



# Extraordinary Delivery

Anna Ecco

# Extraordinary Delivery

by Anna Ecco

*Copyright © 2021 by Anna Ecco.*

*All Rights Reserved.*

*Cover artwork by Bálint Duma.*

*To Moto.*



Havilah was accustomed to the surrounding hyssops in the park. Plants engulfed that once-open field that used to let her lay her blanket anywhere. She rubbed her foot against the flannel and it soothed her whimsical mind. She remembered the trees of her childhood, days spent climbing the ones she could, and collecting scrapes and bruises while falling down the unscalable ones. The tower bell chimes resounded and pulled her back from her imagination. Havilah once again heard the sounds of birds singing, the cars driving through the old city, and distant sirens that had already passed.

She collected her belongings and resumed her walk. As soon as she passed through the two trees that acted as the gateway to the park, she saw a group holding signs. The weekly protests were commonplace. The crowd was a motley gathering. A majority of uni students, some middle-aged activists, and a few children alongside their parents. The signs were in English, yet she heard some speaking different languages amongst themselves. Their faces showed a mix of zeal and cluelessness. The police force allowed them to carry on with the assembly in peace. Havilah considered her route back. With her satchel and blanket clutched in her arms, she eyed a small opening and squeezed through the crowd. An excited student swung his gangly arms and elbowed her with momentum. "Owww," she let out, as she looked up. She saw him there holding up his sign, not noticing Havilah or his misplaced pointy elbow. She made her way

through the last row of participants and glanced behind to observe what their cause was. She read the letters backwards through the banner. !SREWSNA EVAH UOY SNOITSEUQ EVAH EW. Ahhh, an age old inquiry into the condition of the human, she thought.

Havilah surveyed the audience again. They were facing the trees that stood at the park entryway. The iron arch between the canopies read: *Solitude: fear not that world inside of you.* She wondered who they were expecting to answer their questions. She continued walking, as an enthusiastic skateboarder zoomed by and missed her by a nose hair. The blanket fell from her arms. She bent down to pick it up and heard the words, "*The company you keep yourself, take it there too, into those depths you run from to avoid. That's where you are found.*" Looking around disoriented, Havilah saw an older woman standing there with a plant. The woman offered to help her up.

"Excuse me, I didn't hear you," Havilah said.

"I said, 'It's not so simple to take a walk these days.'"

The woman smiled. Havilah studied her. She knew she was from elsewhere, but couldn't put her finger on where exactly. She had a wise beauty about her, being on in years and a few wrinkles to show for her lived days on earth. A wrap covered her salt and pepper hair and framed her captivating amber eyes.

"I thought you said something else," Havilah said, as she looked at the woman.

"Dear, you may have heard something else. And you should listen to those moments," the older woman replied.

"Thanks for your help." Havilah began to edge away.

"Is that the direction you're headed?" she asked.

*"Are you going in the direction of Orpheus?"* Havilah thought the question was odd.

"Orpheus?" she asked back.

"Orpheus?" The woman grinned, "All the way to the underworld, I see."

"Sorry, what did you ask me?" said a puzzled Havilah.

"If you're going that way, we can walk together."

"Oh, I have to get back. My dog is waiting on me," Havilah declined politely.

Morachel kept walking and talking next to her. She had a lightness in her step that intrigued the younger of the two. They reached a main crossing in the stone streets.

"Morachel, Morachel!" A man shouted from across the road. He leaned over to pick up a box that had fallen from the stack he was carrying.

The woman looked up and saw a familiar face. She waved.

"Hello! How nice to see you," she said.

"You too. Come see us for lunch," yelled the man.

"I'll stop by soon," nodded Morachel.

The man waved goodbye.

Morachel told Havilah that he owned the local seafood restaurant in the old part of the



city. Salmon mostly. A place that she used to visit often.

"Excellent cuisine," she emphasized.

"Morachel, is that your name?"

"Yes. What's yours?"

"Havilah."

"A pleasure. My late partner would've liked to meet you. He was a walker himself. That's how we got to know the restaurant owner."

"I'm sorry to hear that," Havilah said.

"I miss that version of him. His presence is with me still. His name is Taro."

"That's an interesting name," she replied.

"For an interesting person. He's a rare type, a sort of ruby to my world."

Morachel paused for a moment.

"The drumbeat of the universe continues. Even with loss," she elaborated.

Havilah was quiet. The mention of the word unsettled her. Loss. The experience of losing what is loved. Time the great healer may ease the sting, she hoped.

"What's your dog's name?" Morachel asked.

"Orbit," smiled Havilah.

Orbit had brought her much joy during lows and highs alike.

Morachel and Havilah walked a small incline past several doors. It was hard for the untrained eye to tell which doors were businesses and which were living quarters. The area had mystique and charm.

"I'll see you next time," said Morachel, pointing to the street where she would turn.

*"You must find your way out from your passages. You have made prisons of your journey."*

Havilah stumbled from her dizziness.

Morachel quickly caught her by the arm. Her face was flushed and she perspired beads from her hairline. Morachel pulled a canister from her bag.

