

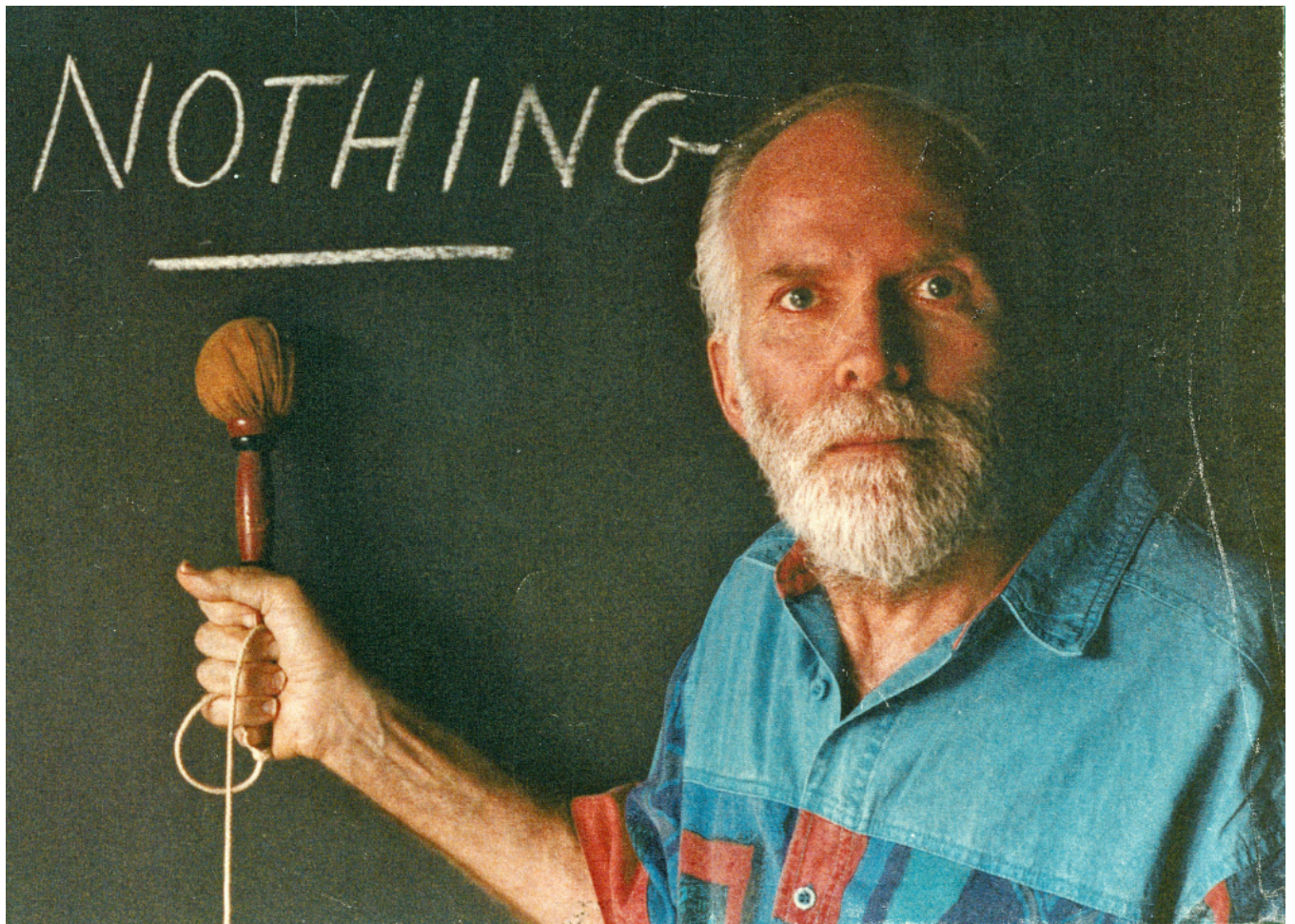
To Robert, a Sage in Arizona – Part One

Posted on June 25, 2012 by janeadamsart

<http://janeadamsart.wordpress.com/2012/06/>

This is the story of a pilgrimage in 1996 to Robert Adams. He died the following year. Born in New York, he “woke” into the atoms at 14, during a school math class. Then he met Yogananda. In early 1950, still in his teens, he went to India, sat with Ramana Maharshi (December 1879-April 1950) and ran wild on Arunachala for a while. Back home, he became a silent and reclusive wanderer, but people always found him again, so he taught them Self-enquiry. The drawings and portraits in this memoir, are all posthumous – done shortly after his *mahasamadhi*. People were very generous, and gave me photos – around Robert, these were rare.

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A JOURNEY TO SEDONA IN ARIZONA, APRIL 1996

The elephant in his dream beholds

the lion that wakes him up from sleep.

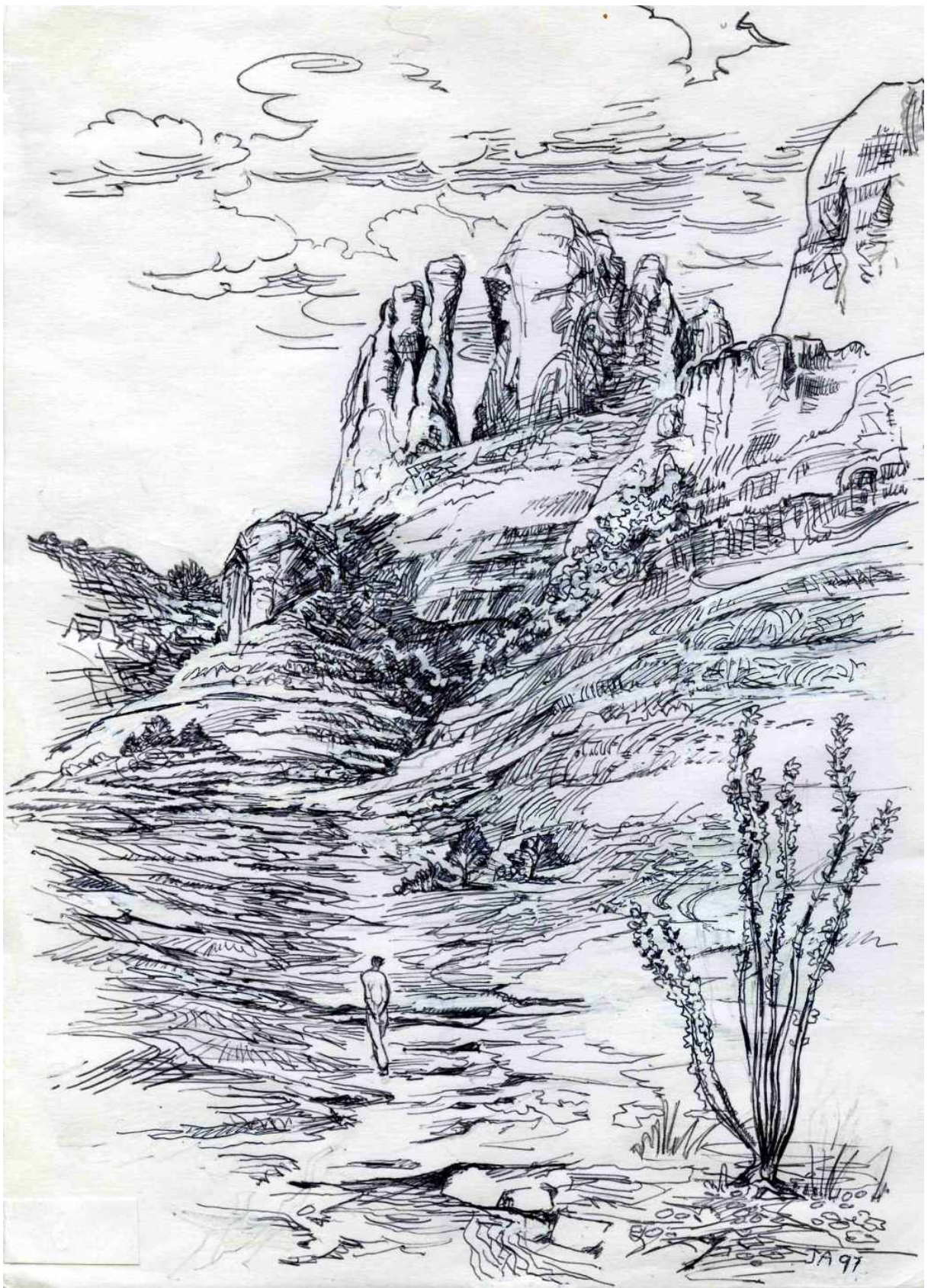
Even so, the seeker in his dream-like

waking life of ignorance sees

the Guru, and wakes from slumber dark.

Garland of Guru's Sayings 28, by Muruganar

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In Phoenix, we picked up our hired car without too much disorientation, and resisted Alamo's businesslike attempts to persuade us to take a larger, more powerful model for the 4,000 foot climb to Sedona. Our vehicle was the smallest car in all America; we christened him "Mr Swiftie". We had no trouble, except in getting out of it; for the doors were electronically calibrated to seat belt fastenings and the foot-brake, and often baffled us. Presently, on a high mountain road of uncertain camber, Mr Swiftie met a Big Bad Guy, chewing gum, real mean. Finally the confrontation allowed some passage.. The hummer jeep shot by with a scrunch of stones, splattering a spray of dust. Mr Swiftie's beautiful green skin was baptized powdery red all over.

