and the stars were bright, Jesus completed his tasks and helped Rebecca with the animals and then with the others lit the fires and all crowded round these fires and ate and opened the casks of wine and began to drink.

"No-no," Jesus said at first. "I do not trust the spirits."

"Don't be foolish, Young Jesus," Zediah said. "Even Rebecca will have wine tonight. Won't you, Rebecca?"

Rebecca laughed and held out her cup and Zediah poured from the pitcher he had filled from one of the casks. Still Jesus held up his hand to signal he was fine without the fermented grape and Zediah told him when he changed his mind to let him know. With that Zediah went back to the cask to refill and take one of the drums and cymbals to join in the music making.

"It makes me feel good," Rebecca said as she drank. And it is very warming."

In the firelight Jesus could see how her cheeks gained color and how her bare feet and legs freely shone out from beneath her robe. She had removed her sandals and now studied Jesus with an amused look on her face.

"You seem serious tonight."

"Don't I always seem this way?"

"Yes. But tonight even more so."

"What do you know of lust?" He said quietly. The others were moving to the music now and laughing and the fires were spitting sparks into the night sky.

"Lust? Why do you ask?"

Rebecca held up her cup for more wine as one of the women neared with a fresh pitcher.

"I think it can be very good," she said after tasting newly from her cup.

"I've heard men lust after gold and castles and fine clothes?"

"And women?"

"Yes. They lust after women."

Jesus felt his face burn as he said this.

"No. I mean do women lust after these things also?"

"They do. Do they not?"

"I'm not certain women lust in the same way men do. I know we have desires. Feelings."

Jesus nodded. Zediah and Uncle were laughing together and looking his way. He raised a hand to them both. Zediah quickly scooped up a pitcher and a cup and the two men came through the reveling men and women to give the cup to Jesus. He started to refuse again but Rebecca put her hand on his arm and nodded with smiles and laughter. Jesus held the cup while Zediah filled it.

"To our good health and safe journey," Uncle said. They all clicked their cups together. Jesus drank like the others. He did not really like the taste, but felt the warmth Rebecca had mentioned. After two more cups the warmth was through his body and he too was laughing and singing with the others. He did not know how to dance but Rebecca made him get up with her and spin and circle around the fires. After more wine and more dances, Rebecca had moved them outside the circle of fires and they were dancing their own dance as two men started fighting on the other side of the wagons. She grabbed Jesus then and pulled him with her back to the rug wagon. Jesus felt some dizziness as she pushed him up into the wagon and told him to lie back on the rugs.

His mind tried to speak to him but the voice was not clear and far away. He was aware of Rebecca doing something with her robe outside the wagon and then the robe was thrown in and wrapped around his face. As he removed the robe she was climbing in and Jesus saw her nakedness move in on him,

"Is this the lust of which you spoke?"

She laughed as she said this and put her mouth on his and he could taste the wine from her mouth and for a moment wondered if she could taste the wine on his. He did not think of Mary now. He did not hear the inner voice. The voice was stilled. Whether from the wine or the feel of Rebecca against him or a combination of both he did not know. He only knew that his head spun and his body burned and there was a buzzing in his ears and in his hands and feet and now in his stomach and chest. He could hear a singing and music. Was it the feasting and frolic from the campfires or was it from the realms? As they came together now, united and Rebecca's lips were locked onto his and the sounds in her throat seemed to come from some deeper more animal place, as though they were in caves with warm sulfuric pools and brown obsidian walls, rubbed to a mirror finish, to see their reflections as the steam rose from the pools and choir voices gained in tenor and depth as they echoed from the walls.

During all of this through haze of his thoughts Jesus was aware of himself and Rebecca but a part of him was also aware of the changing clamor from outside. At first it was as though the wind was rattling wagons and pots and pans and banging hard goods against one and other. He heard the voices, faintly at first, and then increase in intensity and pitch. Something was wrong! He heard screams and shouts and just as he moved Rebecca aside to get up, the tarp flap of the wagon was jerked aside and two of the rough looking men leered in. Their faces lit with "lust" as they saw the naked girl. Both grabbed for her. Jesus reached out to help and the one man hit him hard, in the side of the face, sending Jesus back into the wagon, flat out across the rugs.

He heard Rebecca screaming, through his dazed state. Was aware of her kicking and fighting the two men.

Jesus pulled himself up, shook his head trying to clear it. But through the blariness of the blow he had received and the wine in his system his eyes only half focused. Rebecca was kicking at the two men, fighting them, clawing at them with her nails. In the firelight Jesus saw the one pull out his knife and brandish the blade in front of her. She spit into the man's face. The other had her hands pinned to her sides. Jesus fell jumped from the wagon, but too late. The man with the knife screamed some foreign obscenity at the girl. From his knees on the earth Jesus looked up and watched the swipe of the blade across the young woman's naked throat. He screamed out, "No!" Struggling to his feet as the one let go of Rebecca and she fell to the ground. Both men turned to him. Now the other pulled his blade. Jesus did not care. Something else besides the blurring was happening now. Inside there was a roaring, a surging, something hot and powerful and acrid in taste. He was standing now. He was taller than these two men. Stronger. Quicker. The foulness on his breath was like dragon fire as they came at him. There was no thought now. His body was a spring, a rod of strength, a hot blaze of molten metal coming out of the blacksmith's fire. His eyes took in the men in the darkness, firelight flicking across their grease and dirt smudged faces, their torn dirty rags, scabbed feet and hands, Rebecca with darkness spreading all around her as she lay crumpled on the earth, the two men snarling, casting obscenities as they came at him, blades carving the night air in front of them. The naked girl not moving, her life force gone. Jesus did not yet think of trying to bring her back, now all he saw were the two men. A new emotion roaring within him. Sparked by the wine, the death he had just witnessed. ANGER roaring!

There was no thought in his movement. He had not been trained in combat. Yet his body flowed to the right, his leg shot out and caught the man on his left square on the hip, hard, knocking the smaller man, sideways, the knife skittering from his hand, bouncing through the darkness. The other lunged with the knife point at Jesus's face, the tip hitting his cheek, hot searing pain instant but just as instantly cast away as his own anger grabbed the knife hand, turned the wrist under, snapping the bone. clasp the hand to keep the knife from falling and turning the hand and knife into the screaming man, and slicing his throat in the same method he had sliced Rebecca's. And as this man's scream turned to a garbled gurgling and the blood poured from his wound, squirting out onto Jesus's robe and as the man fell heavily, the other stopped searching for his weapon in the darkness and ran screaming into the night, grabbing the back of his neck where he felt some arrow or spear or sharp rock was piercing in.