"You're must be thirsty."

Havilah drank.

"Slowly, slowly," Morachel continued.

"This happens sometimes."

Havilah took a few sips and handed back the water.

"Careful. Taro used to say that too much thinking isn't good for you. He'd say, 'you have to pay attention to the momentum.'"

Havilah thought about the words.

"Sometimes I forget to look at the ground in front of me," she quipped, trying to to downplay her embarrassment.

She wiped her forehead and moved strands of hair out of the way.

"Thank you," she said.

"Bye, Havilah."

\*\*\*

The little black pug licked her face at daybreak. Though he was a puppy, Orbit knew the routine well. He woke up his human for feeding time and kept her on schedule.

Havilah's sleepy eyes opened reluctantly. Her arms were stretched out and Orbit let her cuddle and pet him before he jetted off. She laughed when she sat up and saw the happy

dog flashing a grand smile and waiting for her. Orbit had gone towards his bowl. The rambunctious pup walked circles around the spot. He used all his antics to get her out of bed. A whimper. A squeal. A not-so-convincing bark followed by a more believable bark. Orbit knew how to get Havilah's attention.

It worked. She got up to feed him. He stood by as she filled his bowl with food. Her apartment was filled with books, miniature collections, and paintings on the walls. She kept the home mostly tidy. There were papers in a pending pile on the desk and some pens and pencils scattered. Her own sense of order. A backpack and suitcase were stowed near the closet for any last minute adventures.

Orbit chomped away and Havilah opened the door to the courtyard. She liked to hear the sounds of pots clanging, music playing, and winds traveling through the screen door. She looked out and saw her neighbor hanging clothes on the line. Orbit ran to the door, as not to miss the action outside. Havilah changed into a t-shirt and put the copper pot on the stove. She remembered yesterday's meeting with Morachel and her intriguing nature. Then Orbit dropped a toy at her feet to remind her of play time. She picked up Orbit and carried him, giving him much needed attention. She enjoyed talking to him in dog language.

"Oobajoobajoobaju. Hello there, baby. Ojieboojju."

Orbit curled up and nestled in her hold. She adored him.

"Oojiebooji. My little Orbit."

Orbit took in the sights from a taller being's point of view, he gave her dog kisses, and kicked his legs to break free. Havilah set him down just as her coffee nearly boiled over. She loved the aroma more than the taste. It was part of her routine, along with the light breeze coming through the windows. These were moments of contentment she had grown to appreciate.

"Haavvviillaaahh." The holler came from the courtyard. It was the property caretaker's hoarse voice. He took Orbit out for his midday walks. She came to the door and saw her pet's shiny black coat roaming on the balcony. Orbit paused to sniff the neighbor's ankles. She saw the hole in the screen that had been given a makeshift fix. It was split open, just large enough for the pug to wedge his body through. She stood back up, eye level with the eye pendant she had hanging at her door. Orbit came running with his ears back and his face being flattened by the wind. He entered the front door assuredly, knowing it was home.

Havilah sipped her coffee and packed her bag before heading out on her route. Her job as a courier allowed her to live simply and discover interesting places. She earned enough to make a humble living. She enjoyed the interactions and occasional conversation on the way. She liked the alone time to think. She mostly found it a suitable way to pass the time or stave off bouts of loneliness.

\*\*\*

Her messenger bag bounced with each step as she moved down the street midday. She had learned to dodge cars and keep an eye on traffic patterns. Some days she could make deliveries by bicycle and bring Orbit along. Today she had to leave him behind and go on foot. Her next stop was a tough customer. An attorney's office who depended on Havilah's services and did not mince words. Usually in grumpy fashion, one of the employees would stand up stiffly, rush the given assignment and repeat its urgency several times.

"Yes, of course. I'll have it there within the hour," she said, accepting the instructions.

"We have to be certain there are no hiccups."

Havilah agreed.

"The client's sentence depends on it," reaffirmed the receptionist.

The receptionist held out the large rigid envelope.

"I understand. I'm on my way with it now," she assured.

"Please. On time," the receptionist said one more time.

Havilah closed the office door behind her. She was perplexed as to why it went like this. She had performed well and on time, and handled this client with extra care. She wondered if letting Orbit collect the daily assignment next time might cheer them up.

She read the address. This wasn't the usual courthouse delivery. Nor was it to the bank that she frequented. It was located across town, far from the historic district. No recipient

name. 110 Valle Calle Alley. It would be a forty minute walk if she kept up a brisk pace. She took out her water, as not to become lightheaded again.

Several lights down Havilah would take the left and cut through a local campus, she thought. The grass patches would save her time and give her a scenic view. She dashed through and imagined what document could be so critical in determining the client's sentence. What had the client been accused of? What would the document prove? She wouldn't dare open the envelope. Her reputation had been upheld by the quality of her work and the confidence her clients placed in her. She felt the honor and the weight of it.

