

STIR IN MY HEART, YOU ANCIENT RHYTHMS--- *A PHILOSOPHICAL FANTASY in the now, beyond space and time, and with a classical twist*

Introduction to THE ORACLE PROJECT.

There were many Oracles at Delphi in Greece over the centuries.

As there had been many Pythian priestesses before them.

Should you visit Delphi today, you can stand on the ground where ancient seeresses dispensed prophetic counsel to crafty kings and seekers of wisdom. It is the same ground where young women once served Pythias, the Python goddess, who was later supplanted by Apollo when the Olympian gods eclipsed Greece's earlier, largely female deities.

The Delphica of this project worked about 500 B.C. A Pythian priestess, as the Oracles were called, she served as "mouthpiece of the god Apollo." At least she was so advertised. Our Oracle laughs at this description, but she does not dispute that rich and poor journeyed to consult her. Nor that the grand, pretentious folk emerged, bewildered, with a self-confounding Delphic riddle. It is she to whom Socrates refers in THE APOLOGY penned by Plato.

How Felicity, an excruciatingly shy and earnest postgraduate philosophy student, came to consult the long-retired Oracle of Delphi is quite a tale. Stir

In My Heart, You Ancient Rhythms recounts that epic journey in journal form.

The book envisioned will look like a journal...

The initial pages will be written in a neat hand with much hesitation, letters carefully formed and laden with self-doubt. As the Seeker's "journey" unfolds, so does the book, literally, with cut-outs, fold-outs, ribbons of prose, cauldrons of treasure. As Felicity becomes ever more expressive, sweeter, fuller, and, occasionally, flamboyant, so does the text. The reader stumbles across splotches of paint and plaster, fabric swatches, drafts of coursework, memos to self, poetry and occasional blank stretches: invitations to contemplate.

Felicity's journal---which becomes the book Stir...---was not intended for public perusal. Her conversations with Delphica [the retired Oracle] are recorded faithfully, as are the contributions of the Nine Muses, the oh-so-fashionable and wise Margarita the Bat, and other humans, deities, and semi-divines.

Not surprisingly, the work resembles a classical epic. It begins with an invocation to the Muse; launches *in media res* [in the middle of things]; and makes the outer journey self-transformative. Like THE ODYSSEY, THE

AENEID, THE DIVINE COMEDY, PARADISE LOST, AND ULYSSES, Stir  
In My Heart, You Ancient Rhythms is poetic. Rooted in its time, it seeks ancient wisdom within, jolted by improbable benefactors, harrowing circumstances, and detours from career path of one's youth. This is the epic way.

Where are we in THE ORACLE PROJECT?

- Many of the poems and entries have been written.
- The journal has yet to be designed and mocked up.
- A few parts of the journey remain in draft or in outline.

We're moving!

Epics are oral tales. With the aim of speaking her work and enticing an agent or publisher to notice Stir..., the author has recorded an audio CD. It jumps around the anticipated text, showcasing elements of the journal-to-be as well as poetry which remains freestanding until Stir... births.

The CD is narrated by a fictitious rather prickly editor, a highly acclaimed author and acerbic academic, who resentfully prepares this unknown girl's untidy notebook for mass consumption. The "editor" is not a character in the manuscript. She came to life in the week prior to recording to provide "glue" and "grist" for the audio narrative. What a task that formidable figure undertook and how well she did it! That our crusty classics scholar will figure in Stir... is highly uncertain. But do enjoy her in these audio snippets!

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Track 25: *Share*, in her journal, Felicity relates the conversation in which the Oracle urges her to publish her journal---which becomes the book that the fictitious editor is now editing...5:39

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## *Stir in My Heart, You Ancient Rhythms...*

### Track 1: Introduction to the CD: Fictitious Editor's Foreword

The editor speaks...

If this were a novel, the skeleton I am about to relate would be a plot. But this is not a novel. It is an odyssey, recorded by a wanderer for herself, while I, a reluctant midwife at best, struggle to introduce another's tale to you, unseen auditors.

I'll begin with what I know: I am a brilliant writer. I have a reputation I have crafted and a name upon which I bank. For several months I have had before me an untidy, uncanny volume, in parts disciplined, in parts unkempt, seeming fiction, or schizophrenia, teeming with artless sketches, diaristic trivia and inspired discourse. It is the product of a young woman whom the publisher calls Felicity; she exists; I have met her.

A graduate student in Philosophy in the U.S., of all places, Felicity (or the seeker, as I call her) one summer's day decided that she would interrupt a boring life with a journey. Having selected Greece as her destination, and having squandered her fortnight in solitary pilgrimage to philosophic ruins, the boring girl spends the evening before her departure in a taverna in a small town. As she notes in a neat hand in the journal's opening pages, Felicity found herself in the middle of a lively crowd of intimates, very alone; as always: a solitary observer, reverential but insular. A glass of wine appears at her elbow, compliments, according to the waiter's pantomime, of a gleaming, rather glamorous woman, at whom Felicity had silently stared earlier and who is now surrounded by well wishers, several tables over. Urged and clearly expected to take wine in hand and join her benefactress, the painfully shy child, very timidly, and out of sheer politeness, complies. Felicity stammers out a greeting. They converse. Felicity is charmed. The well wishers reappear, wine is

consumed, children are dandled on the American knee, food oohs and ahs its way toward fueling dance, and the Greek sojourn is suddenly peopled. The laughing woman expresses delight at meeting a philosopher; it's been a while, she observes; she hands Felicity a card; contact me if you need me she says; the pleasures of meeting and kisses are exchanged with a copious crowd. And the next morning, an attentive bevy of Spiroes whisks her luggage into a gleaming cab while a riot of grandmothers force upon Felicity fragrant food sufficient for the Battle of Salamis, and villagers present her with miniAcropoli and handwrought doilies, all to share with her family whom her new friends regret not to be gifting in person.

Returning to her native soil and arid tillage thereof, Felicity remains boring. And lonely. On a winter's night in early Autumn, she rustles through her pack of Greek mementoes, and out falls the card of the fascinating woman. No name is inscribed, no contact information emblazons the fine bond...just a large question mark greets the puzzled girl. Felicity props the card beside her bed, starts a journal by recounting the companionable evening, and reflects upon the life she hasn't. Dispirited, the girl grabs the card, as if to inhale the good cheer of those bright moments; her thumb presses on the dot below the crook of the interrogatory; and the seeker finds herself in a cave marvelous to describe before the gleaming woman who introduces herself as the retired Oracle of Delphi who declares herself anxious to converse with a philosopher. They do. It is marvelous. And Felicity awakens in postgraduate dullsville the morning after.

Their encounters continue, by the same protocol, although some times they meet in a different era or in a different culture. Felicity does her best to record the outings and begins to live her life differently. She and the Oracle become friends and such fascinating characters as Margarita the Bat and Apollo the Messenger/ publisher enrich the astonished seeker.

As I warned you at the outset, dear auditor, if this were a novel, I would have given you the plot. But it isn't a novel.

It's an epic buffo, a fool's journey. And it begins in media res: in the middle of things. It ends at home, all transfigured. The muses

are invoked. In blessed openness, the reader is plunged into the midst, into a complex tale well and obliquely underway.

Do you remember The Odyssey? Do you recall its first golden words? One arrives in the middle of an Olympian debate where flawed and fractious deities broker human lives. As The Odyssey commences, the past hangs heavy, mysterious. The present is obscure; the future implicate. The reader reels. There are no pristine beginnings here. The hearer must give way to the tale: to its shape and let the journey unfold as it will, from the middle, in the midst.

I am in the midst of editing Felicity's document, for want of a better word, and those who dare to join us had best prepare to walk an epic way, humbly, with humor, in media res.

We begin not on Olympus but with a dance troupe. The invocation to the Muse, well it takes a while for Felicity to get there...after all, she's learning...

#### VOLUMINOUS DANCERS

The editor introduces an excerpt from the journal of a young American postgraduate student by the name of Felicity. The child, as the Oracle calls Felicity, has been thinking about packages...the packages people come in. She reads about a Cuban dance troupe. All of the dancers are very large, fat by the traditions of contemporary dance. They call themselves Voluminous Dancers, and critics say that their performances, which do not feature leaps and twirls on point, recall the dignified dance of ancient Greece. In her diary, Felicity pens a tribute to the...

