

1956

In a bright morning on Eighth Street in Greenwich Village in the summer of 1956 I pushed through a heavy oak door and climbed up a creaking flight of polished oak stairs to an open second floor office. The office had natural light rare in the dawning of fluorescent office glare. A few impeccably groomed men in deep midnight blue suits suav **ing business on ebony dark telephones sat at long feces bro** wn tables that seem **ed to float a few tacky Mexican pottery, mirror, tile, and do** ll baubles amidst clea **nly spaced white paper rectangles of very precisely stacke** d invoices. Suddenly **a very upright gray-haired tweedy English looking man** got up and walked ov **er to me and with a sudden sunny smile said, "Mr. Daniel** s?" It was Fred Impo **rt. He asked me if I would like to go down to have a drink a** t the Cedar Bar. "Yes," **I said. We walked silently down to the bar. "How old ar** e you?" he asked, as w **e sat in a high wood booth at the morning quiet bar. "Twe** ewnty two." "Do you h **ave a job?" "I work for American Export Lines." "Why do** you want to do the G **rogrief work?" "I have got to be what I really am. No** t what I'm supposed t **o be. I want to know why Euripides says *That which ha*** pens every *day is The* **Good. It looks like pure crap to me. Why is everything** so phony? Why do p **eople always end up pretending they're what other people** want them to be? Is t **here really help to get away with being your Self? To b** e what you really are? **To do what you really believe in? Can you teach me how?" Fr** red Import smiled an **d under his smile seemed to be beaming in a deep place. H** e seemed to be doing s **omething very light intensive and breathless deep in hi** s mine. He seemed to **be of two different ways. In one way he seemed to be totally** unmoving, stopped, n **on-breathing, his entire mind looking through me as if I** were a glass cage maze **lost in its Self, in the other way he seemed to be just a fr** iendly busi ness man **who had been through the mill, like the ones I used to h** ear tell sex jokes all ni **ght in the club cars of the Pennsylvania Railroad to and fr** om Chicago. I was certa **in I did not know my Self. I intuitively hid my absolute** dis belief in God and m **y profound prejudice toward any and all belief, religiou** s or political, as mind sh **ackling. In my clumsy blind brightness I had asked exact** ly what was necessary t **o ask, and at 22, I was younger than most who asked thes** e things of the I Have **Something Special You Don't Have Esoteric Religiou** s High Hat Ladder To **God Authentic Consciousness Idiots in the secret Gro** griefWork. In a few d **ays I would see and hear and begin to realize exactly** what he was doing. As **his was the most intense presence I had encountered on o** r off a stage or screen u **ntil then, to my surprise and wonder Fred Import said with** h a very kind smile, "I a **m not a teacher. I know a teacher but she has been in** the hospital. She will be **able to see you in a week or two." He gave me a teleph** one number.

*A few years later at the very brightly lit se cret Christ mas party in the Hall of Mirrors at P.D. Ouspensky's mansion at Mendham, New Jersey, the driving wind snow was howling into the sixty-foot wall of French doors. My mind was as quiet as the universe. I was constantly sensing my entire being. I was beginning to breathe entire being. I was beginning to be my Self. I was in a state of constant presence to my Self. I was very proud of my Self. I had worked harder than I believed a person could work to be my Self. I was standing with my teacher Tempo Perdue, and my friends Sinfan Tasmaguri and Fred Export. Fred Export was saying he never hated or loved anyone as much as he hated and loved his teacher, Gaspair Grogrief, whom he referred to as The Old Man, and that The Old Man had sponged off him for six months in the thirties in New York during the Great Depression. The Old Man had lived in his apartment and had hardly spoken a word to him, but had eaten his food, had given him his cleaning and laundry to take out, had run up his phone bill, had taken him to Romany Marie's, where the minute a beautiful woman was singing hypnotically he would say, "She give everything away. She keep nothing for her Self. She svolitch<sup>1</sup> cubed. Get up. We go." And he had sent Fred Import out at many a 4 AM to Little Italy to procure roast split lamb heads and had Fred Import eat the opaque, scabuscous jelly eyes, and brain, and cheekbones, and tongue, and etc. When The Old Man moved out he said, "Too bad Fred. I here six months You learn nothing. With a pleasant smile Fred Export said that ever since then he had been as kind as was possible to completely idiotic helpless and hopeless young people asking him for help. "I'm glad you learned that," I said. "Daniels, you're a windbag. You're supposed to be a door, then a mirror, then a lamp, then a way. Not a vacuum cleaner. Stop trying to be good. You're as hopeless and helpless as Dr. Tasmaguri," Tempo Perdue said, after a short fast intense air snort like a sniffle, but without the tears, but very near tears glancing down at my friend, Sinfan Tasmaguri, a midget Japanese Psychiatrist standing with us in his little tuxedo and crying and shaking like a leaf. "When you are near tears you are near the truth." Fred Import sighed after a fast air snort as if breathing in without knowledge breathing out, that would enable and smiled as if we had hidden treasure received in a ruin.*