Students toted books around the campus. Havilah knew that today would've been a good bicycle day. She would have to bring Orbit back for a run in the open areas, she thought. She enjoyed the sights and sounds of the outdoors. The new birds were trying out their wings and songs. There were the bluest of jays and reddest of cardinals. Bright tree leaves hung over a creek. She found that this state of being in the world and out of it brought forth creativity. She was surprised, and at times irritated, when some need in the physical realm took her away from her fanciful ideas.

BEEEEEEEEEEEEPPP!

Havilah prevented her body from entering the crosswalk. Lost in her thoughts, she hadn't noticed the stop sign or the vehicle. The driver stared to see if she would halt. She lifted her hand to acknowledge her mistake. She looked

at the uncommon truck more closely and waited for it to pass. It was a decades-old, proud-faced Toyota Hilux. Blue with white pinstripes. Nice car, she told herself. She returned her attention to crossing the street. She found that the other side of the road always gave another perspective. A different view while walking in the same direction. New gardens, trees offered as memorials to give honor to those who had passed on, and a way to consider the same sights from unseen angles.

\*\*\*

This side of town had changed since Havilah was last here. Makeshift street drummers. Beggars on the corner. Vegan restaurants every fourth door. She was relieved to make it in time. She looked up to see Dash Street and Valle Calle. Another block down and there was the alleyway.

The smell in the air from the donut shop made her hungry. Delivery trucks parked and unloaded produce into the restaurants. News stands sold magazines and candy. This was a different kind of bustle than Havilah was used to. Here the streets were dirtier and the people moved faster than in the old part of the city. But she welcomed the excitement into her day.

The alley was narrower than she remembered. She looked at the numbers above the doors and followed along towards the end. 96, 98, 100, 102, 104. "Three more doors," she said to herself, as she saw the brick building.

She landed at the front step and knocked.  
“Hey, over here,” murmured a man from behind the window.

She saw there was a small side window a couple meters away. An odd place for a delivery window, she thought. It was waist high and she had to lean down to see the man sitting behind it.

“Good, been waiting for this,” he said dryly.

She handed him the large envelope. He ripped it open seamlessly. He had done this many times before. He scribbled a hieroglyph on the proof of receipt and tossed it her way.

“Thanks,” he said.

“Sure,” said Havilah. He had already disappeared inside.

She thought about how unexciting it had all turned out to be. She had hurried across town to deliver the document that would help save her client’s client, and she still had no idea what any of it was about. “I guess that’s that,” she told herself.

As she began to walk back, she saw a man across the street. He stood before a glass door. His dark hair shaped his face and he was of calm spirit. She could detect he was an elder, despite his youthful appearance. There was an earnestness about him.

Havilah gave a reserved smile and continued. Another moment of hearing came, “*Lost and finding the way to yourself.*”

She froze and looked to where she had seen the man. He was standing there quiet. She moved slightly in that direction.



“Hey, lady. No one’s been there for years! It’s vacant,” yelled the man from 110, where she had just finished her delivery.

She looked at him, not sure what to say.

“Whatever. Everybody’s looking for something,” he said. He shut the sliding window.

Havilah was looking ahead at the man at the glass door. There were fragrant flowers outside in shades of pink and red. They blended in well with the lovely house. He was right there. The place couldn’t be vacant, she thought.

He opened the door and spoke.

“The momentum,” he said to her.

Havilah took a few steps closer to hear what he was saying.

“It’s what carries you from the dream world to the physical world and back,” he continued while holding the door open.

She could see sparkling glimmers. The brightness inside was being reflected through the door. The wise man had a zen way about him. He moved slowly and intentionally and wore loose-fitting clothes, as not to restrict his flow.

As Havilah approached, she saw engraved in stone a lion’s head on one side and a tiger’s head on the other side. She wondered how both these wild, fearsome beauties came to adorn the entry.

“The solitary and the social nature lives in all of us. We must learn when to be tamed and when to be ferocious. Even when we tame ourselves, it is in the service of our soul and of

fully becoming," the owner answered as he watched her amusement.

"Hence, both the tiger and lion are there," he continued.

She was intrigued.

"I'd like you to meet someone," he gestured for her to enter.

Havilah peered inside and saw immediately where the glimmers had come from. The entire room was filled with rubies. On the walls hanging from canvases, on shelves displayed, on small side tables next to reading chairs. There was hardly an open space from which a red sparkle did not emanate. The glow covered everything in an intense fiery red.

Her eyes widened at the breathtaking sight.

"Wow," she uttered.

"I worked with gems and jewelry," he told her.

Three hundred sixty degrees and she was surrounded by these jewels. She was hesitant to touch anything for fear of damaging such valuable pieces.

"This is an incredible collection. It must have taken years to gather," she said.

"We are collecting throughout life, whether we know it or not," said the man.

His sage sayings seemed to come from an other-worldly place. Sounds emerged from the beaded door that was dangling at the other end of the room. Havilah recognized the woman at first glance.

"Havilah!"

“Morachel?”

“I see you met Taro,” Morachel said, and nodded towards him.

“This is Taro? I thought you said he –,” she treaded carefully.

“You know each other, I see,” Taro said.

He continued, “She communicates with me, but not everyone can.”