Jesus yelled into the night, a horrifying sound, more than a scream or a yell, his bloody hands raised to the heavens, the pain and anguish and anger, all uniting to demand retribution, do demand power, to bring the forces to his beckoning. And the first explosion of lightning ripped through the trees, lighting the pines with God's own fire. The faces of the attackers, all turned then. They could see Jesus with his hands raised to the night sky. They and all the caravan people stopped their battle and watched as the back lit young man seemed to pull more lighting from the sky, the bolts cracking into the earth and trees and campfires and scattering the robbers like so many mice as the ones who had ponies mounted and fled and the others ran off into the night without the bounty they had sought. Uncle and the others heard Jesus wail into the night, his voice hard and forceful and penetrating. They watched as now the skies opened and the rain came tormenting down in torrents, as though a gigantic cask of rain had been split by lightning bolts and God's own tears were washing over the dead and wounded.

Jesus fell to the earth then, in the roaring rain, fell to his knees in the mud. He pushed the robber he had killed away and took Rebecca in his arms. He buried his face in her wet hair, his own face mixing with blood and mud and rain.

"Wake! Wake!" he begged through the storm in his heart.

He hugged her to him, pulled his own robe off and wrapped her naked body. He rocked her. His mouth pleaded with his God. Tears flowed with the rain. He rocked her and moaned and made promises and asked again and again she be returned to life. Uncle was bleeding from a wound in his side but still he bent over the younger man now and tried to comfort him, tried to pull him away. Zediah too kneeled in the mud. The sound of the young man's wailing was heart rending and his demands now to his God made the others look heavenward as though afraid their God would send thunder and lightning down on them for the demands made by Jesus.

"She won't return," Jesus said looking up at Uncle.

Uncle shook his head, put his arm around the youth. Zediah and uncle pulled him up and led him away. Jesus looked back once as the women came to gather Rebecca. He looked to the sky and the two men heard the curse word come from his lips.

Master Jai was not as old as he looked. Many years of being exposed to the sun and the wind and the long hard winters in the Himalayas had aged his skin into a dark brown tanned mass of lines and wrinkles. His hair had turned white but his olive eyes still shone with a sparkle of man who had just stumbled into a adulthood. His body too, had stayed young and flexible and whip chord strong. He could still out climb most of the younger men he taught. This morning he was taking one of his daily meditation walks, through the upper orchards where tiny tart crabapples were just beginning to bloom. He moved upward following the Mandarin Stream which was boiling and running fast and angry down the mountainside after the latest storm. The night before as he sat lotus outside his hut he watched with mirth as the lightning cracked through the mountains and the thunder made animals and children cry and duck their heads. A caravan passed just after daybreak and Master Jai climbed up through the pass traveling the route the caravan had just descended. As he moved at a good pace through the orchard, the hem of his orange robe grew dark from the wet grass and weeds. He squinted into the early morning sun and could see a figure across the meadow against the trunk of a tree, and this made him think of the Buddha and the Bodhi tree. He wondered if it was his imagination as he neared the tree that caused a glow to emanate from the youth who leaned against the tree with his head fallen down into his chest. Master Jai approached from a side angle making certain the noise of his sandals was obvious and the chant of his voice was loud enough to announce his approach.

Jesus heard the old man coming through the orchard but was so morbidly sunk in his own pain and anguish that he did not look up. He had killed a man. His friend Rebecca had also been killed. He had not brought her back to life. Maybe his cousin was as Mary had said, simply stunned by the fall and when Jesus had taken him in his arms his breathing had been restored by the movement. Maybe the powers he believed were his were nothing more than wishful thinking, fantasy. Maybe he was not special as his mother had continually said since his birth. Maybe he was just one of the many.

His head throbbed and he had been so thirsty he had lain down on the bank of the stream and sunk his face into the rushing water and drunk as much as his stomach would hold before staggering across the meadow and finding this orchard of fruit trees. Now the old man was nearing his place of rest and he begged his head to stop throbbing.

"You are alive?" Master Jai asked, stopping five or six steps from the stranger wearing the robe of the desert.

Jesus let his head come up off his chest now and blinked against the morning sun as he tried to focus on the wizened man in the orange robe.

"Yes. Painfully so."

"Are you hurt?"

Jesus touched the place on his cheek where the knife point had cut him. His mind flashed on the night before, the flash so strong and brilliant that Master Jai was knocked back.

Jesus said nothing but stared at the older man as he regained his balance.

"The caravan was yours?"

"I traveled here with them."

"And did they cast you out?"

"There was trouble last night. Robbers. I killed one of them after he killed a young woman. We all had been drinking wine."

Jesus did not know why he told the man before him about the wine. He knew his pounding head was related to this.

"We use nothing which effects us from here up," Master Jai said. He made a motion with the back of his hand from below his chin moving it upwards to show he meant the head was sacred.

"Yes. I had never taken wine before."

"Humans are weak from desire to be numbed. Some would hit themselves in the head with tree limbs. I am Master Jai."

"I am Jesus."

They each bowed their heads in unison. This made Master Jai laugh. Jesus also laughed but cringed as the laughter made his head throb.

"Please. Wait here I will be back soon."

Jesus watched as Master Jai moved quickly with his walking staff to a group of the blossoming trees. With the stick he dug at the base of one of the trees and then bent and scooped something up. When he returned he held out a small handful of tiny mushrooms. They were speckled with soil.

Jesus took the offered mushrooms and chewed them slowly. The grit crunched between his teeth. The taste of loam and mushrooms moved up through his nose. It was not long before the pounding stopped.

"Are they for wine?"

"They are for minor pains. They join the body's flow and calm the waves."

"Their taste is not good."

"No. But they do the work."

Master Jai seated himself on one of the logs near Jesus and rapped both hands around his walking stick while leaning forward and resting his chin on the thumbs of his folded hands. The log was warm clean from the wind.

"You live near?" Jesus asked.

"Yes. My hut is over two hills that way."

He nodded towards the rising sun.

"And you? You have left the caravan?"

"Yes."

"And your father let you leave?"

"My father is not of the caravan. I travelled alone."