<sup>1</sup> A cross between a prostitute, a pig, and a used fish skin condom in early urban and rural 20th century lumpen Russian usage.

A  
few  
days or so  
after meeting  
with Fred Import in that  
fall of 1956, I walked through  
the crystal New York light on the East Side  
to a Field Marshall uniformed doorman and  
said: "Hubris Perdue." This was the last day I did not  
realize my mind created my brain and it was meant to be silent  
as breath or that I would ever again be totally ignorant of and separated  
from my real Self. There was the usual boring East Side intercom recognition  
clearance ceremony, the death quiet elevator ride to the eighth floor, and then, the down  
the cleaner than clean hall and into the patently obvious door number search. I rang Hubris Perdue's  
doorbell. As she had been in the hospital, I expected to be greeted by a dying old woman or her nurse.  
Instead, the door was opened by the divine Hubris with a mighty, "Hello, Daahling," of *The Theeaahtuh*.  
Looking straight in my eyes she exclaimed, "How utterly charming, Dear," and grabbed my hand with enormous  
crushing strength. "Your hand is too limp, Dear," Hubris said, "Put all your strength in your handshake or people  
will think you're a queer, Dear." She smiled, turned, and walked into her living room. She was wearing a real leopard  
skin bathrobe with the head and tail still on the skin; the leopard head, eyes, teeth, and all hung down like a hood behind her  
head and the long tail dragged along the floor behind her. "Sit down, Dear!" Hubris said. She was beyond 50 and wore heavy  
Spring In Park Lane, 1930's stage [*Late Morning, The Drawing Room*.] makeup <sup>as if to conceit</sup> a sort of ingénue light about her.  
Hubris Perdue broad gestured to a large sofa. I sat. Hubris Perdue thin gestured toward a jade cigarette box on a real sawed  
off elephant foot table. "Have a cigarette?" she asked. "Thanks. I have my own," I said. "Very good, Dear," Hubris smiled. "I  
haven't smoked in a year, Dear. Will-power, pneumonia, bronchitis, emphysema, all that sort of thing. But you go right ahead  
and smoke anyway." I did. I leaned back on the sofa with University of Chicago lounge lizard acumen and took a deep drag on  
a Lucky. "Stop slouching like a Lower East Side Dead End Kid, Dear." Hubris roared, giving me a 1930's Noel Coward sharp  
dog trainer hand signal: Up! "What are you? Anyway?" she asked. "A Jew," I said, as I sat my Self up straight. "How pleasant,  
Dear" Hubris Perdue said. "My mother was a Viennese Catholic." When I didn't say anything, Hubris Perdue's leopard  
skin swooshed past me and she sat down. It was one of the most memorable sights of my life. It was as if she were doing  
the Louis XIV<sup>th</sup> chair she sat on, and me, an enormous favor on the surface, but you could see somehow that the unbelievably  
subtle adjustments of the leopard robe, the "Dears" and all that, were an act; for as she sat, she changed completely into the  
presence and being of a Naqshband Sheik or a Sudden School Master or what some would call a saint on a golden throne  
or what you're hoping to find in the back of your mind or the real thing. Her entire being seemed to radiate the room. A  
look of profound seriousness flew over her face like a rose opening in a night garden to the ending couplet cry of a deep  
dark mysterious nightingale manifesting as if truth in the night before the morning the Arabs and Jews were kicked out of  
Spain. "Yes?" Hubris asked, her enormous eyes seeming to look through me. "Is what happens every day The Good?  