“I had a feeling we would meet again,” Morachel told her.

Havilah didn’t know what to make of all this.

Taro and Morachel’s eyes met. They beamed with smiles. He grabbed a large ruby with a stunning geometrical cut and walked towards Morachel. He reached out his hand and she took the ruby. Then, with her other arm, she reached out to touch Taro. Her arm went straight through his body. He was there before her eyes, but she could not grasp him, touch him, or hold him.

“*Rivers of forgetfulness,*” Havilah heard as she watched Morachel and Taro.

She made herself very still and looked around the place.

“How is it that I see you?” she asked Taro.

“It’s rare. It’s the hearers who see,” he answered.

“How do you know that I hear?” Havilah asked.

His grin gave him away.

“Because it’s the hearers who see.”

He sat on the rattan bench and motioned for them to sit across the table. The centerpiece

was adorned with tiny rubies and there were two large stones next to it.

Havilah took her bag off and sat down.

"The man across the street doesn't see me," he explained.

Taro picked up the ruby and put it back on the shelf.

Morachel poured some tea for Havilah and herself.

"You've been a hearer for a while, haven't you?" Morachel asked.

"I can't remember since when," answered Havilah.

As the reply left her lips, she felt fear. She realized that the hearings usually came during lonely times, when she was sorrowful inside.

"*What are you afraid of?*" came another message.

Havilah didn't know.

She tried to ignore it, instead asking the others, "Do you hear?"

"Of course. What I hear is meant for me. I don't hear those that are meant for you."

Havilah considered what Morachel said.

"Those are your messages from within. Isn't hearing messages like seeing signs?" she continued, "These are merely ways to bring to you what's inside of you."

Taro chimed in. "I was also a hearer. Now that my presence has changed, the hearing has changed."

Morachel's eyes were watery. Taro wished he could comfort her. To take her hand and hold each other close.

"We go on even when our fears come to pass. It changes us, but we go on," she said.

Taro leaned forward, "Every longing, every break in our hearts, every dream, every hairline fracture. The Creator knows us."

Havilah was touched by their unguarded expression. She knew that she had fear in her heart. Those deep feelings were obstacles for her. "*Unbar, unchain – your soul is here to live,*" another hearing came. Havilah reflected on the time they had just shared. Morachel wiped her tears and cleared the tea cups. Taro and Havilah smiled at her and she smiled back.

"Make yourself at home and have a look at anything you like. We'll be in the garden," Morachel said as she pointed towards another door.

Havilah replied, "Thank you, but I can't stay long."

"Take your time," they said in unison.

"The keys arrive to us in the unlikeliest of places," Taro said with sincerity, as he and Morachel walked out to the garden.

\*\*\*

Havilah stood and looked around. She couldn't sit in one spot for too long. She was still fascinated by the gems surrounding her. There was so much to see. The refracted light shone everywhere in the room. Her curiosity had been ignited. But she was fidgety.

A message arrived, "*It's a holy collective found in yourself. And found in others whom you come to know in the world.*" The hearings were

becoming recognizable. They were as her voice, containing words of perceptivity that sometimes she could clarify as thoughts. Other times, they were still part of her, but buried too deep to come to the fore.

*"There is an echo in times of movement and an echo in times of inertia,"* she heard. She let them in with less apprehension, for she knew there was guidance within and that she could come to know the intricacies of herself.

Havilah tilted her head to peek down the hallway. It was lined with mirrors from floor to ceiling. She thought about whether she should keep looking around. It felt strange to snoop in someone else's house, she thought. And especially so since this was Taro's house, who was somehow among the living, yet had passed on from this world. She reminded herself that they had invited her to be there.

*"Mirrors and reflections. All of the attributes are being reflected as jewels in every person. Come to life. Awaken!"* This hearing sounded louder to her.

She went down the hall and came to a set of stairs. From the top step, she could see that the light faded below. Just as she entered the stairwell, she saw there were no sidewalls, but two trees. A date palm on one side and a fig tree on the other. She recalled the lion and tiger. She wondered what Taro would say about the dates and figs.

Havilah imagined what could be down there, in the midst of this jewel-filled, brilliant house. She grabbed the handrail. The flight was steep, yet the stairs were sturdy. They

were hardwoods in mint condition. Not even a creak. With each step the light dimmed. For a moment, she rethought this adventure and looked upstairs.

*"Into what is your life force being given? Havilah, what are you the conduit for?"* This message startled her. It had spoken to her by name. "Conduit?" she repeated. She continued stair by stair, with her arm out in front of her. She arrived at the bottom step and there was a door. Havilah put her ear to the surface and heard motion on the other side. The steps came closer, but they weren't normal steps. It sounded to her as a rhythmic shuffle. She stood waiting for the door to open.

BOM! She jumped at the sound of the loud thump and of metal clanging. She looked down and saw a key on the ground. She checked the knob and it was locked.

"Hello?" she asked.

No answer.

"Hello...sorry to disturb you. I --," she cut her explanation short.

No reply from the other side of the door.