**Voluminous dancers,  
moving a new way.**

**Slithering elegance,**

**A big presence on stage.**

pinpoint precision,  
a tableau of sculptural mass  
moving lightly with a grace  
leaping can't encompass.

Fat  
we are,  
they say.

Obese.

Obese dancers.  
People start by laughing, they ridicule.  
Fat we are  
they say  
Obese  
they shout with derisive stares, revolted nudges  
and hacksaw  
titters.

Undeterred,  
we embody beauty as best we know,  
monumental teachers to those who fear bulk,  
generous sensuality, and space amply  
grounded by being.

As we persist,  
our mockers pause  
in time and  
grudgingly, concede an appraising glance,  
then release a startled glimmer:  
enchantment's seed. We see it drop and slowly blossom  
as another mass of would-be foes  
breathes in  
our unexpected artistry,

our lithe interpretation  
of the dance of being human  
unabashed and far-reaching.

Critics say---  
*(and who is not a critic  
who will not move through space and time  
with all the mass that grace can muster?)*

critics say we have rebirthed dance,  
re-sourced ancient art by the miracle  
of being who we are  
in love  
with movement.

Viewers warm.

Reviewers marvel  
as on we spin,  
each a center of gravity  
solid  
synchronized  
splendid.

Birthed from the very desire

to be  
beauty,  
the voluminous re-invent archaic movement  
so impelled are they  
by their outsized need  
to be  
themselves;

to be

the outrageous bulky beauty,  
behemoth style, grace and point of splendor

they know full well

they have the right  
to be.

Bless

you,

elephantine elegance, how great  
is your courage  
to display your all,

scorn will spill  
knowing full well  
upon your earnest,  
knowing  
beauty.

Bless you,

**courage makers  
who dare to show us  
how very small  
how very dwarfed  
and stunted  
are the dances  
we dare to conceive.**

**Slithering along,  
faintly alive,  
we thinly**

**sneer**

**at the large doers  
we could be**

**were not our brains callipered to inches,  
our hearts pinched to the strained capillaries  
of those afraid  
to be**

**outsized**

**who smugly call small the norm and damn**

**the generous**

**gesture,**

**the full tilt,  
the mammoth beauty**

**of life,**

**sweat-stained and heaving**

**in all its glory.**

**From the editor...** *These words the Oracle speaks to Felicity early in their relationship. As she moves through her own, gradually expanding world, Felicity finds the words cropping up in odd places at odd times. They illumine her path as the fearful seeker strives courageously to be. Joyfully.*

## **BE LARGE OF HEART**

**Be.**

**Be large.**

**Be large of heart.**

**Be large of heart  
and life opens for you.**

**Be a gypsy of deep goodness  
and flowers open on your path**

**and generous benefactors  
take you in**



**Be.  
Be large.  
Be large of heart.**

**Be large of heart and life opens  
for you**

**The editor plucks another excerpt from a different part of the journal and introduces it thusly...** *Felicity would tell you, as she has told others and herself for years, that she is not creative. She would have you understand that she gladly leaves to others the expression of noble ideas and stirring heart songs. Imagine her surprise, her keen discomfort, and tentative release when her former staid diary issues forth new life, such as...*

**I WRITE**

**I write.**

**I write  
because  
I need  
the inspiration.**

**I write  
because**

I need  
the inspiration,  
you understand...

the rhythm  
the reason

to listen,

to make sense  
of my breathing

because  
it fosters  
touch unknown  
and  
drips  
rasping beauty  
across a page  
that might have been  
an enemy

had I not known  
it would create me

**at peace**

**just  
for now.**

**The editor is summarising for us a great deal of what she has learned about Felicity by working through the girl's very long and rather tattered journal. We don't yet know why she has selected certain sections for the audio CD, nor do we know what shape the final document will take.** *Felicity is a good girl, a thoroughly nice lady. Her penmanship has always been exemplary. Her manners are impeccable, although rarely glimpsed. For only rarely can Felicity summon the courage to express herself in public. The young seeker feels obligations keenly. She feels obliged to the Oracle to live the sage's lessons fully...a fool's burden, given the liberating intent of her luminous benefactor. But a self-burdened fool carries a double pack, and the seeker does not yet know how to walk lightly. She feels obligated to her professors to become the kind of academic they admire, when that life clearly ill suits her, and when so very few jobs await any of the eager thinkers who flutter from the postgraduate nest. Imagine her surprise when, cross for once, Felicity scrawls across several pages, lines going every which way, this manifesto...*

**I'VE STOPPED**

**I've stopped.**

**I've stopped**

asking people what they do.

Let them be,  
I say.

Let them be.

I've stopped asking what people do.

Let them be, I say.  
Let them  
be.

I've stopped  
responding  
when people say:

What does he do? What does she do?

Let them be,  
I say.

Let them be.

I am  
what I do,  
of course...

but all the time.  
Twenty-four hours.  
Around the clock.  
Breathing  
makes me  
who I am

just now

every just now

fading  
and pulsing

into the next me

I wear  
with such self-regard,

I've stopped

being  
someone you'd notice.

**From the editor...** And here, dear listener, if you could but glimpse into the life this young woman is writing, you would stop in the middle of a very scrawly-page for there is a large stop sign, hand drawn and colored in no neat hand with a scarlet crayon---bold strokes flailing across the page. One wonders where such a serious scholar found to hand a red crayon, for lo and behold, the last two lines of her disquisition are scribbled---no other word for it, ladies and gentlemen---scribbled. Crawling like giant red lobsters over two open pages are the words...



It's beauty that  
fills  
the deep  
sad  
sweet source  
of flow  
with more,  
more of itself,  
with flow  
well  
and truly  
spoken for.

It's beauty,

I believe.

It's beauty that prompt us;  
beauty that clues us in.  
"Not a second to waste,"  
Beauty whispers.

"This is the dance of life.

Fill

your card, not a second to waste.

Boogie,  
lambada or  
twirl on point.

**It's time; it's beauty  
here  
now."**

**Time  
to  
close that magazine,  
turn down the volume  
on alluring shadows and pre-packaged dreams.  
"I love you,"  
Beauty whispers.**

**It's beauty.  
It's beauty,  
I believe.  
It's beauty before us all the time.**

**The editor explains that Felicity's conversations with the Oracle and her friends "catalyze" the young woman's thought world, as evidenced in her journal. They soon seep into the confines of academe and erupt in the most likely places...** *Imagine her surprise when Felicity, seated in a postgraduate seminar, cannot focus her attention on her revered professor nor on Immanuel Kant and that most elusive empire---apodictic certainty. Why even the much-disputed twelve categories of judgment scatter as her synapses dart to recapture them. Breath racing, the little seeker sees the walls of her drab flat and yearns to paint them, now at this moment, in bright primary colors. Right in the middle of a graduate seminar...what is happening to her? Quickly she jots this note into her unblemished copy of Kant's PROLEGOMENA TO ANY FUTURE METAPHYSIC. What IS happening to her?*

# COLOR

I've been waiting.

I've been waiting  
for some color  
to put my words on;

to hang a life  
charged with hue of indescribable  
dignity

and  
savor.

"Take my life,  
oh blue," I say.

"Take my depth, oh green and aubergine..."

and red, you hotcha gotcha crimson ditty:

sing me

clear

through;

rock my soul,

you virgin page

and spill me full of life.