"And they let you leave to live in the high mountains?"

"No one knows. They believe I am still with them."

"Then someone will come back for you?"

"No. It would be too difficult. Too dangerous."

"I see."

Master Jai nodded to himself and smiled.

"What plans have you?"

"I have no plans." Jesus said and knew this was true. He had never had plans. His father wanted him to do carpenter work he did carpenter work. The Jews wanted him to talk religion and he talked religion. Mary put him on the caravan and he travelled on

the caravan. The robber killed Rebecca - he killed the robber. The old man spoke to him - he answered. Why had he no plans?

"What was that song you were singing when you approached?" Jesus asked after the two of them sat in silence for a while.

"It was not a song it was a chant. It awakens the energy here where you breathe."

Master Jai pointed to his solar plexus.

Jesus did not understand but felt something he had not felt before. This man spoke without trying to influence. He spoke with a kind simplicity. Jesus immediately trusted him completely. He had a desire to tell him everything.

"What is a 'master'?"

"It is a term given in honor. Just as easily it could be teacher."

"You are a teacher?"

"There are those who would say, yes."

"And what do you teach?"

This made Master Jai laugh. His laugh was like twenty small birds flying in happy circles around his head.

"I try to teach life, how to live."

"I live in my head."

"Yes. Most do."

"And there are voices."

"Of course."

"I can't stop them."

"You can but no one has taught you."

"You could teach me?"

"If you wanted to learn."

"I do."

"Fine."

The laugh now was smaller. The birds were smaller. The circles smaller. Master Jai's eyes looked at Jesus and sparkled.

"Even now as we talk there is an ongoing conversation."

"Repeat it for me."

"It is lunacy."

"Isn't all?"

"There is this someone who took great power from his mother. " Jesus began. He could hear the voice or voices now that his head no longer throbbed."

"He moved away from her after he removed himself from her and he moved away from places where he was born. He became strong and created for himself others with a flame of luminous fire and he joined with his arrogance which is in him and begot authorities for himself."

Jesus looked at the older man to see if what he was saying would offend or cause the man to not respect him. The eyes continued to sparkle.

"The first one the generations call the reaper, the second the eye of envy and there are a total of twelve and the twelfth is the ruler over the depth of Hades."

"Hades?"

"A place of fire and damnation."

"That does not sound good."

"And there were seven kings and each correspond to the firmaments of heaven, over the seven heavens and five over the depth of the abyss that they may reign."

"And these heavens?"

"They are in the sky with streets of gold and angels playing harps."

"Angels, yes?"

"Humans with wings."

"Ah yes. Very nice fantasy. But streets of gold and harps? Hmmm."

"And he shared the fire with them but he did not send forth from the power of light which he had taken from his mother, for he is ignorant of darkness."

Master Jai smiled and nodded and tapped his walking stick on the earth.

"Continue. Please."

"You don't think it is crazy?"

"Who is to judge? Continue."

"And when the light had mixed with darkness it caused the darkness to shine. And when the darkness had mixed with the light it darkened the light and became neither light nor dark but it became dim. And he is impious in his arrogance which is in him and he said 'I am God and there is no other God beside me.'

"And they created seven powers for themselves and the powers created six angels for each one until they became 365 angels."

"These angels again. Those with wings."

"Yes. The Jews say there is a structure, God, the angels and then man."

"Man is so lowly is he?"

Jesus and Master Jai looked out on the expanse of high mountain meadows and the peaks of the Himalayas rising around their resting place in this orchard, a comfortable smile on the Master's face and now even with the pain, the face of Jesus showed a small upturn of the corners of his lips.

"My life has been a battle."

"Yes?"

"Or battleground. It is as though two armies are trying to rip me asunder."

"There are no armies."

"I understand but this is the way it feels."

"Can a man walk under a bridge without falling in the water?"

Jesus looked into the olive eyes and expected to see humor reflected. There was kindness but no humor.

"Would there be boulders to step on?"

"Logic will not help you."

"We have been taught the logic of the Greeks."

"Logic will help you separate stones but not help you live."

"If I turned your question around and asked you 'can a man walk under a bridge without falling in the water' how would you answer?"

Master Jai sprung up so quickly Jesus recoiled. The old man then stamped his walking stick hard on the ground and snarled. Jesus held up his hands in surrender. Master Jai's laughter echoed across the valley.

"I don't understand."

"This is okay. You also cannot understand the battles or battleground."

"No."

"Come."

Master Jai headed across the meadow towards the hills he had earlier pointed to; the two hills which led to his hut. Jesus followed as though tethered to his wake.

NINE

The hut was built from tree limbs and clay and thin slabs of shale. Mud and dried grass had been mixed to form a barrier against the wind and weather. The roof was thatched with more limbs and dried grass interwoven. Jesus knew he could improve on the strength and protection with the carpenter's skills he had been taught. He did not mention this yet as the flimsy door was pulled aside to allow them entrance.

"Please, come in," Master Jai said as he held the door open. Jesus stepped past him and entered the large single room. On the dirt floor were rice mats and colorful woven rugs, not unlike the rugs in the wagon where Jesus had spend twenty some months of his life. The walls were decorated with prayer wheels and chanting beads and small bamboo shelves which held small figurines. In one corner was an alter with incense and holders and thin opaque candles. All the candles had black wicks showing they had recently been lit. A stack of papyrus scrolls lay near a wooden slab that was Master Jai's bed. A finely polished hunk of oak was in place for use as a pillow. Two tanned animal hides were folded at the foot and would make warm blankets. The room smelled of tea and tallow and in the corner was a small iron stove with a grate on top and a tea kettle on top of this. Beside the stove were two cups, two dishes and a pot for brewing tea. A small wooden chest was on the opposite side.

"Please sit," Master Jai said indicating the wooden bed. "I will make us tea."

Jesus sat carefully on the wooden platform and watched as the older man took the kettle outside and then returned a few minutes later with the kettle filled and straw grass to start a fire. When the straw grass was in the iron stove and small twigs and large twigs were in place the Master struck a flint one time and the straw grass lit. His expertise was impressive. Already Jesus noticed the older man made each movement with precision and purpose. As the warmth of the stove and the comfort of being with this man relaxed

him Jesus let go of the grip he had maintained on his mind and then too late felt the words come frothing to the surface.

He saw the faces; first the sheep face and then the donkey's face, the hyena's, the serpent with the seven heads, the dragon face, the monkey face and then the face of shining fire. His mind said this is the seven-ness of the week.