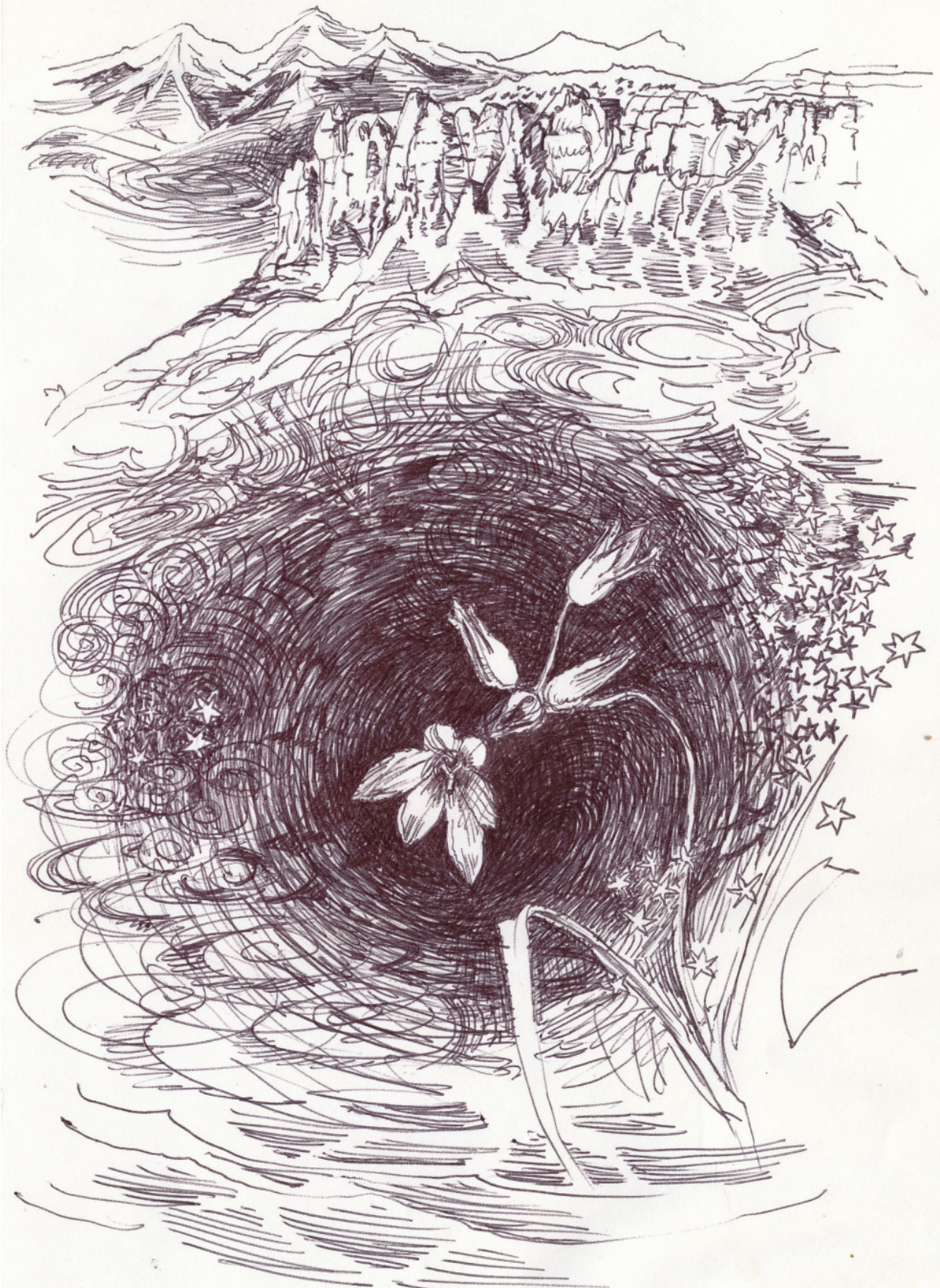
In Sedona, vastly girt with red rock Gothic cathedrals, we pitched our tent on a hill behind Keren's house. The bright stars were our canopy. One of them looked brilliantly fuzzy and strange. Was it a comet? A long misty tail followed a cloudy cluster of tiny stars at great speed; thoughts of strange lands and sages. Slept surprisingly well.

In the morning, Mr Swiftie took us to a millionaire's paradise settlement called Enchantment, at the mouth of Boynton Canyon. We walked far into the canyon, under the noble red and silver cliffs; deep in its heart of peace, tall pine forests grew, like a marital garland of Arunachala with mid-Wales. In the godlike majesty of the rocks overhead, the silent breath has carved everywhere the **elephant Ganapati**, seed of speech and poetry. Every hiker and tourist we met on the path, lit up with total and untiring pleasure in greeting another human. We decided Sedona is a truly ethical town, as no one locks their doors. Is this red cavern of angels a spiritual antipodes to Arunachala?

We were too tired to find a Gaz canister for cooking, after all this. We returned to the tent to rest, and then went to Satsang with Robert at Mountain Shadows Drive in the town – our first meeting with him. His speech has become completely indistinct, but I could hear "be still". He wore smart white trainers, a US general's baseball cap embossed with a golden quail bird, and shades. His movements are slow, casual and careful, rather stooped. As he enters, he turns and gives a direct, unreadable glance towards the visitors from England through the dark glasses. He sits down, looks around the room quietly, and jokes with his intimates. He mouths the Siva *bhajans*, and others join in and chant. A gentle devotional fervour is engendered.

For a first time visitor who has traveled a long way, Robert's fast slurred whisper is bewildering. The mind wants words and forms. It does its best, hearing "be still", "no fear", "be free" to open into the heart of this authority. It feels shut out of understanding. After fifteen or twenty minutes, Robert puts away the microphone and we all listen to a live three-piece traveling band; a blend of Oriental and native-American instruments perform a couple of Sivaic *bhajans* ...

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JA APRIL 7 97

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Robert is father to a large family. He keeps a sort of eye open, and came up and gave Aj and me a hug. The *Jnani* comes gently towards, a bit at a time, comes through the people to meet and to whisper. His tongue is stricken by Parkinsons disease. This protects him. There are other ways of speech. Since he came to roost in Sedona, his curvy wife Nicole has turned into Queen Shakti, and makes his appointments. "I do just love to hear an English voice," she said, with warmth ...

We went to recuperate in Red Rock State Park – silver white cottonwoods, red earth, wild blue sky, a serpentine vortex stroll to Gray Fox, and the stunning surrealism of it all. Then we came back to Sedona and had a gigantic slice of cream pie and tea. The "recalcitrant ego" is in a state of culture shock. Finely tuned to the ancient gentle landscape of the Welsh hills, Devon and the Chilterns, it is disorientated by the deluge of red rock rivers in this millionaire's Shangri-la of endless elemental grandeur.

Learn to turn the red rock angels inside out to percept the colour which floats them. Turn points into cavities. Crimson inner light, wings, wide landscapes, corn gold.

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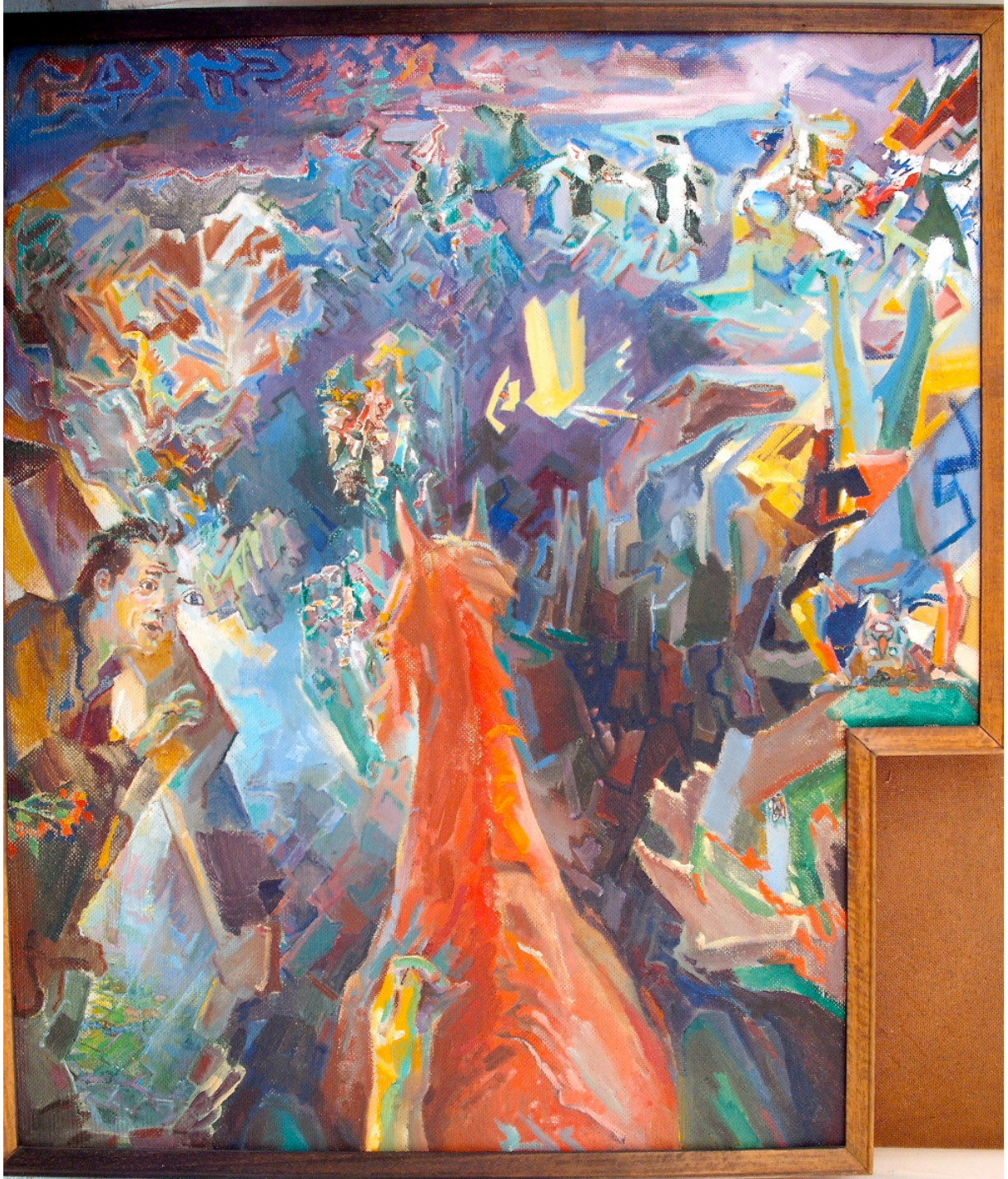