## THE FATES' LOVE SONG

**The editor finds another selection of the journal, about one-third of the way through, to discuss.** Once again Felicity the faithful is preparing a paper for her Philosophy of Biology seminar on the assigned topic of DNA, Causation, and Scientific Explanation. She is, again, off task. And, again, nearly desperate with lack of proper concentration. After all, DNA is fascinating. Some of the authors she had plucked from the vast storehouse of molecular conjecture assert that all our traits, defects, promise, even life span are encoded in little threads, acids strings, within our every cell. Some surmise that these coiled cords spin us unique and determined. Just the previous evening Felicity had been riveted by debates on gene expression: it was both affirmed and denied that our emotions, desires, and imagination signal self-chemistry which turns on genes and turns them off. Self-causation,

she wondered? Post-partum creation? Internal alchemy? But now, on a bright morning, with a deadline demanding its due, the little seeker turned off her duty genes and contemplated the Three Fates of ancient Greek mythology. Daughters of Zeus and Themis, ("order," or "law"), the sisters formed the cord of each soul about to be born (or, as Plato would have it, reborn) on earth. Clotho, the spinner, wove the thread of life; then Lachesis, time dispenser, measured it, allotting life span. Atropos, the inexorable, cut the cord at the moment of death. What did the Ancients know, she wondered, that we "moderns" have barely begun to explore, and does our self-adulation impede us? Oh my, that thought could never find a home in a seminar paper, and that my dear, she cautioned herself, is reality: due almost now. Felicity heard it again. Again and again: a strange, sweet singing in her mind. Heard it again and again, until journals falling to the paint-stained floor, she recorded this, the Fates' Love Song...

**Oh  
do we  
envy  
you  
your  
human life.**

**And  
oh  
do we  
send you off  
with searing love  
and  
protean benediction.**

Let us bless you,  
human child.

As  
we plant  
within your  
core  
mystery of sweet innocence,  
your best being  
ever  
self-revealing,  
a seed  
uncoiling.

A  
thread,  
spiraling  
you  
into  
being.

So that  
wherever you go,  
whenever you pause,  
the voice of your genius,  
the touch of your passion,  
the breath of your kindness  
intones

deep  
deep  
memory

the shade  
of your you-ness,  
the pith  
of your potency,  
the spark  
of your making

which  
through and through  
is

you

being.

Is  
you  
becoming.

The being  
you are choosing.

Is  
you  
becoming  
the  
you  
you are choosing.

The

who you  
are being  
as you choose  
the being  
you become,

as you  
dare  
to be  
human.

Oh,  
child,  
dare  
to be  
human.

Curse not  
fate.  
Nor laud it.  
Implore no Agent of Fortune  
nor  
wither  
your vibrant cells  
with fears  
of flaws  
your forebears  
have  
(you fear) bequeathed  
you.

You.  
You make  
the you  
you  
are.

The only one  
worth  
knowing.

Bond  
with joy  
and  
goodness.  
So  
they  
become you.

And  
thus  
you manufacture  
more truthful  
beauty  
than any code  
can conjure,  
any fate

**constrain.**

**You,  
you  
are the creative core  
within which breathes  
Memory,**

**the mother  
of all muses.**

**Yes,  
Mnemosyne,  
who births  
inspired  
being,  
hums within you.**

**So  
kith and kin,  
we  
salute  
you.**

**We  
intone  
you.**

We  
intune you.

From fate's  
brief blessing,  
we release you.

With love  
we  
croon:  
at every swerve  
of destiny's dream,  
invoke  
your spiral dancer,  
you who weave potency,  
sweet source  
of being,  
enrich us.

You have been spun  
and seeded.  
And soon you will leave  
your watery cradle.

**Then  
oh human child,  
take a deep breath,  
sing out your beauty,**

**and**

**be  
it.**

**The editor tells us a little about what she is doing and why.**

*As anyone who knows my name knows, I do not edit works for publication. I write. This assignment, foisted upon me by a very charming, very persuasive man, as obdurate as he is powerful, is one I resisted. Now, dug in, I will not release the finished text until it is*

that: done by my standards. The original journal, which I have in my possession, is the private document of a girl created with no intent and no desire to share. It is, thus, not orderly by narrative standards. But, as a few poems are being released here and there, doubtless by the ingenious publicist of the press for which I labor, curiosity fomented about the history of this young woman and the contents of her putative encounters with the retired Oracle of Delphi. Quite naturally, the publisher wishes both to pique and assuage the curiosity of an expected large readership. Accordingly, but not in the best of cheer, I interrupt manuscript preparation to prepare for audio recording some morsels from the Delphic symposium. On the larger task I will not be hurried...so I cast before you...the opening words of the journal and the closing. A few dialogues with the Oracle. Smatterings of Delphic utterance. Observations by Felicity. All are plucked from various parts of the journal and pretend to no sequence. You'll have to wait for the rest, I am in the midst...and I won't be interrupted again...

## MUSINGS

It was Margarita the Bat who encouraged Felicity to contact the Muses.

At that point, the little seeker was so intimidated by the beautiful being that she truly feared Margarita was subtly mocking her when MB assured Felicity that the Muses were but waiting for a respectful

invocation. "It's tradition..." the Bat had murmured. "Good old ways." The aspiring philosopher had no doubt that Margarita was precisely as she had said: couturier to the Muses and subconscious adviser to upstart designers pangalactically. But how would David Hume respond---he who would consign to flames all abstruse speculation and disembodied metaphysic---were Felicity to tell him that "Oh yes, she believed all that about Margarita the Bat...but that she, well she dared not believe that a muse would give this plain child even a scrap of recycled inspiration?" It was a very cold day. Just cold everywhere...even in the spirited, elegant prose of Hume's Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding. No jewels, no luster in Felicity's life, and even a fear, so real to her that she dare not hug it, that she quailed to approach the Oracle again, so drab was Felicity in her daily living, despite the infusions of Oracular enthusiasm; so persistently unconnected to beauty and joy despite the cherished Delphic uplifts. "Unworthy, unworthy, she muttered. "Don't they know it?" And then with a truly uncharacteristic jerk and an ejaculation that would have astonished even Hume the skeptic, Felicity did just as Margarita had counseled: she grabbed a mauve magic marker (heretofore consecrated solely to devoted worship: underlining the great words and peerless thoughts of others) and on her dining room wall, Felicity did it...she invoked a muse.

i.

**how to begin?**

ii.

**How to begin?**

**The fool's journey**

**Recounting it**

with home uncertain  
still  
and self  
to be made  
still  
a character worth  
recounting?

Able to endure  
some stillness  
now.

But  
how to begin  
to relay  
the greater deeds of wanderers  
bespattered  
fallen  
weathered beyond pretense  
in  
media  
res?

How to begin?

I seize the old formula.

I turn to the muse, mendicant.

**Oh muse,  
I say,**

**Do your stuff.**

It will not surprise you, dear listener, that Felicity could journey no farther into the land of worth and inspiration. It was, I'm sure you will agree, a bold beginning for a browbeaten child, and the Muses were oh so glad that Felicity had dared to open a pathway to their ready love and chatter. Nor will it surprise you, dear listener, that the seeker had spent her scant stores of faith and self-expression in this, indeed inspired beginning...which the young woman left on the dining room wall, and which glowed for her through many a cold day as violet testament to that which might be: goodness here now.

**iii.**

**Begin, again**

Felicity tapped into her laptop...she had painted a few gold stars on its serene gray face and hot glued lace in citrus hues around its middle, rather hoping to alert the Muses to her affiliation with Margarita whose attention no light being would refuse. Still, it was a disheartened Felicity who began again...and in truth, she felt badly for the little laptop which now, for the first time in its life of service, was distinguishable--- and thus, open to mockery.

**I begin again.**

**Beginning....**

**How to invoke a muse?**

Are they around any more?

Muses?

Can we moderns log on?

And oh yes,

not incidentally,

will they sing  
for me?

Will they unleash  
through me  
a song for the people?

Will they croon  
to me

that tale of failure and deliverance,  
of nobility, depravity,  
of inner eye  
and healing love  
which we  
so  
deeply  
crave?

Where to begin?

iv.

Where to begin?

In self-doubt.

v.

Where to begin?

In self-doubt,  
where I am.

This is no epic age,  
I fear.

We are not grand enough  
for epics.

Nor foolish enough,  
I fear.

I fear  
we fear

the stir and sweep of epic tales  
as they rise from the inner self  
and spill onto page,  
into life  
in uncontrolled fervor

and pitch.

I fear we fear  
and decline  
the epic lure to hardship,  
greatness  
and self-knowledge...  
A failure of will?  
Or faith?  
Or hope?  
A surfeit of comfort?  
Veneer of competence?  
Portable, packaged bread and circus  
available on line, on credit,  
at the flick of a whim?