Jesus looked at Master Jai with blur in his eyes, as though rain water was running down the crags of rocks and broken wood.

"It speaks again?"

Jesus nodded.

"Then tell me."

"The Yaltabaoh had a multitude of faces, more than all of them, so that he could put a face before all of them, according to his desire, when he is in the midst of seraphs. He shared his fire with them, therefore he became lord over them. Because of the power of the glory he possessed of his mother's light, he called himself God. And he did not obey the place from which he came. And he united the seven powers in his thought with the authorities which were with him. And when he spoke it happened. And he named each power beginning with the highest: the first is goodness with the first authority, Athoth; the second is foreknowledge with the second one, Eloaio; and the third is divinity with the third one, Astraphaio; the fourth is lordship with the fourth one, Yao; the fifth is kingdom with the fifth one, Sabaoth; the sixth is envy with the sixth one, Adonein; the seventh is understanding with the seventh one, Sabbateon. And these have a firmament corresponding to each heaven."

Jesus sat now as in a trance and the tea kettle whistled him back and he watched Master Jai place tea twigs in the tea pot and pour boiling water over the twigs and set the pot aside to steep.

"Such thoughts for one so young."

"But what do they mean?"

"Do they have meaning to you?"

Jesus thought for a moment. He could hear the meaning coming up from his depths as though some remembered thought was awakened and came bubbling out of the deep stream.

"It is as though having created everything he organized according to the model of the first beginning so that he might create them like the indestructible ones. Not because he had seen the indestructible ones, but the power in him, which he had taken from his mother, produced in him the likeness of the cosmos. And when he saw the creation the which surrounds him and the multitude of angels around him which had come forth from him, he said to them, 'I am a jealous God and know there is no other God besides me.' But by announcing this he indicated to the angels who attended him that there exists another God. For if there were no other one, of who would he be jealous?"

"Excellent."

Master Jai poured the tea now. His face showed humor and he nodded and smiled as he passed the steaming cup to Jesus.

"Am I your student now? Are you my teacher?"

"We will see. We will see."

The old man seemed on the verge of laughter. He continued to smile and nod his head up and down. Even as he sipped at his tea. He did not look at Jesus. It was as though a single look to his new young friend would make him laugh uncontrollably.

"There are those who believe I am inhabited by demons."

"I could understand this."

"Do you believe I am inhabited by demons?"

"What I believe is of little importance. What do you believe?"

Jesus thought a moment.

"I believe this tea is very warming. The taste is smoky like the branch of a proud tree. I'm not even certain what demons are. Or if they exist."

"Excellent."

That night Jesus slept on the dirt floor wrapped in one of the animal skins while Master Jai slept on his back with his hands folded above his rib cage and his head on the polished log. He felt certain he would sleep peacefully with no dreams and no voices. He was wrong.

The mother began to move to and fro. She became aware of the deficiency when the brightness of her light diminished. She became dark because her consort had not agreed with her. In his dream Jesus remembered Moses said 'above the waters' The mother had seen the wickedness that happened and the theft which her son had committed and she repented. She was overcome by forgetfulness in the darkness of ignorance and became ashamed. She did not dare return and she moved about going to and fro.

And the arrogant one took a power from his mother. For he was ignorant, thinking that there existed no other except his mother. And when he saw the multitude of what the angels created he exalted himself above them.

And now recognizing the garment of darkness was imperfect the mother knew that her consort had not agreed with her. She repented with much weeping. And the prayers of her repentance were heard and she was praised on her behalf, the virginal Spirit. And he consented. And when the invisible Spirit had consented the holy spirit poured over her in order that he might correct her deficiency. And she was taken up not to her own station but above her son, that she became ninth in line until she had corrected her deficiency.

And then the voice: "The Man exists and the son of the Man."

The dream heard the voice and thought the voice had come from his mother. And he taught them, the holy and perfect Mother-Father, the complete foreknowledge, the image of the invisible one who is the Father of all and through whom everything came into being, the first Man. For he revealed his likeness in a human form.

And the whole of the all trembled and the foundations of the abyss shook. And of the waters which are above matter, the underside was illuminated by the appearance of his image which had been revealed. And when all the authorities looked on, they saw the whole region of the underside which was illuminated. And through the light they saw the form of the image in the water.

And the Voice said "Come, let us create a man according to the image of God and according to our likeness, that his image may become a light for us."

And then there was created by means of the respective powers in correspondence with the characteristics given Man.

"Adam?" Jesus mouthed in question in his sleep.

And the powers began: the first one, goodness, created a bone-soul; and the second, foreknowledge, created a sinew-soul; the third, divinity, created a flesh-soul; and the fourth, the lordship, created a marrow-soul; the fifth, kingdom, created a blood-soul; the sixth, envy, created a skin-soul; the seventh, understanding, created a hair-soul.

In his dream he now saw the flying ones, the angels, as they attended "man" and received from the powers the seven substances of the natural form in order to create the proportions of the limbs and make certain all parts would work together.

"The first one began to create the head. Eteraphaope-Abron created his head; Meniggesstroeth created the brain; Asterechme (created) the right eye; Thaspomocha, the left eye; Yeronumos, the right ear; Bissoum, the left ear; Akioreim, the nose; Banen-Ephroum, the lips; Amen, the teeth; Ibikan, the molars; Basiliademe, the tonsils; Achcha, the uvula; Adaban, the neck; Chaaman, the vertebrae; Dearcho, the throat; Tebar, the right shoulder; [...], the left shoulder; Mniarcon, the right elbow; [...], the left elbow; Abitriion, the right underarm; Evanthen, the left underarm; Krys, the right hand; Beluai, the left hand; Treneu, the fingers of the right hand; Balbel, the fingers of the left hand; Kriman, the nails of the hands; Astrops, the right breast; Barroph, the left breast; Baoum, the right shoulder joint; Ararim, the left shoulder joint; Areche, the belly; Phthave, the navel; Senaphim, the abdomen; Arachethopi, the right ribs; Zabedo, the left ribs; Barias, the right hip; Phnouth the left hip; Abenlenarchei, the marrow; Chnoumeninorin, the bones; Gesole, the stomach; Agromauna, the heart; Bano, the lungs; Sostrapal, the liver; Anesimalar, the spleen; Thopithro, the intestines; Biblo, the kidneys; Roeror, the sinews; Taphreo, the spine of the body; Ipouspoboba, the veins; Bineborin, the arteries; Atoimenpsephei, theirs are the breaths which are in all the limbs; Entholleia, all the flesh; Bedouk, the right buttock (?); Arabeei, the left penis; Eilo, the testicles; Sorma, the genitals; Gorma-Kaiochlabar, the right thigh; Nebrith, the left thigh; Pserem, the kidneys of the right leg; Asaklas, the left kidney; Ormaoth, the right leg; Emenun, the left leg; Knyx, the right shin-bone; Tupelon, the left shin-bone; Achiel, the right knee; Phnene, the left knee; Phiouthrom, the right foot; Boabel, its toes; Trachoun, the left foot; Phikna, its toes; Miamai, the nails of the feet; Labernioum - .