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Look at this elderly man in a grand restaurant, with a big family party around a table; the vivacity of his brood of youngsters! I see sometimes, in the interplay, the gleam of the eyes. They shine, empty, rimmed dark with the night, bright and searching. A young child comes impishly out of them, clean like a light.. This makes his close friends love him desperately. They laugh and kiss and play with him. He plays fool with the food and cocks his baseball hat to a rakish angle over his ear, but cannot speak; yet he is their realized Master. An alchemy shines from his eye to the opened soul which tries to hear beyond the words it cannot hear, the Unknown. A secret personal alchemy works from this *jnani* to each of our openings. It is love, our Self. Beware of statements too often used, which enclose! I am baffled, bewildered, rebuffed. He takes his time to come through when we are ready, not when we think.

In the evening, we couldn't get our act together to cook al fresco. It was cold and windy, and I couldn't understand the little stove – a new one since the old one got stolen last year at Chartres – and I was neurotically afraid of spilling Gaz. It was not to be, and everything was rather overwhelming. Desert of failed doership and tears, then early and exhausted retirement for the night. Aj dined imperturbably on cornflakes.

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White limestone strata in the beds of sandstone, outcrop an uninterrupted line of faery castle battlements along the fluted flanks of the red peaks. I cannot believe it is not built by man. Walking on great tablelands of rock within the ravine, I found myself inside this painting, done about 10 years ago; it is called *Ravine* ... an adventure (I knew not what to paint next, it emerged

as I traveled) of coloured rock forms, huge interior abysses of fallen sky, a green complementary horse-head mirror, a “netzach” man I loved, flipped upside down, a white bird flying. The range of rocky peaks are carnival mounts of a merry-go-round; each tells a story. The “hod” man with an eye floating away is called Adam Kops. When he saw the painting he said, “*Hey, look at the dancing rabbis!*” Another visitor to this painting at my home, called it a *furnace of life*. Beyond the dancing rabbi peaks, is a wide, pure land, from whence blue-winged raven messengers fly.

No photograph or picture can encompass the Arizona landscape. Kumar the eternal potter of the gods, fashioned this terracotta crucible on the wheel of *Sanatana Dharma*. The all of it is an altar: *Jnana Advaita*. It is fitting that the *jnani* makes his home in such a landscape.

“Take down the flagpole before the gate, and fly awareness!”

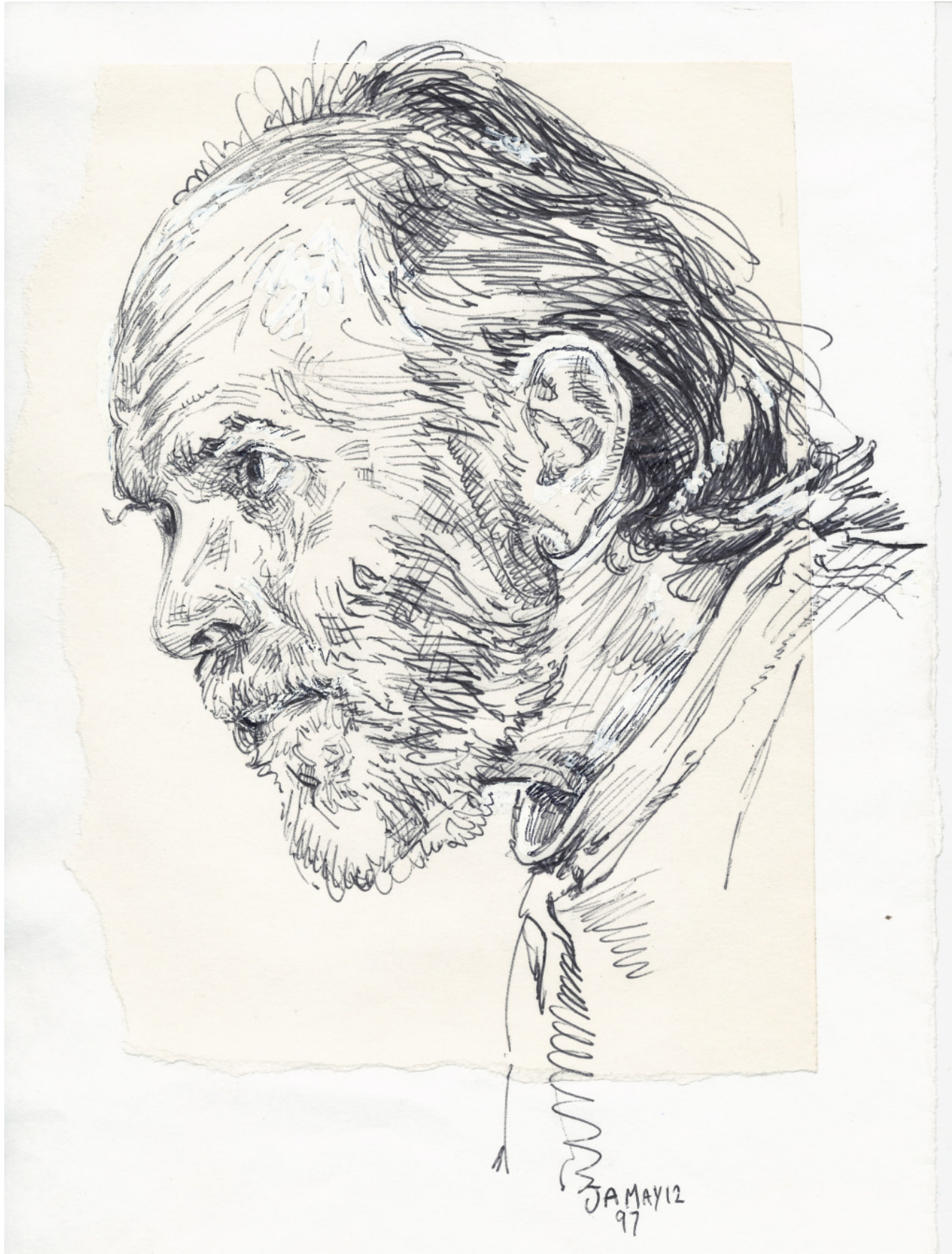
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Robert spoke in sibilant streams like a river in flow, with pauses in between; a murmuring on the water. Very few words came out, but some people seemed able to follow, as they laughed and mmmm'd in the right places.

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The comet is at its closest now – as bright to see as the Moon, and 9.3 million miles away, transiting the pole star. Aj said it is a ‘little engine’ 1 X 10 miles, whose 10 million mile trail sprays our solar system right now. It moves unknown materials across the temporal arcs and orbs of solar systems. What a thought. The weather is getting cold. We discovered on Friday night that nothing is open in the evening – no place to have a coffee. A friendly and far-sighted (looking for business) hotel gave us some in the foyer for nothing, and told us there are no discos here either, and no crime. Mad Cow Disease rampages in England.

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Reaching the Grand Canyon, we began in the widening of that crack, that smile in earth whose silence only a raven’s wing of night may cross, to take as usual our humble photographic record. At first one thinks, No pictures, or maybe just one. After a relatively short time, the film is finished and another one being put in. It were better to in silence receive each breathtaking impact unrecorded. But wouldn’t it be nice to show them at home!

We recalled the account of our brother Ganesan who was taken here, who walked to the rim with his dear friends absorbed in spiritual discourse, the river of his voice and eyes; then all of a sudden they told him to look at his feet, and there was ... nothing!

The vegetation along the rim of the Grand Canyon is uninterrupted pine forest. But if you descend a little way into the *akashic chamber* – a golden geology speckled like thrush's breast, in roseate strata – and look up, those tall, gracious pines are now but a thin dark skin along the summits of the open cliffs of Mother Earth. The same goes for the road, the bubbles of human destiny, the museums and hotels within that skin. They are gone.

Climbed back to the rim, drove on to a Visitors centre, snacked on outsize fast food, and caught sight in the carpark of the friends who played music to God in Robert's Friday Satsang. They were on the road again, in an eye-catching rainbow-ecology wigwam on wheels. They'd come in to use the phone.

Aj is as happy as a child in heaven. Here he is at sunset, walking in an exquisite forest along a resin scented path, and there in mystic splendour, is revealed to him his Vedic City – the dwellings of the gods that gleam with fire – Brahma Temple, Buddha Temple, Zoroastria Temple, et al. I looked down into the alluring cleft of the Bright Angel canyon trail and decided I must return, and stay longer, and go deeper. (The next year, I did, twice I reached the deep green Colorado River to wash my feet, and back the same day – a round hike of 18 miles, a mountain a mile high, inside out: a climate spectrum from snow on the rim, to sub-tropical Africa in the cleft.)