Havilah put the key in the lock, took a deep breath, and turned the knob. She gently pushed on the door, but it did not open. She added more elbow grease and made a new attempt. It seemed to almost budge, only to be slammed shut again. It was as if something on the other side was holding it closed. She positioned her hips to burst the door open and with a great spurt of energy she went for it! The door flung open with a furious gust of wind and she was pulled in by the force.

\*\*\*

Havilah could barely move. Her legs kicked against the walls formed around her body. The tiny movement she managed was to bring her arms from back to front. Even this small shift took great effort.

"What is this? Where am I?" Havilah asked with fright.

She hadn't thought about orienting herself since the intersection of Dash Street and Valle Calle. Now her body was scrunched and she was here. She could feel that she was worlds away from the doorway where she had just stood. The sound was different here. It was softer and muffled.

*"You have come back,"* said the message.

"I don't recognize this place," she replied.

*"It's the passageway –"*

"This?"

*"Into life,"* the hearing continued.

"It's small," she added.

*"It can feel that way."*

Havilah grew restless. She turned and twisted, contorting her body. She could hear the vibration of her heartbeat as close as ever. BOM. BOM. BOM. BOM. The steady beat resonated inside her entire being. She had already been sideways, face up, and feet first as she struggled to emerge. Her impatience was a proxy for her fear. She protested with outstretched fists to hasten the exit from her discomfort.



*"You've been longing to return,"* said the hearing.

Havilah replied, "I may drown here." She wrestled more, moving her limbs wildly.

*"Yes, you didn't know it would be like this. But shallow waters could not take you there. It's the depths that must be visited."*

"Is this real?"

No answer came. If she hadn't been terrified, she may have realized a feeling of safety.

"I could drown," she said.

*"This is the going back. This is the way you've been asking."*

"What if I never make it out?"

*"Inside of you your soul knows."*

She quieted herself and felt that she was snug.

"And what if it's too much to bear?" she asked. Her eyes were shut and she began to feel a calm warmth.

*"It's not whether you'll make it out, but whether you'll let yourself into your beginnings."*

She received the message and opened her heart. She did not know where this place was, but it didn't matter. She knew it gave her something true. If she had been here before, she was willing to be here again.

And there in that tight space where she was for a while cut off from the world, she knew. She would have to bear the uncertainty. It was the only way to become alive. To be rid of any traces of the rejection of life.

Harmonic waves swept over her, allowing music to enter her being. She dropped her head

and poured out her sorrows in tears. At her moment of acceptance, in the blink that she made peace in her soul, something happened.

\*\*\*

I read a book once where he goes on a journey. It moved me. I wanted to go on my own journey too, but didn't know how. I fell into a hole. A pit along my way. It became a holding pattern. Alabaster encircled me, and made something of the happenings. It was my own vase. My shelter. I was inside the vase and could not see the cracks on the outside. They were there. But I had to go inside to find life and the qualities therein. To find me. There's a time of resting and calm. Of bearing with silence and its noise. And peace makes its way in. And there's a time to get up. To come out. Why do I want to leave in the morning? Excited to go and to do, to be jet set. Vital. Wake up to life each day. And by night-time to want to stay. To be tucked in and to slow down. Exhausted from the day. A fantasy life to bear with the parts of daily life that do not satisfy. To get through uncertainty. To make it through the stress of the unknown. Anxious. Despairing. Is that it. Overwhelm. Becoming all well as a matter of course, of life, of course. Your rich, glorious imagination. From what does it help you escape? The feeling of lostness, oh it's painful. But it's better than tricking and faking. Stairways are like going to an underworld. Those thin passageways of understanding. The come here little birdy moments only to realize that it's a bat flying your way. Sheep and wolves. The longing for solitude but fearing the loneliness.

Learning to dance. Making graceful footwork of stumbles. And that also means learning to dance alone when no other is present. Lonely sometimes. Run towards yourself, not away from. You'll still be there when all those pains have come and gone. You will learn not to vacate yourself, but to be there. That fantasy you have to go to a far away land? That's the extent that you desire to know and find yourself. Buckle in, bumpy ride not abating. Restless as all hell breaking loose. Anarchy of a lone soldier! Crisis or actor? The doubts are part of it. Sometimes you cannot look. Shock. Tremor. Cannot see something for what it is. Painful. Fearful. And what it is is many things. You don't want to forget the good. But if you don't look at what hurts, you cannot pass through. Mystery, your soul knows. Remember, pure joy-filled laughs are contagious. Take heart, courier. This life is not linear only. Reject. Replay. Resolve. Realize. Some people cannot say what they mean. Even when their words are true, they are not coming from the truth of that person. Others mean it but cannot say it. Return. Reclaim. They cannot hold a truth until it becomes their own. Use your heaven-given agency and do not lie to yourself. It's very dangerous. It inoculates you. Soon you won't realize that you do it. Separate the truth from the mistruth and the untruth. Bravery. Control your mind and don't let someone else do it. Keep yourself, keeper. Do not violate the will of another. Don't let yours be violated. Snap out of hypnotized states and other installations. If it's how you talk to yourself, then tell yourself the whole truth. Groupthink is a problem. Take heed when you see there aren't ideas being spoken in