Then again the Voice: " The four chief demons are: Ephememphi, who belongs to pleasure, Yoko, who belongs to desire, Nenentophni, who belongs to grief, Blaomen, who belongs to fear. And the mother of them all is Aesthesia-Ouch-Epi-Ptoe. And from the four demons passions came forth. And from grief (came) envy, jealousy, distress, trouble, pain, callousness, anxiety, mourning and all. And from pleasure much wickedness arises, and empty pride, and similar things. And from desire (comes) anger, wrath, and bitterness, and bitter passion, and unsatedness, and similar things. And from fear (comes) dread, fawning, agony, and shame. All of these are like useful things as well as evil things. But the insight into their true (character) is Anaro, who is the head of the material soul, for it belongs with the seven senses, Ouch-Epi-Ptoe.

"And the origin of the demons which are in the whole body is determined to be four: heat, cold, wetness, and dryness. And the mother of all of them is matter. And he who reigns over the heat (is) Phloxopha; and he who reigns over the cold is Oroorrothos; and he who reigns over what is dry (is) Erimacho; and he who reigns over the wetness

(is) Athuro. And the mother of all of these, Onorthochrasaei, stands in their midst, since she is illimitable, and she mixes with all of them. And she is truly matter, for they are nourished by her."

Excitedly now, Jesus came awake. His eyes fluttered only momentarily and then they were clear. As a cat he could see in the dark. Master Jai still slept on his back, his hands and head in exactly the same place. Jesus had no thought of whether or not waking him was acceptable. He touched the old man's arm and squeezed.

Master Jai sat up as though he had never slept. He did not wake with a start. He seemed calm, alert and was abound with kindness.

"The demons," Jesus said.

"The demons."

"I dreamed and the demons were told to me."

"And the angels."

"Yes. There were angels."

"I see."

"What does it mean?"

"The dreams come from the inner stream. Many have come and tossed into the stream branches and sticks and thoughts and superstitions. There is a much wider river of which the stream is part. This has received the droppings since eternity."

"It feels as though someone or some thing is controlling the stream. I feel it is separate from me but inside of me speaking to me."

"Yes. That is how it feels."

"Is it real?"

"What is, is. What is not, is not."

Master Jai lay back then; the same position of body, head and hands. Jesus looked at the two small candles which had burned all night and seemed to have diminished not at all in size. He pulled the animal skin back over his body and tried to clear his mind. He wanted sleep without dreams now.

TEN

In the morning Jesus was awakened by the sound of voices and slants of sunlight shining in through the open door and the slits in the slats in the one window. For a moment he thought it was caravan people coming to find him, then realized they were speaking Master Jai's tongue.

Outside he found twenty some men and women of all ages sitting around Master Jai. As Jesus came out they began a chant:

"Om Tare Tuttare Om Tare Tuttare Om Tare Tuttare Om Tare Tuttare Om Tare Tuttare Om Tare Tuttare Om Tare Tuttare Om Tare Tuttare"

Jesus sat near a younger woman and an older man. The chant went on for ninety-eight repetitions. Jesus joined in somewhere in the middle and found the sounds and words very soothing and calming.

"How do we know courage?" A young man with a shaved head asked.

"Great courage is not violent. If courage takes pleasure in violence courage is pointless," Master Jai answered.

Jesus saw himself using the knife. His insides tightened and he bent forward in pain.

"I don't understand," the young woman near him said.

"Understanding should be based on what is not understood."

"Is this the Way?"

"If the Way is named and defined, it is not the Way."

As a soft murmur moved through the students sitting around Master Jai, Jesus raised his head and looked towards the older man. Was it his imagination or did Master Jai nod to him?

"I have something I would like to say that could be of importance to my new friend Jesus who came to us by way of caravan from the desert. Not that my statement will be of importance; one statement is much like any other."

The group laughed and nodded. This was like Master Jai. Always humble.

"There is a time when time had not yet begun. There is a time when being had not yet come into being. All time is now. All being is now. All is one with me. Since all living beings are one and all time is one how can one living being say anything to another living being, yet I have just said this and I have also said all living beings are one. I could say all time and being began when two masters sat upon toad stools and decided being and time needed to exist. You see, the Way has no boundaries: words can mean what you want them to mean yet people create words to make boundaries and invent theories and divide all things into categories. Wise people understand there is only unity and to make boundaries and divide creates paths to insanity."

Even the birds seemed interested in what was said. A blue one and a gray one sat in a tree on a branch directly in front of Jesus and cocked their heads together expectantly.

"What do you say to this young Jesus?"

Jesus was not expecting to be called upon. What did they know of him? What did they want to know?

Twenty some sets of eyes turned his way.

"I see boundaries of the five lights and the forth power. How the wind was instructed to blow into the face the spirit of existence. How the image of one who exists moved and gained strength and was luminous."

"Do you agree?" One of the older women asked Master Jai.

"How can I possibly know? Do we know what we do not know?"

He then looked to Jesus and laughed.

"Does nothing know anything? How can I know what I claim to know? It might be what I do not know. Similarly, how can I not know what I think I know? It might be what I know inside."

Smiles all around. Happiness. Perhaps a confrontation. Who was this young man from the desert?"

Jesus could clearly hear the brook babbling nearby, the hum of insects. He could smell the wildflowers and the sap oozing from the trees. The sun on his face in this high altitude felt new and fresh.

"But what if the powers became jealous because he came into being through all of them and have given their power to man, and his intelligence was greater than that of those who made him?"