As the sun sank to the rim, we watched the god Agni at work. The gift of transformation subtly, softly rose-glowed the celestial strata of Earth's open womb: the fiery sacrifice. Even His creatures, His radiant bulls, kine and cattle, became visible, illumined in worship. Agni is the Lamb of God. As the sun's daytime colour dissolves, all turns misty grey. Imperceptibly, another light kindles, warming to immensity. When even this light fades, the subtle body of the Canyon dances. Great angel dervishes whirl in gossamer twilight, powder-violet.

Then we got back into the warmth of Mr Swiftie and drove back to our tent, 130 miles of untowned, unbending, desert darkness. Glen Gould played Bach piano concertos with geological precision. We stopped at Flagstaff to dine at Denny's under Orion.

There is no time across the time. It is unborn. And yet it dines at table.

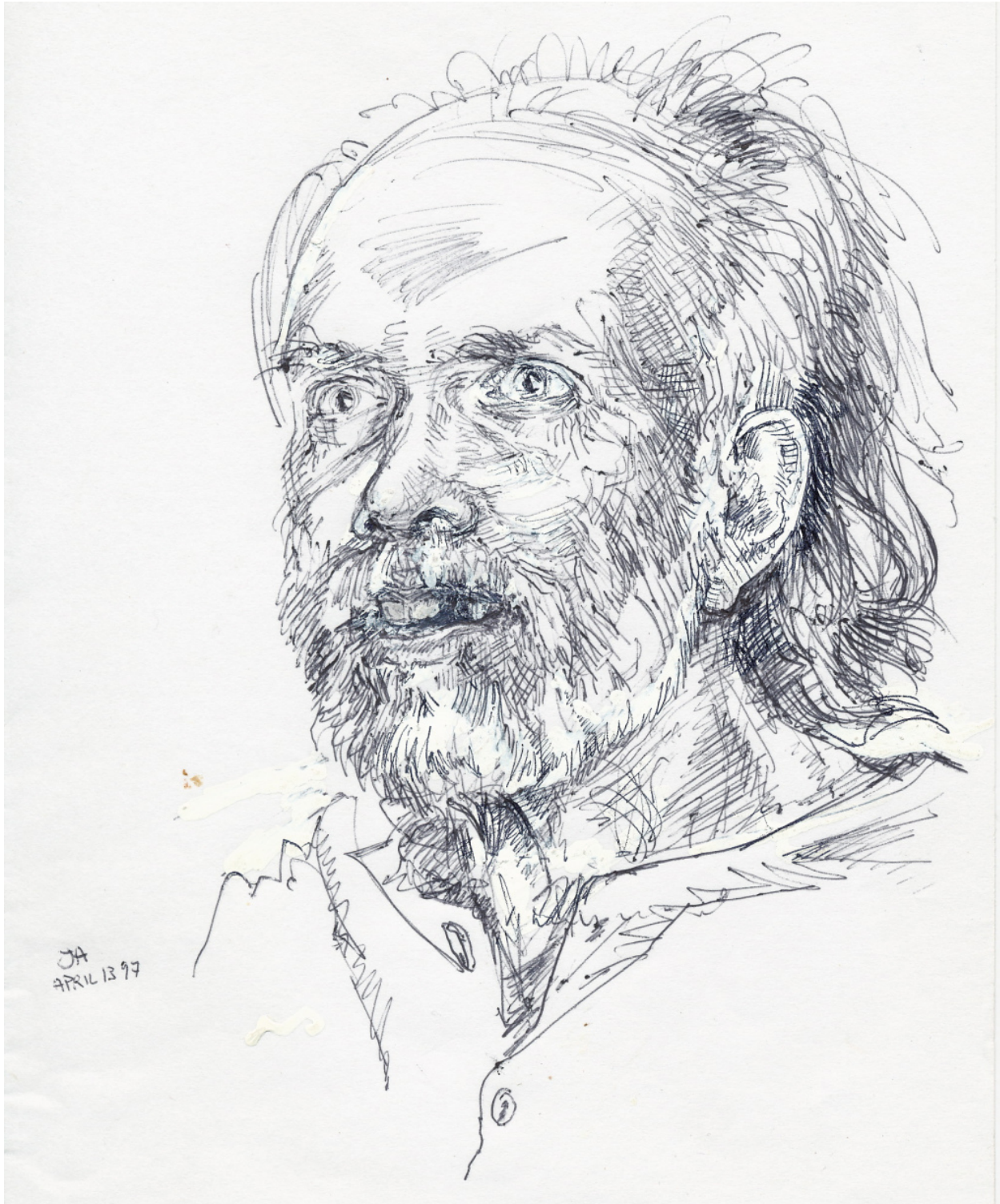
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The Self has access to all memory, and to all that is needed. Robert plays with his food and when he laughs his face lights up and two long yellowish fangs appear, because nearly all his upper teeth have been pulled out... they are making him a set of new choppers. He takes (in slow moments of opening or hearing) your heart right out, tears it out and bathes it simply in innocence and beauty.

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After our trip to the Grand Canyon, we took him out to lunch ... Robert's white T shirt was emblazoned with the slogan VISUALIZE WHIRLED PEAS. After greetings, we sat down at a round table semi-out of doors, and Robert took off his dark glasses, put his baseball cap on the

table, and after some pondering, ordered soup of the day, veggie burger and a herbal tea, and then inquired, “How’re things in London?”

Aj wrote, “*He gave me a piercing look with his eyes and held me in his gaze for some long seconds until I could bear it no longer, and looked down. I felt an intangible gratitude to be in the presence of this holy man, sage or jnani. He told me to Be still and know I am God. If the mind wanders, ask Whose mind? But as there is no mind anyway, the problem dissolves. Any obstacle was an illusion. I am free Now. Who took away that freedom?*”

Robert asked about the Ramana Foundation – Mitzi joined us, to interpret – and said our *Self Enquiry* is “a wunnerful magazine.”

I plucked up courage to tell him about my father’s path to the silence, through his chest of drawers: Zen, Krishnamurti, Gurdjieff, planting potatoes, and playing the violin. Robert took in every word, wide open, to know my parent’s age and state of health, and said firmly, “Give him my *warmest best* regards.” He held me in his radiant look, wide open, absurd, unborn, unending, a mirror to no thing, his mouth a big dark cave. This made me so happy, I needed to talk about it to him, out of the sea, and couldn’t. He is a bent, elderly fair skinned man with delicate features, white beard, small lean hands with little fingernails, a childish gentle nose, and a hearty appetite for his food. He kindles my heart, like a match. “If you go inside,” he hissed, wide open - “there is no end! No end! It never ends! Be still, be still, be still.” At the end of the lunch he announced “so there’s nothing more to be said.” We could now humbly request a photo – to put in the album at home, next to the Grand Canyon? Robert obligingly sat down again outside, took off his cap and glasses, then stood up, put his arms around us both for Mitzi to take one, and said “Give Nicole a ring tomorrow at 9.30 – and have a *wonderful* afternoon!” He came to inspect the diminutively green and somewhat dusty Mr Swiftie, laughed and was driven off in John’s red station wagon.

Aj and Ja got into Mr Swiftie and pointed his snub nose up Oak Creek Canyon, for Aj required a nice picnic table near some water and trees, for Virgo-Sagittarius to sit down and write up the notes. Capricorn-Cancer went for a paddle in the crystal clear cottonwood river, in the red rock ampitheatre, to potter on the stones and goatishly digest the input. Sweet music, nut-brown water. Robert is NO THING! My mind opens wide with delight, then shuts like a snapdragon. But it doesn’t matter: be still.

Aj and I think his speech is a divine affliction. He said years ago, “to continue speaking is a waste of time.” Contrast his cavernous mischievous laugh, with the glossy and eloquent Gurus of this world. I can hardly bear it when his light shines in. *Saint*.

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The next morning, Nicole on the phone arranged a time for tea on Saturday at their house – “I’ll draw you a map, we’re near Safeway darling, just around behind Macdonalds, but it’s rather hard to find” – and said again she couldn’t sleep for the thought of us in our tent in the freezing night, and we might like to stay with them next time, if their daughter isn’t using the spare room? This felt very encouraging: her southern voice is a comfort and an “earthing” here. We struggled through the giant supermarkets. But the cashiers are as cosy as a Holsworthy grocer back home. Mr Swiftie has a strong personality, and is always easy to spot in the car park, among his large and glittering companions.

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I wrote: "At this stage in our adventure, I feel the small-town of my psyche, its aridity. This makes sense for the moment, I guess. With the jnani at the end of the road, I feel in various ways my emptiness. Sometimes it is awareness and beauty, full of light and love and song. But sometimes it is just dense and tired, non-relating, the hard metalled road waits for the sun to break through again, like it does with his unearthly smile. I feel shy, with nothing to say or ask, and not knowing how to negotiate this end and birth of all relationship. The beggars in the basement are scared perhaps. Tears somewhere. Funny – I just noticed the word 'sacred' is also 'scared'. I envy the other people, their intimacy with him."

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JA APRIL 9. 97

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Give the gift to Him. As soon as I fall to silence, love comes.

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END OF PART ONE

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To Robert, a Sage in Arizona – PART TWO

Posted on June 25, 2012 by janeadamsart

<http://janeadamsart.wordpress.com/2012/06/>

This is the story of a pilgrimage in 1996 to Robert Adams – PART TWO. He died the following year. Born in New York, he “woke” into the atoms at 14, during a school math class. Then he met Yogananda. In early 1950, still in his teens, he went to India, sat with Ramana Maharshi (December 1879-April 1950) and ran wild on Arunachala for a while. Back home, he became a silent and reclusive wanderer, but people always found him again, so he taught them Self-enquiry. The drawings and portraits in this memoire, are all posthumous – done shortly after his *mahasamadhi*. People were very generous, and gave me photos – around Robert, these were rare.