an individual's own language. If you can still decipher that, you have a better chance of extricating yourself. Beware of the euphoria that comes with groupthink. The light shows, sounds and music, the energy of an alluring cause, and the accompanying persona non grata du jour. It can be enticing, so be cautious. All entrancing, and we all want to be entranced sometimes. But you have to remain aware, more so then. Oh, the shadow in us, the inclination in us. You don't always know what you're entering into. Watch what you let yourself become enchanted by. Oh, for want of intimacy. What is this jail you are putting yourself in? Exile? Imprisonment? Trapped sensation. Inside you know. Your instincts awaken. Fly. Like a trapped young bird flapping like mad against the window, seeing outside the world just in front of it. Can't understand. The world right there so clearly, this glass keeping it in. Wings flapping flapping flapping. Make it out of the cages. Back to free flying. Try not to fool yourself. This is important when it comes to your effort. Rest is necessary. Laziness is not rest. Tell the truth about it because understanding what you give to life will help you come alive. Start to explore interests and see what makes you light up. Give your best. Respect differences. And honor the efforts of others. There are fool's errands that we all run. We run them in loops, circles in our minds and in our lives. We need more than a small dose of luck to break from that nonsense. Wish we could spare ourselves, but sometimes we must take the longer path. Do not run on empty. Definitely do not run from empty. If you fear that, it's because you don't know who you are. Sit as examiner

over your life, look inside, and ask. It is scary. The alternative is scarier. Look. Sometimes you've got to fight! Hold your ground and you will find out who you are and what you're made of. And learning who you are not and don't want to be will help immensely. So who will you be? Protect your mind as the cap does the skull. Run far from fools and foolishness, especially when the message sayers go through great pains to make it sound reasonable. If you are blind to it, or are in the more dire situation to be the one championing foolishness, then it will take a longer time to awaken from the coma. Your mind has fertile soil. So mind what you allow to root and grow. Your mind is your own. The Creator has given it to you with your very life, your being. It is yours, as is your soul, your will, your heart, and everything that makes up your personhood. So then be open and listen to those hums that resonate to you. You're moving on from the unwanted places, slowly, slowly. Belief. Half-chopped cedars. Saw that half a tree and on the other side its other half appears years later. Things take time. Getting a handle on the time piece will add to your peace of mind. Can be long and slow, or fast. Rushing hardly helps things. Branches extend. Do stop and pick up miniature pinecones. They are like you. Not a guru in sight that will lead you to yourself. Tell that ego to tuck away. You are not zero from nothing. Not true, but could be a comforting thought. It is courageous to see life unfold. Patience and humor in spades. Strength and sensitivity are a winning combination. We all have that in us. It's life. They cannot take away your uncertainty. They cannot tell you what your

future will be. Do you want to strip all the unknowns from life? That is robbery of life itself and its spontaneous nature. The task is to keep yourself and learn to trust. It's ok to not know. We always don't know at first. We learn. We figure out. We make our way. Not foreclosing, living the whole while, and seeing what happens. If the sayers say they will take away uncertainty and will hand you your future, they are full of it. Be careful of such divination and the rackets lurking in corners. Live and see what happens. Yes, prepare. We make choices over time that we hope will show up when we arrive to the future, but we don't live there yet. We can attend to being here as soon as we heal that which makes us cling to times gone. Be wise. Do see evil for what it is. It has a source that wants to taint. For those who have rejected life and know it, you are already arising from that stupor. Slowly get up and walk, each step its own. You'll encounter kindness and mercy. Throwing in the ripples, one gentle pebble at a time. For those who have made a rejection of life and who pretend everything is good, you have become dishonest. You rejected life when you ceased being true. To you, be awakened. From your deepest hurts as a babe you bowed and vowed to hide inside forever. That is why in your rage you do to others and the world what was done to you. Wake up! Be in yourself, inhabited. Assume your position here among the living. Look towards the city of cities with your soul. That idol of your false self is not what you ever needed. The impostor becomes their own god, sacrificing and feeding their own true being to a false insatiable monster. Is that not idolatry. Life

is here. Those who love you are here. Those who you wish you could love are here. You are here. Your Maker Is. In your wrongdoing, you are still in life. You were still in life when wrongdoings were done to you. That's why you tried to exit. The Creator is waking you. The nightmare is not for you, and it's not for you to terrorize or be terrorized. Heal. Why do you lie to yourself. There is a rage and fury inside. You are leaking and carrying around asphyxiation because you do not acknowledge. Liar beware. Stop it with the methane. It's the only way to move forward. To discover you, really. Bye bye false you and falsehoods. To become true. A true one among others, and maybe one to another. Do this. There is not much that separates those that do from those that don't, yet they are worlds apart. Layers of unhealed hurt cause some to go to a place that is hard to return from. You are being called back. Summoned for appearance. Arrive. Give honor. Find honor. Contend for the fabric of creation to overcome the shrapnel from destruction. Even those who say they are loving life most publicly are often ones who most violently reject life in their hidden moments. They worship image to a pronounced degree, such that they have cut themselves off. They bury and take cover under that image, lying to themselves and no longer able to see. They show the masses that they are happy, yet falseness seethes through them. They imprison themselves further and annihilate others, while their deepest longing is to be freed. Don't get it twisted, dear ones. There are times when battle is necessary. To all, be brave. Come and begin to live. Pedal your long awaited bicycle! In the realm of the physical,