"If a man sleeps in a damp place he will awaken to find his body aching and his limbs stiff. If he climbs a tree he will be trembling with fear the higher he goes. But is it the same for a monkey?"

"I have been told man came forth because of the light which is in him. And his thinking was superior to those who made him. And they took counsel with the angels. And they mixed fire and earth and water with the four fiery winds. And they wrought them together and caused a great disturbance."

Now all eyes were cutting back and forth between the old man and the young. What they were hearing rattled ancient cages.

"Humans eat meat of animals that eat grass. Centipedes devour snakes. Crows eat mice. While a male monkey mates with a female monkey. Who is correct?"

"They brought the first man into the shadow of death in order that they might form him again of earth and water and fire and the spirit which originates in matter, which is ignorant of darkness and desire and their counterfeit spirit. This is the tomb of the newly-formed body of which the robbers had clothed the man, the bond of forgetfulness; and he became a mortal man."

"Who is the 'They'?" The young woman near Jesus blurted out.

"A man may say a certain woman is very beautiful," Master Jai interceded. For the young woman was quite beautiful. He knew this was effecting Jesus."

"Yet if this woman were shown to a male fish the fish would dive to the bottom of the lake. If shown to a male bird the bird would fly into the wind; If shown to a deer the deer would flee. So who is mortal?"

"This first man was taken to paradise and told to eat at his leisure, for their luxury is bitter and their beauty depraved. And their luxury is deception and their trees are godlessness and their fruit is deadly poison and their promise is death."

"Standards of good and bad, right and wrong are a jumble. Who can be certain of the difference between them?"

Jesus seemed not to hear.

"And is there no one who can teach the mystery of life? Which is the plan of the likeness of spirit. The root is bitter and its branches are death, its shadow is hate and

deception is in its leaves, and its blossom is the ointment of evil, and its fruit is death and desire is its seed, and it sprouts darkness."

"Awakened people do not feel the heat of the burning deserts, nor the cold of the glaciers. They are not frightened by the flash in the sky even though it splits mountains, nor by storms that whip the giant waves. They are indifferent to life and death. They have no interest in right or wrong, good or bad."

But we must pay, The Young Nazarene thought. What of my sins? What is the cost?

The young woman of beauty looked at him with wide dark eyes, eyes darker than the darkest night. The eyes seemed to glisten as a flow of emotion moved over their obsidian.

"The fact that everyone knows beauty is beautiful births ugliness and the knowledge that goodness is good births evil."

Jesus had turned away from the young woman to listen to the master and felt as though his thoughts had been read.

"But what was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil made man ashamed of his nakedness as he ate the destined fruit."

"To see what is hidden you must rid yourself of desire, yet to see that which is manifest desire must fill you."

The group murmured at these words. What nakedness? What fruit?

"And was it the serpent who taught the first man to eat?"

"But was there a first man?"

"I was raised with the serpent being the barer of wickedness from begetting, lust and destruction so the first man would be useful to him."

"A snake has use for a man? How is this? To take his venom?"

"It was written. The first man, Adam, was lonely, fell asleep and God pulled a rib from him and made woman, Eve."

The others smiled and looked to Master Jai. Was this young man telling a joke? Was it a child's fairy tale?

"And this writing?"

"From our book of religion."

"Ah. Tell us more."

"He saw the woman beside him and the luminous lifted the veil from his mind and he became sober from the drunkenness of darkness and he recognized his counter-image. So it would go a man will leave his mother and father and cleave to his wife and they will become one flesh. And as they united Sophia, the mother of living, let them taste perfect knowledge and awoke from their deep sleep and recognized their nakedness and covered their bodies with leaves."

"So there were these two, this man and woman, and they were naked and a snake helped them see this nakedness and they thought it was wrong and covered their bodies with leaves?"

"This I was taught."

"And you believe nakedness is wrong?"

There was quick laughter from the group on hearing this.

"We are taught to be covered. Are you not taught this?"

"We cover only to protect from the weather and the elements. Nakedness is not wrong for us."

Jesus started to speak and then stopped himself.

"If I were to disrobe would this be wrong?" The young woman near Jesus asked.

The young woman looked to Master Jai. He nodded. Jesus sat on the cool earth and looked up at the young woman as she began to disrobe. Her movements were not hurried, but seemed measured. First the rough peasant shirt was untied and allowed to fall to the earth, then the white wide legged trousers. She stood with her legs apart and her head thrown back as though on display for a buyer. The group made clucking sounds of approval. Her undergarments were made of a pink towel like material, one wrapped around her breast, the other criss-crossed over her lower body.

"Is this wrong?" She asked, still standing in the display position.

Jesus shook his head.

"Shall I take off the rest?"

"I believe the point has been made," Master Jai said. The young woman bowed Namaste and re-dressed.

"Please, now. Let us hear more."

Obviously the young man was flustered. Still he had the voice inside urging him on. He opened his mouth and let the words tumble forth.

"Great things have arisen in your mind, for it is difficult to explain them to others except to those who are from the immovable race. Those on whom the Spirit of life will descend and (with whom) he will be with the power, they will be saved and become perfect and be worthy of the greatness and be purified in that place from all wickedness and the involvements in evil. Then they have no other care than the incorruption alone, to which they direct their attention from here on, without anger or envy or jealousy or desire and greed of anything. They are not affected by anything except the state of being in the flesh alone, which they bear while looking expectantly for the time when they will be met by the receivers (of the body). Such then are worthy of the imperishable, eternal life and the calling. For they endure everything and bear up under everything, that they may finish the good fight and inherit eternal life."

Jesus hardly knew nor understood what he had said. His eyes were on the eyes of the young woman, who was now dressed again and sat looking at him with a knowing smile.

The Master now spoke.

"If it is not seen we call it invisible, what is not heard is inaudible, if it is intouchable we call it intangible. What is a marriage of all three is one. The oneness can never be named. It both is and is not. It exists and it does not exist. It is the unthinkable thought. You may face it but it cannot be faced."

"The souls of those who did not do these works (but) on whom the power and Spirit descended, (will they be rejected?)"

"Do your utmost to be empty. Hold firmly to stillness."

"If the Spirit (descended upon them), they will in any case be saved, and they will change (for the better). For the power will descend on every man, for without it no one can stand. And after they are born, then, when the Spirit of life increases and the power comes and strengthens that soul, no one can lead it astray with works of evil. But those on whom the counterfeit spirit descends are drawn by him and they go astray."