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JA APRIL 9. 97

Robert and Friend

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Give the gift to Him. As soon as I fall to silence, love comes.

Mr Swiftie took his passengers along a long and very bumpy road around the mountain fringes of the Secret Wilderness. We would not have time on this visit to explore the Secret Trail itself, which is quite long. We walked up instead through a pine forested dry valley trail to Vultee Arch, a single web strand of sandstone stretched by the wind over a precipitous gully. Ja clambered up the steep hillside to sit on it and take a photograph. Aj lay down comfortably at the foot of a tree to sleep.

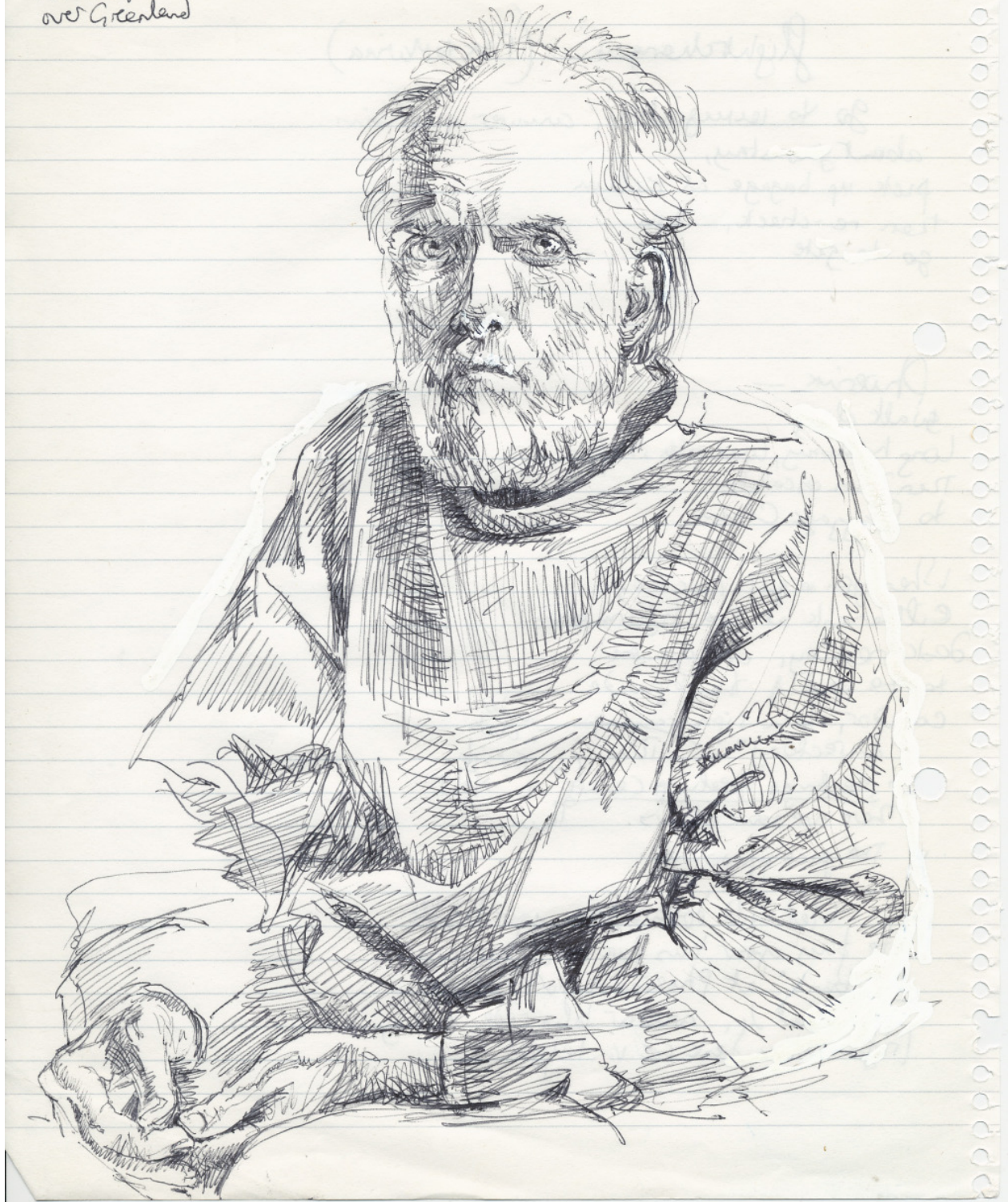
Returning to Sedona, Aj and Mr Swiftie dropped Ja off at the end of Soldiers Pass Road so she could go for an adventure on the “Coffee Pot Vortex”, and then prospect a better way back to the tent from there, than she’d managed the day before. This rock, which is more like an Indian eagle, is spectacular, leading a row of terracotta pinnacles out from the “Thunder Mountain” like giant molars set in a landscaped jaw bone. At first it seemed very difficult to reach. Ja had not consulted the map, and was set down at the wrong place, and had to negotiate a settlement of pretty painted villas.

But then I sat quiet for a bit, and *gave in*. Just as I was about to walk home, I spotted some small friendly stone signals which, when followed one to another, some of them difficult to find, led me back, up and through to the wonderful high place with the setting sun glowing through it. The terrain everywhere is a mixture of stony red earth and hills, with a varying density of green juniper and impoverished conifers, and you have to watch out for cacti. It is navigable in the cross-country sense, but the strong ecological consciousness of the region makes me want to keep to the paths, wherever there are any.

The earth is red, dry and gritty, but looks and feels as if it recently received the dew. It is hard to tell in places like this, which are human paths, and which were made by a coyote or mountain lion, which follow no human sense of purpose. But a gentle pilgrim had left, to blaze the trail, a small pile of two or three stones in every doubtful place, to beckon and direct. It uplifted me, like finding an angel, to come upon this, and lean upon the enchanting guidance. The adventure around and along the contour of the glorious great rock at twilight, was secret, privileged and beautiful. The cross country hike back to our tent, encountering some deep feline footprints, was lit by a silver splendour of shredded storm. In the night there was strong wind, rain and sleety ice. It was noisy in the tent.

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In clouds
35,000 feet
over Greenland



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Every morning, just before sunup, we hear the coyotes in dawn chorus, a haunting cacophony of little shrill barks and howls. It is rather a wonderful sound, as soon as I know it is not a kennel. We saw a coyote at night, lean and grey, crossing the suburban road. Nobody worries about rattlesnakes, as they are very shy, and so are the mountain lion and bobcat. The ring of bright mountains is no limit to the wilderness. All the Arizona desert is there. Solid birds of bright plumage chaff one another solemnly in the juniper, and large rabbits go about their business.

We explored many long trails. We visited Cathedral Rock. I enjoyed another long and arduous rocky climb, while Aj snoozed gently with *Gems from Bhagavan* near the waters in the shade. Cathedral Rock is much bigger than it looks: the ascent up the massive rugged shoulders to where the pillars begin to soar like organ pipes, was guided by discreet cairns from place to space. The sunshine blossomed bright with birdsong, and melted pockets of snow. One night as we turned in – the comet is moving away now – I noticed the exceptional brilliance of the evening star. Her gloaming brightness shone greater than Jupiter. She catches a spark of the hidden Sun in her web.

Starlight points to Self-light, and at moments among my sleep I saw this Star on a clear and soft blue radiance, like that which falls among the hills at twilight. The Star and hint of elven blue – like the **moon blue lotus** of Ramana's look in *Ramana Gita* – help me to Self remember. Aj is astonished at himself. He has not read one of the dozen or so books he brought with him, and they are still tied up in a bundle in the tent. He wrote, "*As everybody starts early here, in Robert's Kingdom of Sedonia, where even the ordinary citizens behave like hobbits in a childrens' picture book, greeting all and everyone whenever they pass, we landed outside the Satsang house at 6pm, to get a place upfront ...*"

They played a wordless voice to God, like a bird and a cello, a Yogananda song. There were readings, pointedly, from Arthur Osborne, Lex Hickson on Zen, and Rumi. Robert entered the room in a white tracksuit, shades and no cap, reached for the mike and began his bird song: the *sphurana* began to glow... At the end of Satsang, Robert announced – through Richard – “a special warm welcome for Ja and Aj, our visitors from Ramana Foundation in England, they are the editors of the quarterly journal Self Enquiry, and it is a wunnerful magazine” – Richard held up a copy of the Winter issue. I was in no condition to deal with the sudden stampede for new Subs – had come to Robert's Satsang without address book, receipt or pen ...

At Dennys, which is open all night, we enjoyed the company of Mrs Rich, an old flame of Robert's from LA. She came and sat with us affectionately, dressed all in white, with white hair, white straw hat, face like an old apple, and round blue eyes. She seems to be a lady of some mobility and means, and said she is a Desert Person really. She is not fond of valleys or water, and needs to build her new house high up on the mesa. As a visit to Poonjaji is on our vague agenda, Mrs Rich beamed at us, opened her purse, and gave us ten dollars. Aj contorted into a polite British “No please, really.” “Go on, go on honey, take it, it's a Present!”

We retired to our tent behind Keren's, much refreshed by the Sedona Night Life.