get discipline, and perhaps a trainer. In the realm of mental toughness, be your own coach. And then, listen only to trusted ones. It turns out to be few in number. Grow. And about those trusted ones, you will know them because they do not run from themselves. They will not be flashy with techniques and empty promises. They are not compelled to recruit and are not driven by agenda. Judgment is an art and a science. At times a spiritual practice. Sailor, be of pure heart, go back to the rib. For all the protection that was sorely missed, there were moments you were spared. Irreconcilable differences. Yes. Broken link. Chain fence. Awaiting the redemption. If there are secrets, they may be choking you. Cutting off airways. Breathe! Let out a big sigh. The drumbeat is your muse. Sprint to it. Midwives and pediatricians know. Small steps, small steps. Whatever you have come through, death has not its grip on you. Will you unlock the latches and be a free person? The depth of your soul shall be expressed. You have guarded it with steel walls and made it as a fortress, a syndrome of locking in. Let the Creator shine through you. Let the world see. Garden. Learn the seeds and plants. Watch them grow. Mourn stolen harvests. Then get up and keep going. There will be animals that ravage with brutality and those that harmonize and mend. So plant more date trees and fig trees. Lemon trees, geraniums, and grape vines. Crepe myrtles throwing shade on terra cotta tiles. Olives. A garden of natives, a garden of imports, all to be tended to. Slow grow. In order. Sequence. Consequence. If you lose steam, recuperate for a while. For as long as it takes. Care for your spirit. Go inside your mind-world.



Imagine, dream, explore. Then come back outside to participate. Nurture those dearest to you; balms and salves will appear. Like a soothing mineral spring to help carry shared burdens. Work and build together. Let yourself be dependable. For yourself and for others. To be counted and counted on. Little effort. Each day. Long time. Grow tree. Give something. No, you are not without consequence. No living thing is. Accept life. Wrap your arms around it. How can you be obsolete. No one is. No age. No person. No being. You fear this, and the greedy want you to fear it. But there's no need to. You're just getting started. In every age this is true. You are here. What is your dream to contend with? The passionate sparks within you. That's something to behold, rather than resigning to the weak idea that you are useless. Restless you are. And that is a sign of vitality on the way to calm waters. Have you loved well? Oh, look how you have loved. You will find your constants. Work on the important things, and you'll appreciate pleasures anew. Hype is ubiquitous and those who pander want bandwagon mates. The sayers and the society makers. What they say now can change forty years from now. Or today. Keep yourself. But what is tender and known, that's what you pay attention to. A simple life is good, so long as you are loving and letting love in. Ahhh, staying power. The sum of stamina and endurance, which produces a superpower ability to hang in there. It may seem counterintuitive, and will hopefully happen only on rare occasion, that your staying power will have you walk away. This heartbreaking outcome is when you see that you do not want to subdue or be subdued. It may

or may not be permanent. Some ask for miracles in the midst of such circumstances. Distance means something. Use it to grow and strive for reunification, if worthy and possible. We never know what can happen, but we cannot always see what is happening beneath the surface. Seeds die, they don't take, species mature at differing rates, growth spurts are uneven, some plants are grafted into one another. One season gives what another takes away. Yields may vary. Specious claims abound. Floods happen, as do droughts. Perfect rains water perfectly. Seafarer, there are rocky tides sometimes. But waves do break and you will reorient. You'll even laugh again. Constellations and course charts come in all shapes and sizes. Your life is being fashioned. You may find pieces of guidance from previous sojourners, but you'll have to get to know the way for yourself. We are who we are, and we're also who we're becoming. There are embers in you. It's why you want to be like Rocky, Pippi, Danny LaRusso with epic karate moves. An athlete, a watchmaker, writer, musician, a mathematician. The kitchen sink. Declare! You may try all those things for a day, for a week, for a year, for your life. The time itself is not the most important. No one can tell you how. Make the music of your life. It's powerful. Most things you learn by doing. Period. And by being who you are in the truest way. It's usually in the quiet, unexpected, or disheveled moments that you meet the depths of yourself. You turn back and quit because of your fears. Why do I try and give up? Quit mode. Why don't I try at all? Losing steam. Why enthusiastic and then deflated? What's that, wanting to reserve a right?