"To take the body seriously is to ask for pain. If you were not a body you could not suffer."

"Where will the souls of these go when they have come out of their flesh?"

"The soul in which the power will become stronger than the counterfeit spirit, is strong and it flees from evil and, through the intervention of the incorruptible one, it is saved."

"And from where did the counterfeit spirit begin?"

He made a plan with his authorities, which are his powers, and they committed together adultery with Sophia, and bitter fate was begotten through them, which is the last of the changeable bonds. And it is of a sort that is interchangeable. And it is harder and stronger than she with whom the gods united, and the angels and the demons and all the generations until this day. For from that fate came forth every sin and injustice and blasphemy, and the chain of forgetfulness and ignorance and every severe command, and serious sins and great fears. And thus the whole creation was made blind, in order that they may not know God, who is above all of them. And because of the chain of forgetfulness, their sins were hidden. For they are bound with measures and times and moments, since it (fate) is lord over everything.

"And?"

"And he (the chief archon) repented for everything which had come into being through him. This time he planned to bring a flood upon the work of man. But the greatness of the light of the foreknowledge informed Noah, and he proclaimed (it) to all the offspring which are the sons of men. But those who were strangers to him did not listen to him. It is not as Moses said, 'They hid themselves in an ark' (Gn 7: 7), but they hid themselves in a place, not only Noah, but also many other people from the immovable race. They went into a place and hid themselves in a luminous cloud. And he (Noah) recognized his authority, and she who belongs to the light was with him, having shone on them because he (the chief archon) had brought darkness upon the whole earth.

Not that they believed but the young Nazarene spoke with such beauty, they wanted more.

"And he made a plan with his powers. He sent his angels to the daughters of men, that they might take some of them for themselves and raise offspring for their enjoyment. And at first they did not succeed. When they had no success, they gathered together again and they made a plan together. They created a counterfeit spirit, who resembles the Spirit who had descended, so as to pollute the souls through it. And the angels changed themselves in their likeness into the likeness of their mates (the daughters of men), filling them with the spirit of darkness, which they had mixed for them, and with evil. They brought gold and silver and a gift and copper and iron and metal and all kinds of things. And they steered the people who had followed them into great troubles, by leading them astray with many deceptions. They (the people) became old without having enjoyment. They died, not having found truth and without knowing the God of truth. And thus the whole creation became enslaved forever, from the foundation of the world until now. And they took women and begot children out of the darkness according to the likeness of their spirit. And they closed their hearts, and they hardened themselves through the hardness of the counterfeit spirit until now. "

Master Jai stood now and the others also rose to their feet. Without speaking he moved near Jesus and the two walked together down the path towards the stream. The

rest followed but remained a certain distance behind. They talked quietly among themselves as they walked, discussing this strange young man from the desert and the unusual words he spoke.

"Your words are very poetic," Master Jai said as he and Jesus reached the bush pines which led to the bank of the fast moving stream.

"Thank you."

"Are you a poet?"

"I don't believe so."

"Were these words written and you memorized them?"

"No."

"They are from your mind?"

"Yes."

When they reached the stream Master Jai turned East, down stream and continued.

"These words do not make you happy."

"They frighten me. They run on and on in my mind night and day. Sometimes even as I sleep. I hear them or see them in my dreams."

"I have known others with this unusualness. Many of them are very gifted."

"Before yesterday, I thought I was gifted. Now I do not know."

They stood now before an eddy in the stream. The water was backed up by a natural dam of fallen branches and silt. Jesus was staring at the pool with a certain sadness. Master Jai moved to the edge of the pool and bending down trailed his fingertips in the water. Within moments two silver bellied mountain trout rose to the surface as though taking insects. Instead they rolled over and like dogs rubbed against the Master's fingers.

"They know you?" Jesus asked.

"Of course."

"You have trained them?"

"I don't know if trout are trainable."

The fish moved against his fingers once more before Master Jai stood and dried his hand on his robe.

Jesus looked around for the others.

"They have gone upstream. If I take a student downstream they let us be alone and go the opposite way. Their walk will be meditative."

"Would the fish rub against their fingertips?"

"Probably not. Although I have seen butterflies land on the arm of Lila."

"Which was Lila?"

"The one who teased you."

Jesus felt his face redden.

"She is very advanced. Her Uncle was a stone swimmer."

"What is a stone swimmer?"

"We will do meditation tonight and in the morning and then I will take you to a place where stone swimmers are trained."

With this Master Jai turned and headed back upstream. When they reached the buck brush below the hut the others were waiting for them. Lila had gathered a group of mountain flowers and woven them into a crown. She placed them on the head of Jesus. She smiled up at him and a flash of something made his skin tingle and a coldness move up his back and shoulders. The crown, even for its beauty felt heavy with sadness. She took his hand and walked with him back up the hill with the others.

ELEVEN

As Jesus slept on the wooden pallet that night he dreamed of Mary. He had dreamed of her before but the dreams were not clear. In the dreams before her image was always fleeting and she seemed hidden in the midst of fog or wavering sunlight. This night she came clearly and was real. She wore a white filmy robe and was barefoot and knelt before him and kissed his feet. She called him "my savior". She spoke to him of the Romans, the cruelty of their rule, how he must return some day and set them free.

"I will go into their realm of darkness," he heard in his dream.

"I will hide in their wickedness and they will not recognize me."

He could feel the midst of darkness and the foundations of chaos, and knew they would fall down in this chaos and it would destroy them. He held his root of light out to Mary, telling her of the virginal Spirit, how he would guard her against the angels of poverty and the demons of chaos who would ensnare her, telling her to beware of the deep sleep.

"Speak to me of the Oneness," she said. "To give me strength."

In his dream the tears in her eyes brought forth the litany. He did not speak it nor did he not speak it. The words came from a certain depth.

The Oneness rules all. Nothing has authority over it.