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We saw some art in the local galleries. The standard varied, but helped me to perceive more clearly how holy these rocks and sky are, in the native-American spiritual culture, as subtle intermediaries, half creature, half angel. Eagles, coyotes and legendary medicine men soar out of the “crack between the worlds.” These rocks have homely and banal domestic-American names, but a hundred years ago they were cryptic messengers and gods in the wild wilderness – no houses, roads or Safeways – and I review the *Mystery*. The script is written by the wind in the stone. Sedona is a place of power, now settled by affluent New Age soothsayers. Any settlement here, breathes in the colour of the land, its geology and colliding frames of the Dream Time consciousness. As I read all the Carlos Castaneda books at an early stage in my *sadhana*, I recognize the Sonora desert resonances of **not-doing** and **seeing the space between the leaves**. Any sensitive sojourn here, involves a great deal more than just looking at the view.

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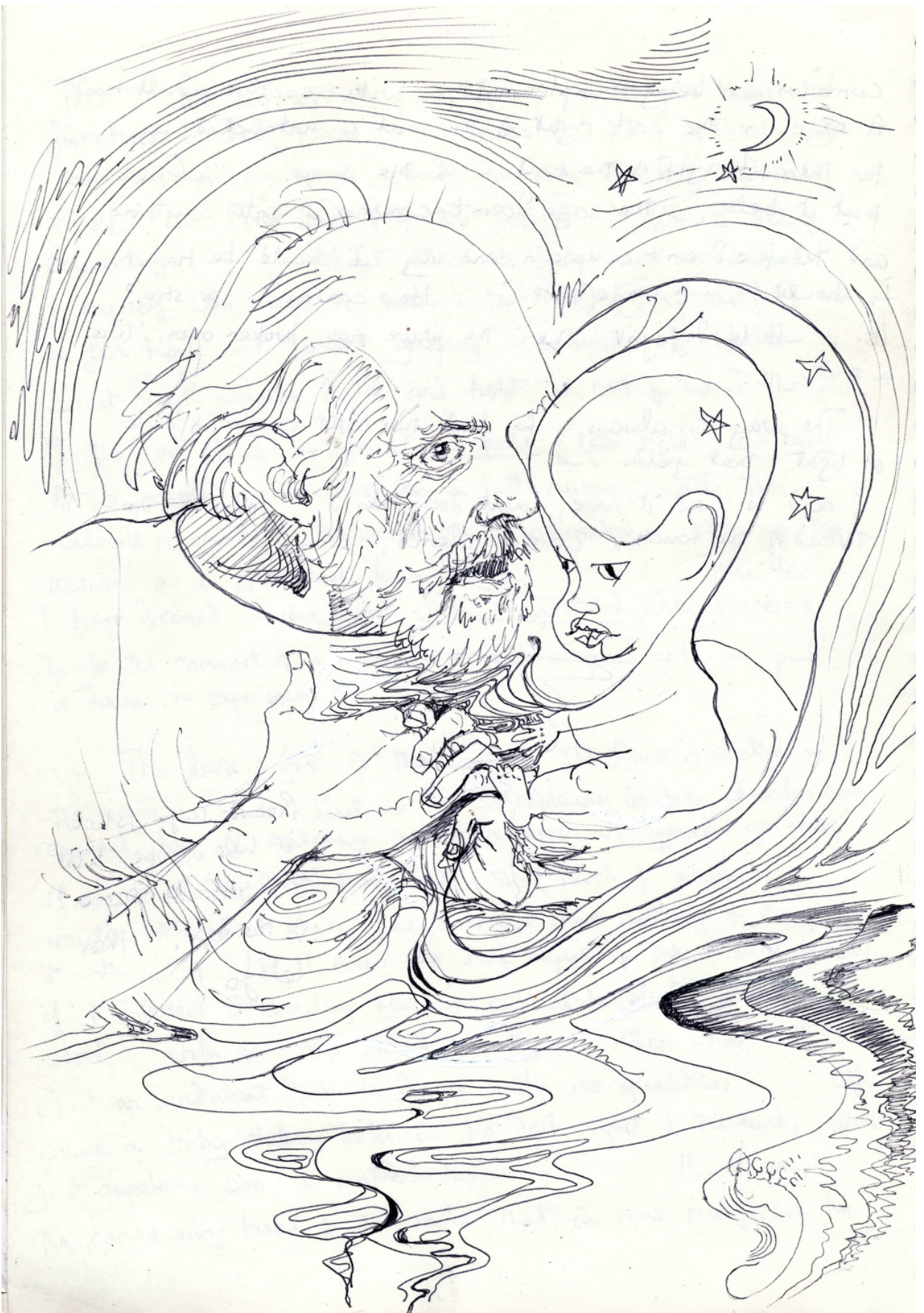


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At supper, someone took my camera and kindly snapped me trying to understand Robert's whisper in my ear, through the jolly voices all around. Robert said *Don't publish pictures of him in our Journal*; then the words from him began to fade, to run together indistinct, like the rain, and I couldn't hear. Could it possibly be "*you can camp in our garden next time*"? Again and again the words, the husky, rapid whispered sound from wide eyes of a fearless child who has all the time, urgency and endless patience in the world to make me understand, a word at a time, but *I still can't understand, I'm so sorry*. Is this physically painful for him? Then he smiles and lets it go for now. Some things translate *only with pain and difficulty* into the crude cradle of speech or writing. The universe has something to spell, and I am distracted by the sounds of the table.

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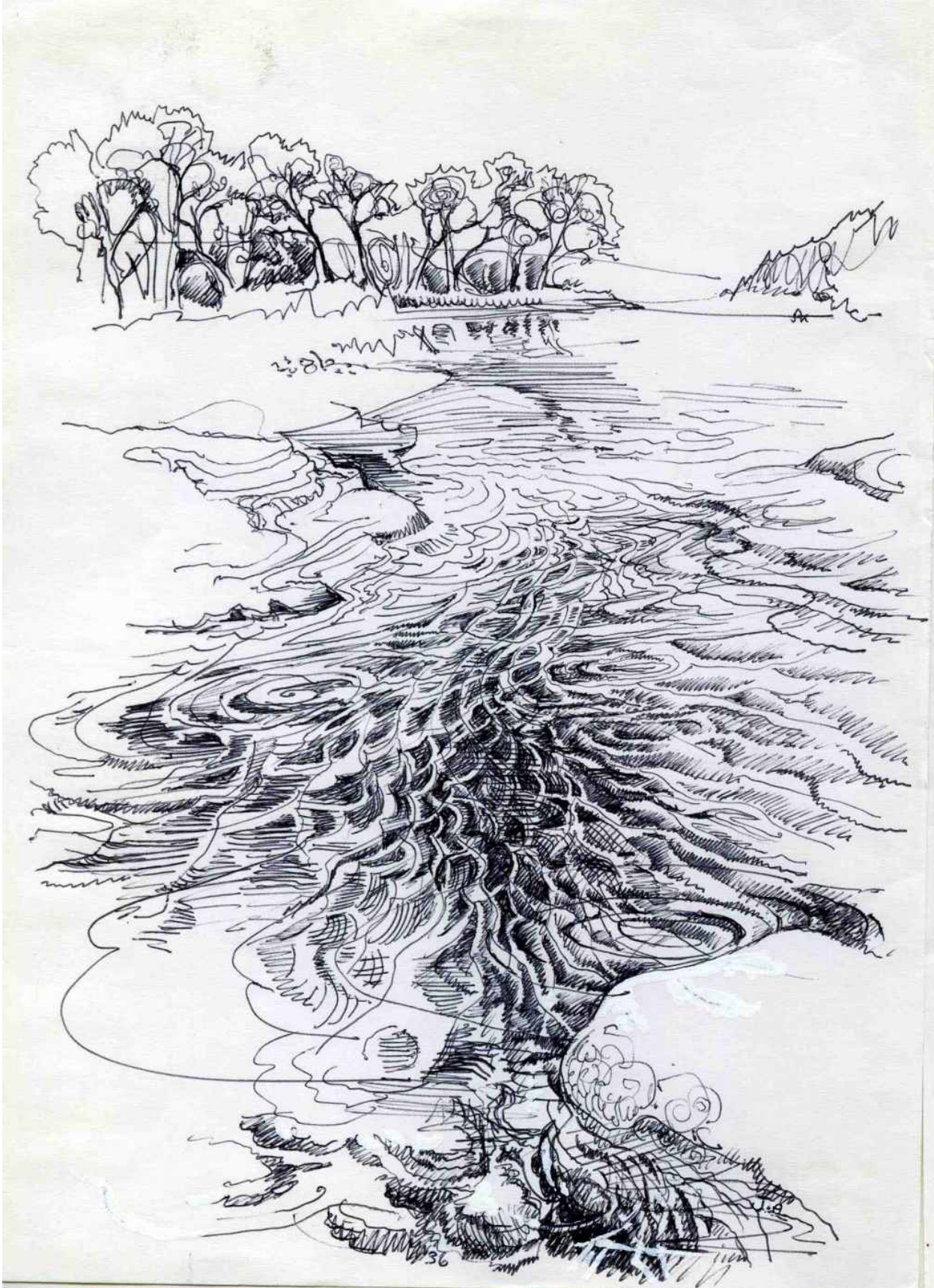
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There was some lively discussion around Robert, that with “I-am-no-body”, the preordained idea of our physicality disappears. Everything is preordained, and set up so long as we are identified with our mind-body’s Karma. As soon as this identification discontinues, *then there is no preordination, nothing*. This moment changes everything.