An  
arduous journey?  
A perilous, marvelous  
three volume tale?  
How to begin?

We have begun...  
We are born,  
We are here  
in the midst

And I

right now  
feel  
very lost.  
A pilgrim to be sure  
seeking  
Something  
deep in my cells  
which I cannot yet affirm  
so  
home does it feel  
and so  
lost.

vi.

It is clear.

I am no epic poet.

No seer.  
Shaper.  
Sage.

Why do I fear

Epic  
Exploits?

Exodus,  
Odyssey,  
Return,  
Living.  
The journey.

Burnished insights.  
Revels,  
Revelations,  
Lost,  
Lost on the way,  
Living?

Why do I flee  
decision, betrayal, conflict, tears, love...  
the stuff of greatness,  
the fools' noble way?  
I cannot say.

And more,  
I cannot say that  
the muses  
are larger  
than life.

For where  
I am  
now,  
in the midst,

I see nothing  
larger than  
life,  
nothing greater than,  
deeper  
more exacting,  
grandiose,  
turgid, or divine  
than that?

Nothing more worthy of breath.

Oh, you Muses,  
dancing in the grove,  
gossamer-scented,  
enrobed with  
rapturous delight,  
each twist,  
each twirl of you  
tweaks a cell  
within me,  
a mother memory,  
Mnemosyne,  
she loves us deeply,  
and twist, turn, snip and sparkle,  
I birth the new  
I need  
just around the corner...

Oh muses,  
you....

you know me: I do not aspire to epic grandeur.

So  
why  
invoke  
a muse  
or two?

Why disturb  
you spirits of the  
pathways?

For old times' sake?

To amuse  
you sonorous souls?

Oh  
this  
I  
know  
from the depths,  
from my depth:

I need you.

**This I know: we need you.**

**vii.**

**We need  
your songs.**

**viii.**

**We need  
your songs  
to flow though us:  
the inspiration  
which directs.**

**Which weaves  
a truly human  
tale  
from within.**

**We need  
the inspiration.**

**Frankly that.  
Exactly that.**

I'll speak for myself.

I need  
the inspiration.

I am in the midst.  
And I need  
a song for myself.

And I need a larger one,  
one to pass on.

I beg  
some healing verse  
to ease,  
direct,  
and mark  
our common passage.

viii.

to begin...  
to be touched...

yes, that's it...

I wish  
to be  
touched  
lovingly  
with wisdom.

Touched by  
“the better angels of our nature,”  
by the needs of others,  
by that which lives beneath the surface  
in all of us  
and moves  
us  
on.

And  
although  
weak,  
flawed and foolish,  
although no hero,  
bard,  
or pundit,  
I beg  
the voices from beyond  
so deep within  
to caress us  
once again  
to pour upon us  
that balm  
which lightens  
heals  
and graces  
our way.

I am not  
proud.  
I have no cause to be.

So I can plead  
the grander cause...

I beg.

I beg the Muses...

Oh Muses,  
I have not the wits  
to shape  
these shards  
of love and desperation  
into a public tale  
myself.

I implore you.

I invoke you  
oh most humbly  
oh most lofty  
Muses,

for I am  
in the midst

where epics begin.  
And fool that I am,  
I want  
a song  
better  
than I could myself  
devise...

that song  
built  
for noble ends,

for inspiration  
for counsel  
humor and insight...

hum it for us,  
Muses.

Send us a tuneful start.

Then weave in

those strains  
of grandeur  
and compassion  
that draw us in,  
that draw us out,  
that draw us together...

We're waiting...

and while we do,  
we'd best

begin...

## CELLULAR OPULENCE

The editor here refers to a central character in *Stis...*, Margarita the Bat, about whom we have heard very little in the material thus far selected. An amazing creature, and very influential on the Seeker, Margarita has been the Oracle's best friend since 500 B.C. or so---but after all, **who's counting?** If you were to interview Margarita the Bat, which I assure you will never, never happen (she was badly disappointed by a journalist in 432 B.C. and the scribe tribe has yet to redeem itself in her eyes); if you were to interview Margarita, she would tell you that she is no philosopher; no poet. But if you were to inquire of the Muses who inspires them to swirl in color, overflowing creation, they would chime as one: "Margarita!" And if you were to ask the odd philosopher who had persuaded him or her out of the stacks and into life, the truthful trolls would blush and stammer: "Margarita!"

Still, even ever-regenerative bats expand their horizons. So moved was Margarita by the little seeker's heart cry to the muses, that she sent this reply. ("Suspiciously poetic," murmured Delphica, with a lightning wink and grin) CELLULAR OPULENCE, a crystal cylinder, wrapped in wine velvet, which sings when it feels like it, appeared on Felicity's door step one crusty day borne by a handsome youth in a toga with laurel in his hair. "College kids..." the neighbors muttered. Felicity transcribed the golden flow into her book as follows:

**We move.**

**We always move.**

**Underneath it all,  
we are  
what we are not  
and not  
what we think  
we are  
so continuously  
it is best  
after all  
to be.**

**To be grateful**

for life  
in and around  
our inseparable spirits  
dancing  
joining spirit hands  
jumping into unknowing mischief,  
inevitable sorrow  
and soul-piercing delight.

Move on!  
Make yourself anew.  
Regeneration...  
The way of all flesh.

Stretch!  
Surge!  
Sing!  
Grow!  
Young person.

You are the muse  
for whom  
I wait.

You bear the songs,  
the script,  
the seeds,  
we need.

You.

You and I  
as well.

We are the muses.  
Wait for no one else.  
No sad and silent chorister  
will leave the gifts  
you bear,  
the sweet and mournful,  
silly and profound songs  
of deepest love  
and life,  
living beauty  
for whose birth  
the very silence  
in due reverence  
genuflects  
and nudges...

Sing,  
young person.  
Weave your loving song  
in the flawed and desperate  
grand and flairful way  
that you  
only you  
can.

Let life be  
as full  
and rich  
as grand design  
intended:

Open your heart.  
Take a deep breath.  
And sing.

**Track 9: IN MEDIA RES...in the voice of Felicity**

*The following excerpts are from Felicity's journal about herself...a subject she has long shunned.*

I begin,  
as I have always done,  
in the middle of things.

It's the epic way.

I was, when I first met the  
Oracle,



Pong

“Her face is rather fine.” Ping

“If only she didn’t pinch her face.”

Pong “Perhaps she needs glasses.”

Ping

She was I.

Thus the women of my family  
dissected my appearance. As if I were  
not there. As if I could not hear.

There was much fault to find as they  
prospected, with caustic precision, for  
potential.

Empresses manqueé, they pronounced.

Unsuitable.

So much was Unsuitable.

Sigh.

Unsuitable sigh.

Disappointing. Held for five counts.

Ping.

Pong.

Ping

Like a Tsarevitch dumped  
unceremoniously in Davenport, my  
mother presided. She spoke with  
clarity. She surveyed. Assessed.  
Pronounced.

I read.

My mother lied. Regally. She  
announced. She declaimed. She  
detracted. Royally. Her sisters  
visited. They all pronounced. Ping.

Pong.

I read.

Ping.

Pong.

Does that child have a mouth? Can she not learn how to participate in civil discourse?

Ping.

Pong.

What is she thinking? You can never tell.

They all lied. Regally.

I hid. I read.

I became a philosopher addicted to simple truth. Quietly addicted. Quietly everything.

I chose not to embroil myself in my mother's creative fiction...her account of life as it might have been, should have been, would have been, had not... My father featured prominently in had not. He had a starring role in the screenplay "Unsuitable," a work-in-progress by the dowager Duchesses of Downey, honed, one would think, to perfection, but rehearsed relentlessly in the theatre that passed for life. He came with a bit of money. That was the best that could be said of my father.

I surmise it was a good thing. For when death freed him, the bit of money proved helpful. So they said. Helpful. A very good thing. I loved my father. He was not, to me, unsuitable.

I stole away. Quietly. To a boarding school in Southern California. We read a lot. Quietly. It suited me.