Can you show me how to be what I really am? Why is everything so phony? Why do people always end up pretending  
they're what other people want them to be? Is there a way to get away with being your Self, what you really are?  
To do what you believe in? Can you teach me how?" I asked. Hubris said, "You are the salt of the earth, Dear,  
but what good is salt that has lost its savor? What is your savor? You are the light of the world, Dear, but you  
are hiding your candle under a basket. What is your light? Where is it? You see you've lost contact with your  
Self. What you're looking for is inside you, Dear." Hubris Perdue: [sighs: *The Dying Swan*.] "The first  
thing you have to learn is how to remember to be in contact with your Self, but in order to  
do that you need a great deal of attention. Here is an exercise you may do every morning  
when you first wake up. Between sleeping and waking something precious inside  
a person is open. Do it while I am describing it to you now and you will  
understand better." Hubris Perdue looked down at the floor,  
seemingly in at her own life, and seemed to be in  
sensate prayer for the entirety of Life itself.  
Hubris Perdue: [sighs: *The Dead Swan Ascends Unto Heaven*.]  
"Close your eyes as you  
will be able to concentrate  
better. Later, you will be  
able to open your eyes and  
see. This is the way in. The  
way to the heart of the mind,  
Dear. First things first, one step  
at a time, and first is always  
sitting. When I sit I hold my  
Self up. I then sense my  
body. I allow it to rise.  
I quiet my body. If I  
sense unneccessary  
tension anywhere, I  
place my attention  
on the place of that  
tension and allow it  
to melt and all this  
time I yearn to rise,  
to be up. To live. It's  
like placing a yeast  
in the dough of body.  
When your body is  
quiet place your attention  
on your mind. If you perceive  
any words, pictures, thoughts,  
visions, colors, daydreams of your  
mind, try to place your attention on  
them in your mind until they disappear.  
After all, this is the Song of Nothing, Dear."  
Hubris Perdue: [sighs: *The Swan Inhales A Spark Of Joy*.] "When my mind and body  
are quiet, I place my attention on my right  
foot. I actively attempt to perceive as  
deep and fine sensations as I can of  
my foot. Pulse. Skin. Bone. Nerve.  
Whatever sensations I can sense.  
Then I move my attention  
slowly up my right leg,  
sensing each sensation  
as I go. Skin. Toes. Calf.  
Knee. wrist. Thigh. Thumb. It's  
like taking a trip around your Self, Dear.  
When I reach the top of my right leg, I place  
my attention on sensations of my right hand, and  
actively try to perceive as deep and fine sensations as  
I can as I carefully and slowly sense each sensation of  
my hand and then with equal care and consideration sense  
each sensation up my right arm to the top." [Hubris Perdue  
[sighs: *The Swan Breathes The Marrow Of The Sun*.] "Then I  
place my attention on each sensation I sense on the top of my left arm and with equal  
care and attention slowly sense each sensation that is available to my perception on, within  
and down each sensation of my left arm to each sensation of my left hand. "Then I sense down  
each sensation of my left leg, again slowly and carefully into each sensation of my left foot. It's  
like taking a trip around your Self, Dear, a long and quiet and subtle trip, Dear." Hubris Perdue  
[sighs: *The Swan Is Sun*.] "Always try hard to perceive the deepest and finest sensations you  
can. We must become more sensitive, Dear. This is the next step for Humanity, Dear."