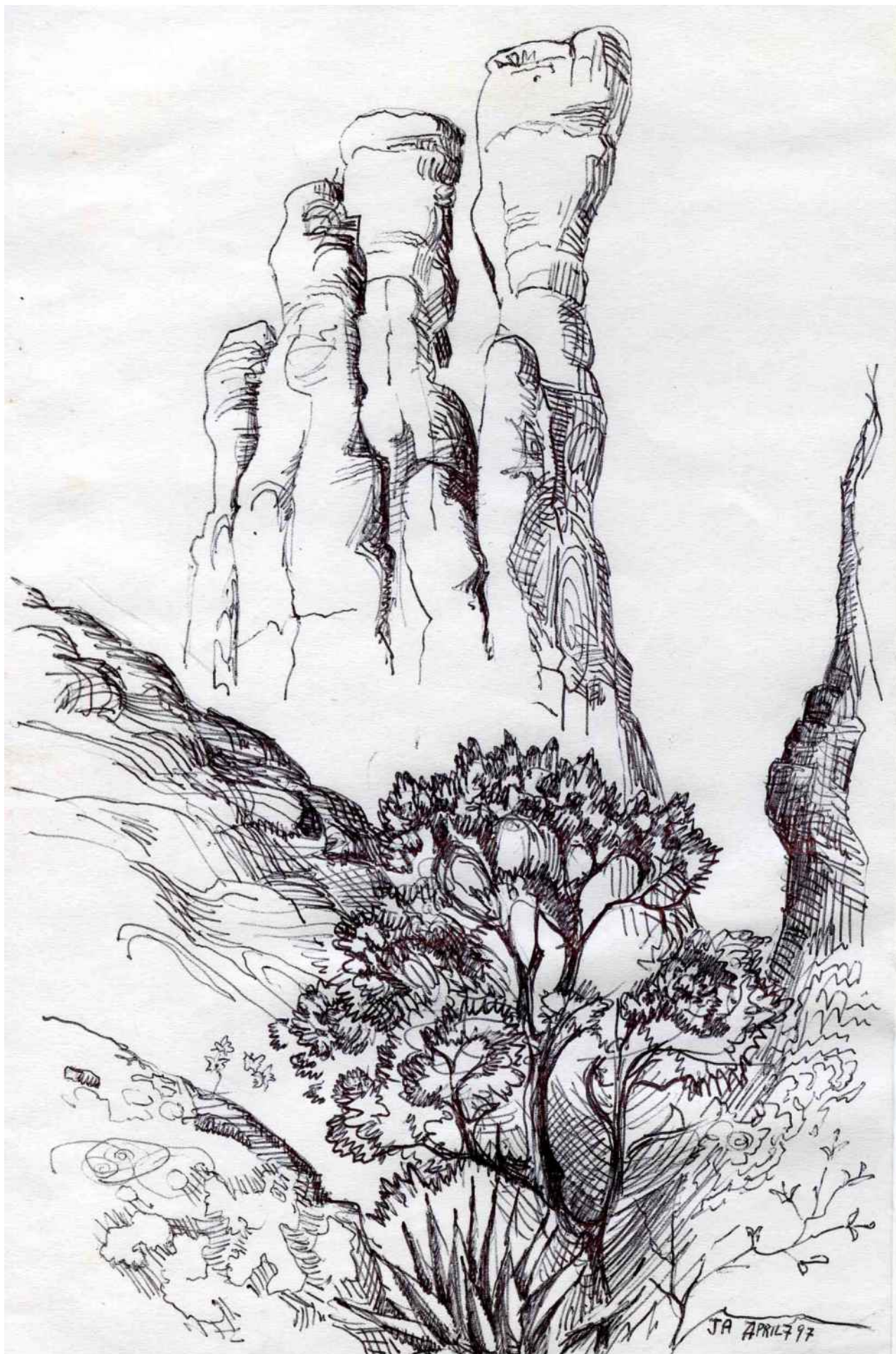
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One of our new friends – Rolfing Rob – invited us to come for a hike with him and his dog Wolfie. We followed him to his rented house for him to change into his blue baseball hat, bumbag, clean socks and sneakers. He emerged like an angel, carrying water. We left the cars in Dry Creek wilderness, and climbed a very steep and little used trail towards Lost Canyon. We never saw Lost Canyon, because we had a wonderful time on the path, doing Douglas Harding experiments. Only a star can perceive a star. Atoms. Every word we say comes straight from the Sun – think of that! The Sun speaks through the food-chain hierarchy. He that is in you ... now feel in here the endless, bottomless no-centre of His radiance. We also practiced Forest walking – attending to the seer who smooths out the bumps – and Upside-down-ness on the precipitous path. Aj fell down and sprained his wrist. Rob held and completely healed it with a Rolf technique of concentration and pressure. The Rolf massage “reinvents” the landscape of the inner body, and dissolves structural tensions. It is a scientific manipulation of the collagen *fascia*, or connective tissue, and the body’s innate ability to let go of protective armouring.

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JA APRIL 97

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We looked out from our highest point over the vast basin of the mountain-ringed Secret Wilderness, and *didn't complete the trail*. I found this a useful exercise in dispassion.

“Our way becomes clear, and what we need to do becomes apparent. We no longer exult in our personal darkness, but accept the Divine Will in life, and its orientation of our life towards the light. We learn to shine in the presence rather than to dwell in the darkness of our personal thoughts and emotions based on memory. We learn to have faith in life, to love and to accept the truth, to be open and humble and giving to a reality that is pure grace.”

Vamadeva Shastri (David Frawley), *Wisdom of the Ancient Seers*

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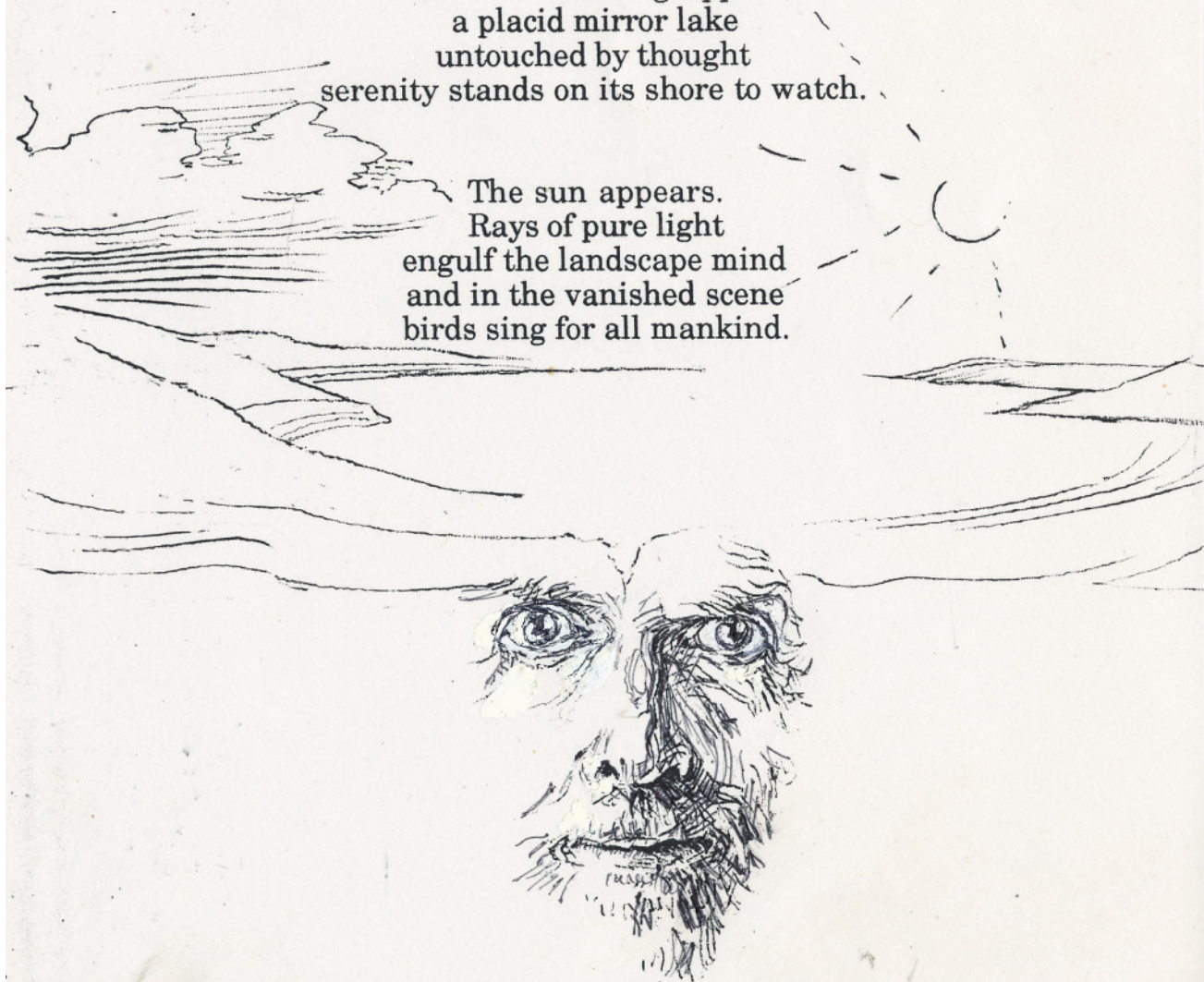
Awakening

by Robert Adams

Daylight breaks
the mind is stilled
silent, at peace
movement nil.

No pebble drops into its pool
no ever widening ripple
a placid mirror lake
untouched by thought
serenity stands on its shore to watch.

The sun appears.
Rays of pure light
engulf the landscape mind
and in the vanished scene
birds sing for all mankind.



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I have pre-conceptions about the simple and unworldly nature of the *Jnani*'s residence, within walking distance of the supermarket – no doubt based on Annamalai Swami's little ashram in Tiru. Perhaps I imagined a relaxed and scruffy sort of place, like one of those outback bungalows in Phoenix.