**Track 11 : EDITORIAL ASIDE, in the voice of the fictitious editor**

**The editor tells us why the publisher has decided to release some excerpts from Felicity's journal in Audio CD form before the editor has finished her task of transforming a disorderly, private notebook into a "blockbuster" publication. Again she summarizes much of what we have not yet been privileged to read.**

*Some conjecture that this Felicity is actually the creation of a Southern California publicist; that she is a poetic harridan whose lackluster exterior and alleged devotion to philosophy are crass commercial fictions. I have met the girl myself and I assure you, she remains on the exterior, as earnest, bland and unassuming as the journal portrays her. This little seeker is, in some ways, remarkable...but I digress. People wonder what any Oracle could have said to have catalyzed the creative patter of the volume I edit. As far as I can tell, Delphica is a woman I should like to meet. As far as I can tell, she spoke of things un-Oracular...no dark mutterings...no smudges of laurel; she talked of wandering, of not knowing, of learning in the midst, of being ignorant, of simple goodness, cosmic swerves and ripe peaches. Of her life, friends, the pleasures of retirement, love, passion, expression. According to the seeker, a dancer and a dance upon whose sole account we must rely, or do without, Delphica was not pedantic. She was kindness concentrated; Felicity recalls, very quick and very gentle. As a rule, upon waking after an encounter with the Oracular troupe, Felicity would commit to her journal all she remembered, later preserving these relicts for future sustenance on her word processor. The meetings themselves and their slow digestion, absorption, and self-expression were joyful, cherished, slow burning embers of warmth and inspiration for the lonely philosopher. Early on, Felicity feared that the next time she pressed the world beneath the curve, the Oracle would not be there. She dreaded to disturb the Pythian priestess...a sentiment Margarita soundly drubbed. It was a source of dissatisfaction to the aspiring scholar that the precise words Delphica had used eluded her. As did the chronology. "Good," said the Oracle. "Know thyself, not the prattle of*

another, however loved and loving." Still, off and on, Felicity would flow with a surge of golden words and jot them down instantly, verbatim; the seeker believes that the words she recorded were the exactly what the Oracle had said in a previous meeting, memory's treasure delivered in a cosmic swerve of inspiration. What follows, out of sequence, is a journey with no footnotes.

<b>Track 12: ALL THE CASE, in the voices of Felicity and Delphica (the Oracle)</b>
--

**Felicity recalls a conversation with the Oracle, recording her reactions.**

The universe is friendly, child.

She said.

It was a whisper, I think. A sigh.

I felt in me a sigh.

I don't believe it I replied.

The world....the world is just the big out there. All that is the case, wrote Wittgenstein. "The world is all that is the case." Out there. "There is nothing that is not the case." Maybe...

The world is all that is the case, she affirmed. And it glows with love for you. Pulses with it. The world knows you. Intimately. Be at home there. Where you are. In your skin. Under stars...

They write in books: a sigh escaped her. One did.

The world is a friendly place, Delphica challenged. Be it.

I arrested the next sigh. Firmly.

Friendly.

Loving.

Pulsing Warm.

Where had that world hidden?

Hers was, of course. The case. That I believed. Marvel that she was. Anywhere she went became her. She fit in. She glowed. That I believed.

But I?

Of lesser stuff, I wanted to say to her. Look at you. Look at me. I see what is the case. I am of lesser stuff.

You are? Are you? The Oracle rejoined to what I did not say. Lesser stuff? You and I are the same stuff, child. Be it. Beauty. Be it. Friendly. Be it.

Delphic riddles. Kindly meant. I could feel her truthfulness. She could see within me. I didn't mind. The parts she read were bathed in kindness; I felt smoothed, not violated. But some things were clear: *I* was not hobnobbing with the muses, schmoozing with the lesser deities.

How little do you know yourself, child. I think she might have sighed.

Be the self you want to be.

Be the self worth knowing.

The one who does not have to change to be loved, admired, cuddled. Liked. The you you are now. Only a little sweeter. Only just a little sweeter, warmed by the scent of your own true self. Sweet being.

\* \* \*

**Early on, Felicity is very curious about Delphica's own life; about her past as the Pythian Priestess and her prophetic gifts...As the journal proceeds, Felicity's**

meditations themselves become more exuberant as she finds herself leaping poetically...and feels as well that searing unworthy she has so long embodied...The first line is one Delphica has used to describe herself and Felicity is shocked when the phrase leaps out of her onto the page of her journal...

## *Rivers of gold run through me...*

Stir in me, you ancient rhythms.  
Let me sigh with the bliss of the reborn  
while stuff of innocence leaks  
from tender cracks  
I reopen  
with love of breathing.

Sweet. True. Being.

Oh the sadness of the not at home,  
I am that sadness  
I wanted to say.  
Such melancholy! I smiled within. Why, I did have unexpected shallowness to reveal!  
Headline: "Drab, disgruntled child surprises world with unexpected spurt of melodrama." Thus I thought into the book of life... "To all that is the case, Felicity adds her trite mite."  
But I have never.  
Been at home.  
Except with books with papers. With flowers in pure air.  
You see I'm not you.  
Books and papers, flowers air.  
With people,  
I'm odd;  
at odds.  
I didn't say it.

Nonsense she countered: you are love you are warm you are all be it.

*Put some color in your life,*

the oracle advised.

And so I did.

**Track 13: CHILD, in the voices of Felicity and Delphica**

**In the journal Felicity reflects on her transformation after many visits with the Oracle and her menagerie. She also “pieces” together some shards of the Oracle’s life as a young seeress and “cultural institution.”**

I didn’t mind it when she called me child.

I felt...

not patronized...

warm.

I felt cared for.

I felt

I had time.

I could be a bit.

I felt

I had help.

I felt

Warm.

Pulsing.

Cared for.

Who calls you child, I once said.

Everyone and everything she answered. They can if they want. I prefer it.

Who *does* call you child? I persisted.

The Sibyl. The muses. Diotima, of course; Gems and Aphrodite.

You don't think that I was young once?

I was different, you see.

I saw.

I was different.

I was so seen.

I didn't want to be different.

I wasn't.

I'm not.

But I saw.

And what I saw made some uncomfortable.

What they saw was not comfortable. The they they saw was not comfortable.

So I became the outcast.

I am

myself

now.

I am.

I am, thus, loved.

I love your truthful heart, child.

I love the who who questions.

The words I say  
are not to taunt you.

If they cannot live within you,  
they do not serve you.

I know that, child.

I love your truthful soul.

And then, as if were an afterthought,  
the Oracle placed a large pearl in my hand.

*Put some warmth in your life.*

*Child...* she whispered.

And so I did.

\* \* \*

*The Oracle*

*Is human.*

*She is, just,*

*human.*

\* \* \*

**Finally, in this series, we hear from the Oracle.**

Caldrons  
Caverns  
Caves of pleasure.  
Arches of triumph  
Archipelagoes of bliss  
Memory  
Memory  
I've done it all before  
I've been there  
I've had it  
I was it  
I am it  
Every blessed thing  
Bless the beautiful  
Beatify the banal  
I am  
What I was  
Who I am  
In the midst  
No higher  
No better  
No Persona.  
I am the Oracle.

*Rivers of gold run through me*

And tunes of splendor,  
crescent moons of godhead and  
hues of earnest beauty  
tumble from my heart.  
In a land without miracles  
hope  
is rare courage.

Oh be that land.

In that other,  
don't go.

Modest mentor,  
loving friend,  
grab your hope  
by the vitals  
blushing  
(if you must)  
with that self-regard  
you know  
core deep  
you  
are  
and bring

hope

deep

home.

In which case,  
reality

becomes

you.

They say  
Don't dream.

They say  
don't dream  
lest you lose  
that hard, slimy grip  
on reality  
so reputed

to give you  
ulcers.

Au contraire,  
I retort:

*Dream*

Dream  
and reality  
births  
courageous  
beauty.

But you must  
*Be your dreams,*  
dear one.

For undreamed dreams  
nurture not  
and  
dreams designed  
to flee you  
cannot  
rainbow into heart  
bursting forth  
seed  
into promise  
as yet  
undreamed.