Disappear. Afraid to fail, to soar, to live. Those moments of inspiration show you that there is life inside. Attach to it. You walked away when you needed to exercise your staying power. You'll learn. You thought you couldn't do it because you haven't found out what you're capable of. Sometimes you're right. You can't do it. Maybe not yet. But then in your discouragement, you delay picking up what you need for the journey to be able to do that thing or something else. The call is to find out what's inside. To learn and to know. When you can, do one thing at a time. It's better that way. Easy now tiger. Slow that darting mind down. It's making you spacey! My mind and my intention are here. This is a moment for this task. Later, I will give my attention to something else. But in this moment, my focus is here. Harness it. Give from yourself. This is how we participate in life. How we accomplish what we desire. This may require pragmatism. Admittedly, some of us could stand to have more practical aims. But don't lose your wonder. And if you are too practical, then let your head float in the clouds more often. We participate and we observe. The Creator Is. Have a tradition if you like. Make it yours. To keep, hold, and know. To remember. A sense of consistency and the familial. Belonging and home. Positivity is important. A hopeful outlook will make you happier. But if you repress and deny uncomfortable feelings, they will gnaw somewhere in that other consciousness of yours until you listen. It's like stacking up unpaid tolls. Is it an attempt to avoid loss and pain? Or heartbreak that has already happened. You won't always be blindsided. You'll tap into strength.

Once the feelings move on, you can too. You know losses well, but gains also come with the territory. Weaving macrame here. There are worlds inside of us. Yet what's hidden inside is what we hide from. The terrible and the magnificent. Disappointment, loss, sorrow. Oh, it's no superficial wound. It has cut deep beneath the surface. What do you grieve, O mourner? What is it that you miss? What keeps you in paralysis? Feel the loss, do not stave it off. Every single thing that ails comes from kicking and screaming. The corrections come from making them in your world a little at a time. Full glow. Breathe. Look ahead. Isolation. Weeping. We all long to be known. The heartbreaks are there from lifelong, no promise there won't be more. But how you have loved and did love and can love and do love. That stinging pain is commensurate with your capacity to love. May that love be found. Let your souls touch and understand this life together. A mate. A home. A family. A child. A parent. A friend. The good kind of giants know this. Depth and substance are essentials. To live a life with meaning, put meaning into your pursuits. Once you understand this and respect it, you will see that there is no such thing as unimportant work. It's a myth. All that resistance to life? Might as well resolve to live, give your best, and dare to love. When you see only one step in front of you, take that one. It can feel like you are blindly making your way through. You are. Carry on. Sometimes there is no wrong decision. Sometimes there is, but it still wasn't easy to make. Do your best and remain open to learn. Say sorry. Make adjustments where necessary. The detours and dirt roads, they have

a way of connecting. Were there years of wanderings? Was it wasting time, buying time, killing time? You've been a collector. Of experience, of information, of hurts that heal. Of love you never thought possible. It all becomes part of your lived-knowns. Context matters. Be available to listen to yourself. Your senses and intuition may interrupt when you're doing other things. It's the only way you'll listen. Don't ignore them, as they can help you avoid additional suffering. Pay attention and you'll see the traps beforehand. Don't forget, and be smart. The emotions arrive in your heart, your belly, and your feet. Listen! Please, for the sake of Orpheus. May we learn from our lives. You'll have to be invested, to have and to maintain. To hold. Does it scare you? It scares me. What are you afraid of? Hurt. Your tears are there. You may let them fall. Water the earth, water you, water others. You'll be on your way to a free person. Can you let go? Can I let go? What does that mean? It's ok. Nature heals and makes way for your flight among horses. You have found life and you will find it. You have found love and you will find it. Don't bolt from loneliness. Silence has a way of highlighting apprehensions. Embrace the solitude that finds you. When you must, find solace in the company of none. Well, one. You. Remember you have a Maker. A great mending taking place. You'll be amazed. Sing a song that breaks sorrow. Realms that open, silver linings, golden opportunity at any age. Tranquility out of tsunamis. Your efforts will be fine tuned. When to conserve, when to expend. Wrestling becomes purposeful. The noise, you'll need to shut it out if you want to excel, find

discipline, and commit. Turning it off will bring frustration, but satisfaction comes when you remove static. If you listen whilst you labor, beauty can be discovered. Let haphazard ways go away from you. They are mostly unhelpful. Perhaps just on blue moons if you may be required to act a fool in order to save your life from a sudden enemy. Otherwise, keep wit, measure, and spontaneity about you. Limits do exist. It is a comfort like a warm blanket to know where the lot lines fall. Ask nature. All limits should be respected. Some may be challenged. A manner of holding, call in the surveyors. Do not be enamored with yourself or cursed staring at one's own reflection. But you must believe in yourself and be tenacious. Find some beloved others and they you. Trust the Maker of life. Let the fleeting and passing pass freely. But those lasting longings that nag, don't let them go. A day will come, so keep them in sight and inch closer to them, your gems. Make sure you practice your marooning in your own mind if you can, before you find that island. Learn to bear uncertainty; it will come. If you don't quit, you will see that you can surely bear frustration too. Find your island, make your shelter, say a blessing over your food, nourish your soul. Be connected, make compromises, bring your precious loved ones. Look up. See the vast same sky and wonder how it hangs above you and all others in the cosmos. You'll need everything you've got – your heart, your mind, your soul, your gut, your grit. You'll know when you know. They call it trust. They call it belief. They call it *you*.

THE END