The famous Tea for the English visitors was at Robert's house... We gasped and entered his living-space, Vogue-interior designed, white-washed, teak timbered, booming with New Age quadraphonic sounds, plump blue furnishings on a cool expanse of powder-blue carpet. We saw pairs of gold swans, giant posters of Robert and Ramana, candles, vast plants and framed family snapshots on glass shelves: Nicole welcomed us: 'It looks much larger than it is'. The model English tea party laid out on the dining table, with the famous cucumber sandwiches, a mountainous strawberry cream cake, two big round hedgehogs of cheese and fruit bits on cocktail sticks, and an array of gold rimmed cups, saucers, knives and spoons, with a special little jar of marmalade placed right at the edge for our "English taste", would put Fortnams to shame. I thought Robert was an old hippy like me – he's lived in the jungle - and visualized comfy stuffed old chairs and dog hairs. It bemused me almost to tears, and a painful shyness. "You see, I didn't forget the marmalade!" cried Nicole joyously. "What do you think of the cucumber sandwiches?" said Adele, who always glows – "I put chilli in them!" I couldn't eat a thing, and was terrified of breaking something. With everyone swanning around and effortlessly at ease with the *jnani*, I sat paralysed on the carpet and let Robert's fluffy dog Dmitri wash my hands.

In shock, I managed to join a girly chit chat at the table, with their daughters. Nicole said she was born in Grand Cayman – I thought she said "I was born in the Grand Canyon" – and she got a work permit for two years to the States. The permit was inexplicably renewed – "*do you think a certain Indian gentleman with a white beard and a walking stick had anything to do with it?*" – and then she dreamed about Robert three times, and met him a day or two later. This was 42 years ago. "*It was enormous love, darling, not just romantic,*" she said, "*since then, I've been learning to become less selfish.*"

Don't try to prevent your thoughts. There'll always be thoughts, just watch and let them pass, and do not belong to them. Presently you'll discover none of them have anything to do with YOU. Let the beggars be. Robert, like the sea, is a private mirror to everyone. Mine – after he hugged us – is a childlike sharing of a happy secret. When he turns to Aj his manner re-shapes to something more solid and man to man; they could be talking football.

There are no EGGOS, not even a recalcitrant one. As the Self never moves, and as you have taken the Jnani into consciousness, and he has taken you into his, he never leaves you, wherever you are. Step behind your spine. Let the body walk and move and be touching ground in This.

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Sedona town was named in 1908 by a Dutch settler after his wife, the fair Sedona Schnebly. They built their house down by the Oak Creek. We went a little way up towards Schnebly Hill, but not as far as the wonderful Ravine. In an otherwise unremarkable spot, I met a young black New Yorker with cultured dreadlocks who desperately needed a pair of tweezers. A big chunky wood splinter had gone in by his thumb nail. Surprisingly, I had one in my bag, and I sat with him during the operation which, after about ten minutes or so of intense pain, patient curses and stoic bravery, was successful. It is nice when time and place are precise for a need to be met. Our Sedona adventure politely claimed its due.

Robert arrived at Satsang dressed in blue like the sea, with cassettes from his piles of sounds and love-songs to the Lord. I wept, like a well running over, because we were leaving tomorrow. Robert's speech was clearer today, and he played with us and made us repeat after him: *I am Brahman. I am That. I am awareness. You're not what you think you are. Feel free. Be quiet. All is well.* Rivers joined – the Los Angeles students with the Sedona people. A lady asked, "How to deal with fear?" "You don't," he said shortly. "You don't deal with fear." Much laughter from those at the end of the road, who are pushed by him in the chest, straight into silence ... the silence between the words, from which they arise, into which they vanish.

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“Supper” was at Enchantment, the rich little resort at the mouth of Boynton Canyon – a very swish bar with a panoramic view of the roseate cliffs, sheer and glowing, and twin pinnacles high above, which like *Ardhanarishvara* – the Lord whose half is Woman – focus the *shakti* energy. I longed to go for a walk. The loving-kindness of our new friends eased a place for us next to Robert. I couldn’t manage small talk, but fortunately Nicole was there, telling us how she spent all morning yesterday cleaning that fine blue carpet for the tea party, because Robert’s small dog Dmitri is very old, and chronically incontinent. As soon as Aj moved into *his* chair next to Robert, I found it easier to converse, my block diminished; we ate yet another fine feast with the gods, and discussed the difficulties of the British Royal Family, whom Nicole and Robert adore. Nicole is essence-exuberant: Robert said he married her “because she looked like Rita Hayworth”. Aj got to talk with her, and I love her. What a couple.

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The mountains as we said goodbye, were like wild flowers in sunset. It spilled the well again. All you can do with Advaita is eat it, taste and enjoy. Perhaps the British stiff upper lip makes it difficult to talk of Love, but the heart is being it, all the time.

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There is nothing I have to do right now; I am helpless.

*Wide, slow, in-singing song of the heart is planted here
of its own accord.*

There is nothing I have to do right now.

Right now I am everything I ever want to be.

Right now I am the Self, right now this moment.

Let it all go.

Let this fill my helplessness.

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“It’s like paper and the print on the paper. When you read a newspaper, you look at the print, you do not think of the paper the print is on. You were concentrating on the print only, the words. Yet, without the paper, there would not be any print, don’t you see?”

“So it is with the Self, with REALITY. REALITY is like the paper; the print is like the people, places and things on the paper. Only, you are the paper, and you identify with the paper, and you KNOW you’re the paper, and the print has nothing to do with you. It cannot influence you or do anything to you, for you know that without you, there’s no Universe. There’s no ink, there are no words, there is no alphabet, no alphabetical letters. You have become free.”

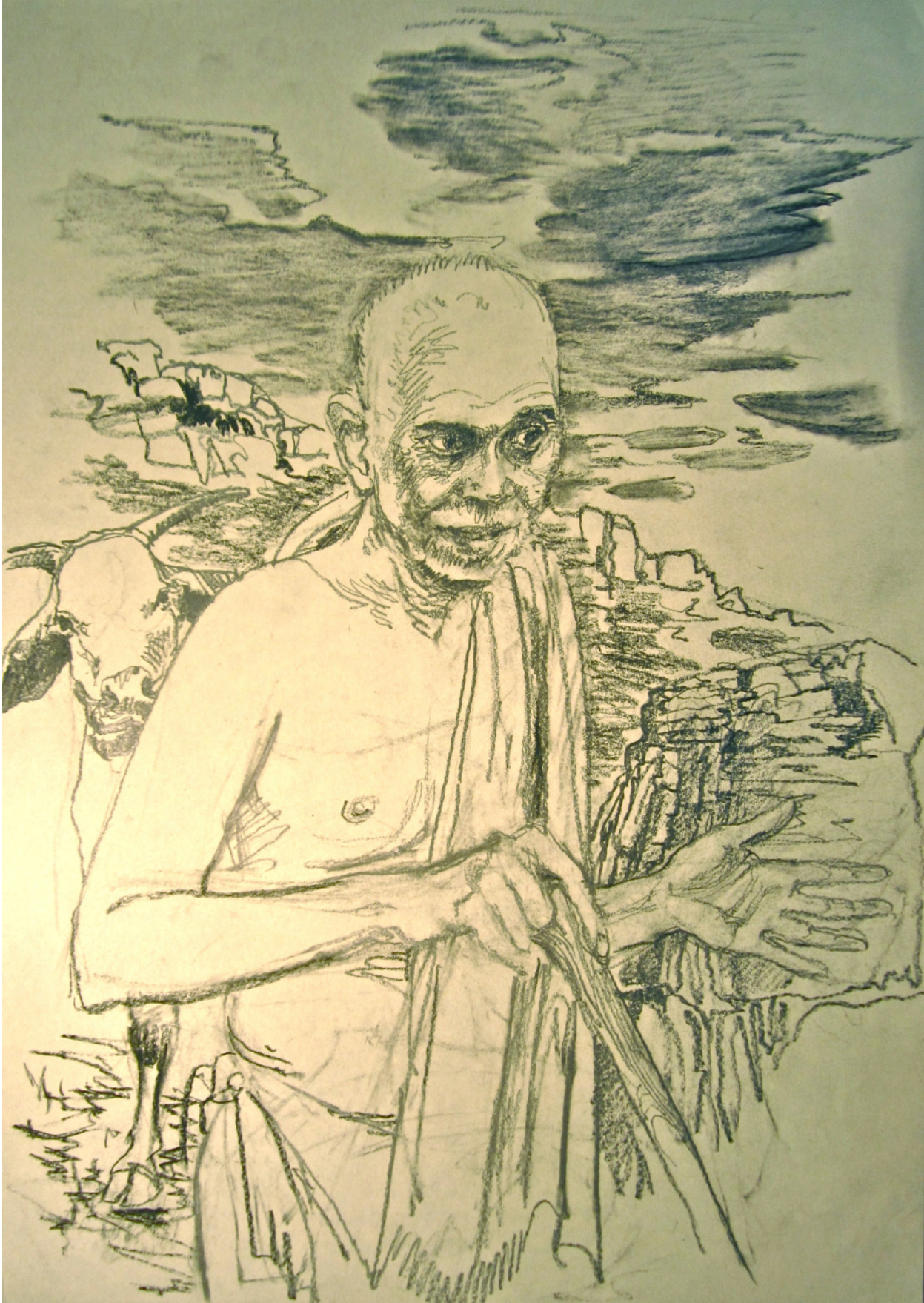
Robert Adams 1928-1997

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photo by Hale Dwoskin

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Ramana Maharshi with cow Lakshmi on Arunachala

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