As yet undreamed....

The really real  
twenty-four hour  
miracle  
you.

Hope.

*Give me hope.*

I would love to.

But, dearest,

you must grab it,  
claim it,

name, demand that it call you by

adopt you,

take you home,

feed and clothe you in gold and chocolate.

The world does us no injustice  
being

as it is.

The magic carpet seats twelve  
crystal decanters in the bar  
free fall zones

chutes of pleasure  
innocent delights on tap.

If we make inners  
big enough,  
we will find  
lofts  
to soar in  
and  
windows teeming  
with gardens  
of delight  
and enchanted bats  
and golden doors  
to ecstasy.

Track 15: RIVERS OF GOLD, voice of the Oracle

*Rivers of gold run through me.*

I am the oracle.  
The mouthpiece of the Divine.  
Just like you.  
Breath to breath.  
Touch to touch.  
Hymn to hum  
In every pore  
dignity and splendor  
pour in.  
And out.  
Released  
to know itself

life wanders  
blessing  
all its own  
becoming  
bare beauty  
unbeknownst  
the very breath  
before.

*Rivers of gold pour through you.*

Be  
your better  
self  
and  
all you want  
becomes you.  
Thus life feasts  
simple  
goodness.

I learned child,  
I found it hard.  
Then.  
I learned.

People would say  
You are the Oracle.  
You have these powers.  
You owe me.

Give me.

Give me riches.  
Give me grace.  
Give me everything  
You have.  
Give me a hint.  
Give me a direction.  
You owe me.  
Child.

And I was  
a child  
then.  
A good child.  
A gifted child.

And so they said  
you do not deserve to have  
for you  
anything good  
sweet  
rich  
kind  
warm,  
for you  
the gods favor

while we,

lesser relatives  
of immortal goodness,  
need oh so much more

from you.

Oracle.

You are the

Rivers of gold run through you.

Thus  
we demand  
that you never have  
a good day  
a sweet thing  
a love to cheer you  
a child  
whose heart  
beats with yours.

I learned, child.  
I learned hard.

I learned to look.  
Not just to see.  
I learned to look.  
Within.

I saw how innocence  
is violated,  
turned against itself;  
I observed those games of spite  
envy-driven  
which trade on  
uses  
of the good.

But what can an Oracle do?

She can give away her secrets.

And when she does?  
Many find the simple truth to be  
too good to be true,  
too free to be valuable,  
too arduous to be  
the way.

*Know thyself.*

I posted it.

above my gatepost.

Freely given:  
every trick of the Oracle trade  
to any wanderer  
who cares to seize it  
and make it  
home.

*Know Thyself.*

No mystery, child.  
It's posted  
in your cells.  
Remember...

Mnemosyne,  
the mother of all muses,  
thrives within you,  
spiral splendor  
bursting forth  
in every unfettered  
moment.



baring  
promise  
of the empty set.

Track 17: NO ONE SPECIAL, the job description of an Oracle, as Delphica sees it

*Rivers of gold run through me*

I am  
no one  
special.

Special Delivery  
I am the connector.  
The Oracle.

I am.

*Boulders of gold surge through me.*

I am no one  
special.

I am.

*Pebbles of gold make through me.*

I am no one

special.  
I am called the oracle:

She who sees  
She who says  
She who surges with prophecy.  
Pythian Priestess.

I tell you:  
I know this.  
I am no one  
Special.

It is your heart  
I see.  
It is your own pregnant beauty  
I note,  
your own doom  
rising to reveal itself,  
pining to repent  
should you but recall it.  
It is your chill  
I feel,  
fractured heart  
no pillow for beauty's assurance  
just now.

*Rivers of truth run through me,*  
streaming strands of clean and bright  
should you decide to bathe  
and heal.

*Diamonds of love run through me*

so that you,  
torrent of gold in life's dream,  
so that you  
may reweave your blessings  
so as to birth  
the blessed being  
the being  
blessed  
by fateful goodness  
who breeds a self  
a world of good  
infinitely  
worth  
knowing.

*You cannot see*

*a seer*

*when she is being*

*true,*

just a pipe for your own best being  
to trickle through,  
dropping on the silly seer  
all the power  
and splendor  
*you* just might create  
connecting to all goodness

and breathing  
your best beauty  
moment  
by  
moment.

*Look not at the seer,  
my darling,*

I am  
I assure you  
no one  
special.  
The Oracle,  
remember?  
At your service,  
should you be looking  
for  
yourself.  
No spectacle,  
no performer,  
I am untouched by your regard.  
Regard  
yourself  
as I do...  
Respect that being  
with power  
of such magnitude  
it flares  
with goodness unimagined  
and from that golden orb

whirls  
a being  
infinitely worth  
comprehending.

So be gone from me  
who is no one  
special...

On your way,  
fragrant pilgrim,  
bursting with all  
that we need  
and yearn to be  
just  
now.

*Rivers of gold run through me.*

The conduit.  
The connector.  
At your service,  
splendid child.

*Rivers of gold run through you,*

## Child.

Your breath is like Olympus,  
nectar-feast birthing  
all the case becoming  
as you dream.

I, too, am a wanderer.  
Never to leave you.

**The editor is hard at work on her task.** In the notebook one finds several color Xerox copies of a painting of the nine muses dancing with Phoebus Apollo. I gather from the inspirers' voluptuous thighs that the original work dates from Baroque times. (???) I am having the devil of a time identifying the work which I must do *magna cum celeritate*---where is the number of that woman from the Hermitage? The scene is pastoral, the dance stately, and the garments unworthy of Margarita. I surmise that the seeker at this point in her sojourn was seeking solace in cappuccino for the relevant pages attest to an upset of a domestic nature, and the following plea may be discerned beneath a thin mocha veil...

THUS WRITTEN

How  
to befriend  
the blankness

the lack

of plan

that is

all progress.

You Muses,

you dance

together

while I,

alone,

at least for now,

**draw**

**on love's clean face,**

**this page,**

**today's sustenance,**

**the blank slate of my dreams.**

**Here the editor gives us a “glimpse” of how the journal seems to flow...** *One infers that the caffeine, the mess, the invocation or some combination thereof proved salutary, as the next entries unfurl what the Americans dub “attitude.”*

## SELF-RECURRING ODYSSEY

**So  
Be.**

**Be  
Simple.**

**Be simple,  
however unfashionable,  
and let**

**beauty**

**steel you**

from the fading fear:

fleet fancy.

Oh  
people say  
it's a fleeting fancy.

But  
what you want  
tends  
to overtake  
you,  
pushing aside what settled  
good  
you might have taken  
for  
god  
in a duller moment.

Deep.  
Deep,  
dark  
desires,  
they say.

But  
it's the hot  
ones  
tend  
to do you in,

all unspoken,  
then  
rob the day  
of its  
thereness

all unspoken.  
More's the pity.

Flights of fancy.  
They say  
don't give in  
to imagination's  
sweet caress,  
fallen hopes  
righting  
themselves  
on dismal  
prospects.

I say  
what  
brings joy  
brings true  
and joy  
is  
sunny  
sweet  
very deep

goodness  
lighting in  
singing out.

Sullenness repels  
the simple pleasures  
of the best  
goodness  
planetary bliss  
bestows.

Oh  
I say  
be yourself,  
yet  
unimagined  
beauty  
warmed by  
fading beauty  
for that sustains us:  
the self  
that will not  
be stilled  
by dull  
because we see  
bright  
where we are  
and being brilliant  
so absorbs us  
light

wouldn't think  
of dwelling elsewhere.

Colors  
paint us  
noble,  
every beauteous note  
of deep dignity  
unmasked as giddy  
freely flowing tone of soul  
bursting with  
you  
too pregnant  
to retreat  
from the moment's  
sparkling embrace.

SELF-RECURSIVE ODYSSEY

It's not  
a  
road show,  
this life.

It's a deeply meaningful  
procession.

Solemn ritual:  
breath in,  
breath out.

We are God's breath

wisps of air  
on life's canvas.

Soul notes  
of deep  
goodness.

Fret not  
the fall

of night.