*It is everything,
Holy Oneness
The invisible Oneness over everything.*

*It is uncontaminated
Pure light no eye can bear to look within.*

*The Oneness is the Invisible Spirit.
It is not right to think of it as a God or as like God.
It is more than just God.*

*Nothing is above it.
Nothing rules it.
Since everything exists within it
It does not exist within anything.
Since it is not dependent on anything
It is eternal.*

*It is absolutely complete and so needs nothing.
It is utterly perfect
Light.*

*The Oneness is without boundaries
Nothing exists outside of it to border it
The Oneness cannot be investigated
Nothing exists apart from it to investigate it
The Oneness cannot be measured
Nothing exists external to it to measure it*

*The Oneness cannot be seen
For no Oneness can envision it
The Oneness is eternal
For it exists forever
The Oneness is inconceivable
For no Oneness can comprehend it
The Oneness is indescribable
For no Oneness can put any words to it.*

*The Oneness is infinite light
Purity
Holiness
Stainless,*

*The Oneness is incomprehensible
Perfectly free from corruption.
Not "perfect"
Not "blessed"
Not "divine"
But superior to such concepts.
Neither physical nor unphysical
Neither immense nor infinitesimal
It is impossible to specify in quantity or quality
For it is beyond knowledge.*

*The Oneness is not a being among other beings
It is vastly superior
But it is not "superior."*

*It is outside of realms of being and time
For whatever is within realms of being was created
And whatever is within time had time allotted to it
The Oneness receives nothing from anything.
It simply apprehends itself in its own perfect light*

*The Oneness is majestic.
The Oneness is measureless majesty*

*Chief of all Realms
Producing all realms*

*Light
Producing light*

Life

Producing life

Blessedness

Producing blessedness

Knowledge

Producing knowledge

Good

Producing goodness

Mercy

Producing mercy

Generous

Producing generosity

[It does not "possess" these things.]

It gives forth light beyond measure, beyond comprehension.

Then she spoke. Jesus felt the dream Mary rise up and at once was surrounded by light. In other dreams the light had hidden her but now the light presented her.

We would know nothing of the ineffable

And nothing of the immeasurable

Without the help of the one who comes forth

surrounded by light; which is the pure spring of the water of life

that sustains all realms.

In the effulgence of light

she stood.

This, then, is the first of the powers, prior to everything.

Arising out of the mind

The Providence of everything.

Her light reflects..

She is from the light

Perfect in power

Image of the invisible perfect Virgin Spirit.

She is the initial power

*glorious among the realms
glory of revelation*

She gave glory to the Virgin Spirit

This, the first Thought, is the Spirit's image

*She is the universal womb
She is before everything
She is:*

*Mother-Father
First Man
Holy Spirit*

*Thrice Male
Thrice Powerful
Thrice Named*

Androgynous eternal realm

First to arise among the invisible realms.

For She was the reason that it had come into being.

She, asked the virgin Spirit for Incorruptibility

The Spirit agreed.

Incorruptibility came forth and stood by Thought and Foreknowledge.

Incorruptibility gave glory to the Invisible Virgin Spirit

For She was the reason that it had come into being.

She asked for everlasting Life.

The Spirit agreed

Everlasting life came forth and they all stood together.

They gave glory to the invisible Spirit

For She was the reason that it had come into being.

She asked for Truth.

The Spirit agreed

Truth came forth and they all stood together.

They gave glory to the invisible Spirit

For She was the reason that it had come into being.

Thought.

And

Foreknowledge - Incorruptibility - Life Everlasting - Truth

These are an androgynous fivefold realm - therefore it is a realm of ten.

The dream was no longer a dream. Jesus did not immediately know this. He sat up in the darkness and repeated:

"These are an androgynous fivefold realm - therefore it is a realm of ten."

Master Jai said something about waters in the mist. He said this from his own sleep but did not awaken. Jesus lay back then. He could still feel Mary Magdalene's presence and it gave him comfort as he once again slept.

TWELVE

In the morning Jesus woke before Master Jai and went down to the stream in the early morning dew to fill the oak bucket with water. Below the surface he could see the mountain trout moving their fins against the current and looking up at him. He knelt and placed his fingertips in the cold water of the stream as he had seen Master Jai do the day before. The trout did not swim to his fingers.

Master Jai was up and sitting lotus when Jesus returned with the water. He placed the bucket on the small table and on his mat sat as close to lotus posture as he could. He was not certain he was meditating but he did his best to keep his mind clear. Within minutes the voices began:

The Holy Spirit

Brought his and Barbelo's divine autogenes Son to completion

In order that he could stand before the great Invisible Virgin Spirit

As the divine autogenes Christ

And honor Him with a mighty voice.

[The Son came through Providence].

The Invisible Spirit
Placed the divine autogenes over everything.
All authorities were subordinated to him.
The truth within him let him learn everything

[He is called by the highest name of all.
That name will be told only to those who are worthy to hear it
From the light, [which is the Christ,]

From the incorruptibility,
Through a gift of the spirit
The Four Lights arising from the divine autogenes stood before him.

[The four fundamental powers are Understanding, Grace, Perception, and Consideration.]

Grace exists within the realm of the Light called Harmozel, the first angel.
Along with Harmozel are

Grace
Truth
Form

The second Light is called Oriel and it stands over the second realm.
With Oriel are:

Conceptualization (Epinoia)
Perception
Memory

The third Light is called Daveithai and it stands over the third realm.
With Daveithai are:

Understanding
Love
Idea

The fourth Light is called Eleleth and it stands over the fourth realm.
With Eleleth are:

Perfection
Peace
Wisdom (Sophia).

These are the four lights standing before the divine autogenes.

Twelve realms stand before the Son of the Powerful
The autogenes
The Christ
Through the intention

And the grace
Of the Invisible Spirit
Twelve realms belong to the Son of the autogenes.

[All of this came into being through the intention of the Holy Spirit
Through the autogenes.]

From the perfect mind's foreknowledge
Through the intention of the Invisible Spirit
And the autogenes's will.
The perfect human appeared,
Its first true manifestation

The Virgin Spirit named the human Adamas
And placed him over the first realm with the mighty autogenes Christ
With the first Light Harmozel and its powers.

The Invisible One gave Adamas invincible power of mind.

Adamas spoke, glorifying and praising the Invisible Spirit:

“Everything has come into being from you
Everything will return to you.
I will praise you and glorify you
And the Autogenes
And the triple realm:
Father – Mother – Son,
the perfect power.”

Over the second realm was appointed Adamas's son Seth
With the second Light Oriel.

In the third realm were placed the children of Seth
With the third Light Daveithai.
[The souls of the saints are placed there.]

In the fourth realm were placed the souls of those ignorant of the fullness
Those who did not repent at once
But who, after some time, eventually repented,
They are with the fourth Light Eleleth.

All of these created beings glorify the Invisible Spirit