In sweet  
solemn stillness  
you are goodness,  
and life  
caresses you  
with pleasure.

Be  
that good thing  
you treasure  
and all magic  
becomes  
you.

Free and easy,  
lightly breezy,  
leave a space  
for knowingness  
to visit.

All unencumbered,  
it lights  
in that open soul and  
hush!

leaves a gift:  
the way forward,  
new delights to birth.

Time to wander...  
to recreate days of wonder  
and miracle nights  
by the very act  
of breathing,  
savoring  
every unbound  
molecule.

Time to return  
to the compass point:  
sweet space  
of love  
with no  
holding back.

That's where  
God  
dwells.  
All good from there  
proceeds.

You are

**the best,  
I assure you,  
the best  
that breathes its beauty**

**just now.**

**Grace looms.**

**Grace.**

**Grace surprises,**

**rushes in.**

**All abandon.**

**We're getting a sense from the editor what this journal looks like physically and how it has evolved, but we have no clue how the editor plans to make it into a published work...does she?**

*Felicity's book becomes more populous as her journey takes her--- if the photos scattered at random may be taken as evidence of her attendance--- to parties, street fairs, open air markets, parks, preschools, sporting events, clown fests...One finds swatches of fabric in thickets throughout, gobs of what I take to be tinted plaster, sketches of improbably elaborate desserts and recipes for*

alcoholic beverages serving forty. There is still philosophy to be  
sure and qualms aplenty...but also...

DO

**Do  
the world  
a  
kindness**

**and  
?**

**?**

**It's the question  
that frees**

the inner  
to respond  
to  
itself;

to leap beyond  
the known, the now

even when the now  
is  
under construction.

I'm

I'm a wanderer,  
soul's code  
spinning out  
daily itinerary,  
losing track  
of my energy source  
at times,  
wrongly attributing to

myself,  
the glory,  
the star-trekking savvy  
which fuels  
my progress  
on this

open

eager

planet.

Blessed  
on every fork of the road,  
every  
snaky passage,  
what is apparent  
to the transparent  
is

But I miss  
the benediction  
often  
muddling on  
muddied  
by sordid inner  
squabbles.

I'm  
a wanderer.  
Hold me  
to  
no perfect  
standard.

Don't mire me in solicitude,  
nor delay me with questions  
which demand  
tragic answers.

Don't pout for contact information,  
as if I were not  
here  
now,  
as if

then  
gone  
I am less  
myself than ever  
and more to you  
than we have ever  
been.

Spare me the grappling hook interrogation,  
muddy footprints in  
my book  
of fate.

I'm a wanderer.  
I love you,  
fellow travelers.

I leave you  
to your selves.

So  
Be  
It.

# DIVAGATION

I'm a wanderer.  
Don't  
expect me  
to stick to the point,  
stand on tradition  
or trudge  
your career path.

I'm a wanderer,  
  
and I want  
  
to wander  
  
off the point,  
over and over off the point, and behind schedule,  
in the midst.  
And I want  
my cells  
to know:

I support you.  
I support you in your breathing.  
I support you in your growing.

I  
more than  
marvel  
at your very  
splendor.

I'm  
a wanderer.  
And I want  
to stumble  
over revelation  
and find a limber beauty  
in my own clumsy gait.

I'm a gift giver.  
Even beggars choose  
and even widows  
when they're flush  
have a mite or two  
to  
arc  
in serendipity,  
rainbowing wonder  
on a dreary day.

Here.

If you like it,

take it in.

*No obligation.*

Your cells:  
have you wandered there  
lately?

And have you told them:  
“How truly  
good  
you are  
you never seem  
to  
fathom;  
will  
you  
but take it in,  
my dears,  
please?”

And then  
I ask your cells  
to uncoil  
nightly

your best  
beauty,  
smiling as you sleep,  
they murmur:

“Oh  
how  
good you are,  
wholesome and ineffable,  
simple  
goodness  
well worth  
searching for,  
truth’s beauty  
being  
all  
revealing.”

And I?  
The wanderer?  
I’ve straggled on.  
Off the point.  
Out of fashion.  
Mired in tangents.  
In some midst  
of my own making,  
Baffled,  
like

not.

as

But this I know,  
sweet fellow traveler:  
the godlike beauty  
of simple goodness.

I pray  
you  
take it in  
and let  
it breathe you  
wherever  
you  
may  
wander.

'T WAS

I am

**I said.**

**I love it.**

**Ah,**

**that was  
a good day.**

**From the outset, the editor relates that Felicity begins her odyssey as a very lonely girl and that, as the volume proceeds, the young Seeker has filled her life with poetry, color, and friends---and rather fabulous and amazing friends....but HOW has this happened? Is the editor trying to stir up an audience for the book-to-be or is she, as she claims, a Classical Scholar and intellectual essayist conscripted to task she initially despised?** There are (surprise) a few notes and post cards taped in the tattered volume. One recognizes the villagers from the taverna at weddings, baptisms, parties, and seasonal intervals. Various vacation spots in Europe, the Orient, and North America vie for space with a torrent of mail from New Zealand and Australia. Discretion has prevailed thus far, and I have not perused Felicity's personal correspondence. I am, as a rule, far from discreet; I cannot say how long my newly found ethics will thus bind me. What follows is the seeker's recall of a snippet of dialogue...

*Who are you?*

A graduate student.

*That's not a who.*

*It's a what.*

*Who are you?*

A professor in the making.

*That is not a who, not even a what. That's a what you aren't.*

*And the you you are creating?*

A philosopher.

*A philosopher? That's got who potential. Could be a who. Could be a what. A lover of wisdom? Yes, that is someone to be. You are a who who loves wisdom.*

*Through and through a lover of wisdom.*

Delphica...does it matter whether I am a who or a what?

*Decidedly.*

Well, I clearly haven't given the distinction much thought. You're suggesting I have to decide?

*Decidedly.*

Hmmmmmmmm.....Well, when is a philosopher a who and when is one a what?

*It's not the degree that makes you a philosophical who. The degree: that's a what. The degreed entity: also a what. The established chair: an elevated what. Those who study and seek I so admire but as Diotima oft' noted, the groves of academe seem to multiply whats. Bless the whos who prosper there.*

When am I a what and when a who?

*When it's a what, it isn't itself.*

*You, my child, are a who except when you try to be someone else's idea of who you should be.*

Delphica...

*Yes?*

What should I answer when people ask who I am?

*Don't answer.*

*Felicity...*

Yes, Delphica

*I love that sweet who. Be it.*

\* \* \*

**One finds in the journal a long handwritten document, with much crossings out and asterisks, circles, underlining and revision. JUSTICE AS FAIRNESS VERSUS JUSTICE AS ENTITLEMENT: IS THERE A MIDDLE WAY? appears to be working title. Sections of a word processed document have been cut and taped by hand and much is written, in various shades of ink, all around. Just past this grove of philosophic reflection and apparent academic angst, we see a sheet from a memo pad stapled on a page...and here Felicity has written...**

RE:

**About that life of yours?**

The one clearly worth having?

Get on to it!  
Now

Before it's too late                      or do without

That vital thing:

be it.  
\*   \*   \*

This prose is clearly from the Oracle:

*Stir in my heart, you ancient puzzles.*

Blood of my blood.

Bone of my bone.

So old we are and where is our wisdom?

*Give it up, I say.*

*The it:* give it up.

The disconnected say  
I have no heart  
such truth I share.

They say  
you cannot know me.

They say  
I need work  
like a vase half wrought  
or a bronze poorly burnished,  
a dish under seasoned;  
they say I speak untruth.

I agree.

Readily.

Why waste words on those who want from

Pythias

a pauper's feast:

flattery

cajolery

mockery of goodness' great cradle---

my heart?

My heart is indeed a large part of it

I grieve for those who desecrate me  
for they  
are not the they  
they might have been  
had we connected  
deeply.

*I am the Oracle.*

You are the seeker.  
I make connection visible.  
I embody the link to all  
within  
all.  
Within each.

Unsought,  
the Oracle is no connector.  
Unconnected, the seeker  
is not herself:  
the who who makes herself  
daily  
questioning  
savoring  
discovering  
the dance.

What is the Oracle?

Not a what.

*The who in you.*

It is not my job  
to preach.

It is not my task  
to berate.

It is not my space  
to beseech.

It is not my calling  
to placate.

*I am* love's extravagant creature

and a humble servant  
of truth

as it rasps through me

God's gift and your inspiration

*Stir in my heart, you ancient  
puzzles.*

Blood of my blood.

Bone of my bone.

So old we are and where is our wisdom?

*Give it up, I say.*

*The it:* give it up.

*Rivers of gold stream through me  
and rivers of tears*

*crystalline*

push aside boulders  
with the ease of water

running

grace streaming

light saving  
love pouring  
rivers of gold  
torrents of tears  
free me  
from the bounds  
of who I was  
what I feared  
who I would not let  
break through  
the bracken shell  
of dread.

*Rivers of gold run through me*

And joy.  
Joy from sorrow  
well spent,  
sacred transmutation  
of the stony  
to the supple  
stream.

That life you love  
my child...

So  
be it.

*The Oracle is  
only human  
after all.*

*She must resist  
the push and pull*

*of others to see her  
as more than that.*

*She must  
Know  
Herself.*

“Put some color in  
it” the oracle said. So I did.

Track 25: SHARE, in the voices of Felicity and Delphica

So this is how the book came to be!!!???? The Seeker resists the Oracle...

*Where is your appetite for life,  
child?*

Delphica queried.

I don't know, I said. Is this another task you would assign me? Locate appetite for life?

*It takes some cultivation, child.*

*Felicity?*

Yes, Delphica.

*How are you finding your sweet  
self?*

I like her. She's good company. Getting more forgiving all the time.

*You must protect that sweet child,  
Felicity. I love her.*

Will do, Delphica, I love her, too.

**The editor relates the conversation that led to the publication of *Stir*...** The retired Oracle of Delphi had a surprise for the seeker, a challenge. One Felicity would (as was the case with an obstinate author of mutual acquaintance) resist.

*You are a philosopher,* the Oracle remarked.

Yes, ma'am, I replied.

*You need to share,* said Delphica as Margarita rumbled around the chocolate drawer.

Share what? I wondered.

*Philosophy,* she countered.

Philosophy? What about philosophy

*That book you keep.*

That book? She couldn't know about that. Well...of course, she could. She did. My life, I said.

*That book,* she replied.

No.

*That book,* she repeated.

No.

*It's your philosophy.* Delphica's eyes were determined to soften me. I resisted, while Margarita dove for Belgian chocolate in a very distant cavern.

*Share.*

I can't I said.

Fool that I was. Never "can't" an Oracle. They know choose from can't.

Won't, I thrust in firmly.

It's just a journal.

*Just a journal?*

Okay, I said. I see what you mean. Our conversations are important. It would be my pleasure to share you

with the world. I can do that. I would enjoy that immensely

*The whole book. Just as it is.* I

presumed Margarita had flown to Switzerland for emergency rations; there was no hint of sound from the far quadrants...just our breathing.

I want to share you, I insisted. I'll leave everything about me out.

*Impossible*, she declared.

*Untruth.*

*Unacceptable purgation.*

Unacceptable to you, I countered. I'm quite fine with it.

*Untrue to life, Felicity. Untrue to what is the case.*

How so, Delphica? I am obstinate; I see this. But I advocate no lies.

You are the seeker, child. And without the seeker, there is no Oracle. A connection does not exist unless a questing, questioning being plugs in and uses the connector to fashion a better self. Moment by moment. In truth Felicity, we are both seekers and both oracles. All humans are both seeker and oracle, questioner and pipeline to the great All. That is what it means to be human. That's the beauty of who-ness. You're always a point of interrogation wired for guidance...and delight.

I'll think about it, Delphica. You know I will.

*Thank you, child.*

Where's Margarita?

*Gone to fetch Phoebus Apollo. You know how he adores her. Margarita has a publisher in mind for our little project. Apollo can talk anyone into anything. Ah yes...! think he has your book in hand now.*

Without my permission?

*Of course not.*

I don't want my name on it.

*Fine.*

I don't want to look at it. I'm embarrassed.  
Embarrassed about the me parts. I want it to be about  
you.

*It is as you have lived, my dear. It  
is brave and beautiful and  
frightened, gauche and noble, tender  
and tentative...just as the self you  
have made. You will look.*

*Examine: it's part of knowing  
yourself. Give up that fear of being  
you.*

This will take some getting used to, beloved Oracle.

*You are the who who seeks, sweet  
teacher. No shame in that. Let it  
be.*

**Track 26: KNOW THYSELF, in the voice of the editor**

**This is our last excerpt in the audio CD. The editor reflects on her odyssey thus far.**

Thus came to be the so-called Oracle project. A philosopher, I guess, is a peddler of used ideas. And Felicity, when she met the Oracle, had to try some on existentially. Her curious volume charts the odyssey of one seeker slowly connecting to possibility and learning how it feels to live a self-fulfilling quest. She is not done. She is not set. But she is no longer alone. And just as Odysseus is not Everyman, Felicity is not every discoverer. What she has chosen may not suit anyone else, nor please her in a year or two. Her Oracle is not everyone's model mentor. Still, neither proffer this, her messy passage as a universal model for the attainment of happiness or self-expression. And while the Pythian priestess is not everyone's idea of a vital connection, a liberating teacher, there is much good in this volume, as there much good in the seeker and much kindness and wisdom in the Oracle, however such connections are felt or embodied.

I am quite sure that Delphica would advise us not to dwell on their conjecture or conclusions, nor to revere these, their leavings, relics of time well spent... I think she would have us examine the meaning, the living of our lives...for quite truly...our days are numbered and plenipotent

...and however foolish or splendid one finds Felicity's Oracle, she brings every discussion back to ontology. Being. Personal ontology. Being: what it feels like to be. And how to know ourselves well enough to make ourselves humans worth knowing, from the inside out.

Yes, even when the now is under construction. As it is. Always.

Build selves we must. Let us do so wisely.

Even I, who have brought this amateurish text to the point of publication, even I have changed. For I am no longer embarrassed, as I once was, by this young person's earnest passage, recorded in the best truth she could muster, and with more courage than she knew she could be. I am no longer put off by the triteness of the language, the

tedium of conceptual repetition, the spineless heroine worship of an unformed woman, by the unseemly opulence of her mentors.

I have examined myself over the course of these months and I find therein a sneering, snobbish, lush yet desiccated woman who wants, suddenly, to live. Just now I want to be less chic, less arch, more kind: I want to be a self large enough to be embarrassed, to be embarrassing by the etiolated standards I am just now learning to dissect and discard. I am writing this afterward and affixing my name to passages I would have derided, with devastating charm, not six months ago. I have a name. It has been important to me. People know it. It is largely who and what I am. Until recently, I never looked at what a small who remains from the what I have so diligently constructed. I have a name. I have style. I have a style. I have a lifestyle. I look good for my age. I am in demand. I am paid to demolish beliefs, to puncture air. I have believed in things, foremost: not believing in things. I am what I have crafted: My snide and witty condescension, honed in the halls of academe and peddled smartly in glossy circles, is a shield for a rather nice self I might care to know. I have been a brittle who, a bitter what.

So what I have learned? Recently?

That I can learn.

That what I choose, how I live, all that courses through me: that is my being. Moment by moment. Over time. So I need to think about that "self" I make. Take time with it; examine it. Quite simply, I cannot help but be. And I cannot help but be the being I have chosen. The who I embody. Moment by moment. Over time.

The ancients were correct, if cumbersome in translation:

One cannot not be...

And one's being is of one's choosing.

We might like it otherwise...

But whatever we breathe in and breathe out;  
whatever we give, take, recycle, and manufacture: that we are. Now.

After all that choosing, we somehow, often, find ourselves surprised  
that we have no choice but to be.

At least I find myself surprised.

I am just now surprising myself; just now enjoying a capacity for  
learning from which I have artfully shielded myself. Until recently.

So I sign off with the most simple, startling, obvious and nearly  
undoable advice I have taken in for many a decade...

Be

wisely.