

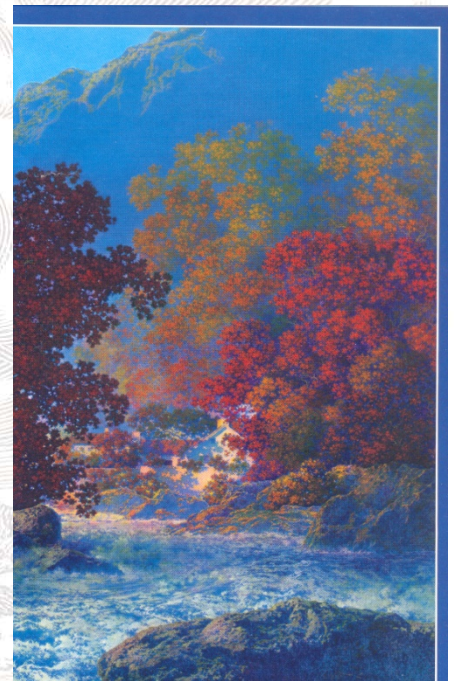
*S*inopsis: Joey, my yung tenant, had askd me how I got into the work of *comunicating with the unseen world*. I told him how wen I was in college I began to rebel agenst the narroness of the tipical religius mentality - especialy their reluctance to admit that sumone mite receev a valid gift of proffecy. I determind to aply for that gift - a gift that the aposle Paul encurraged cristians to seek. And I began to make progress.

Now, I was at the point ov exaustion ware I was actualy on my nees az I cudnt stand enny longer & I was crawling ahed. I had left my sleeping bag behynd, but even the lite pak I was still carrying felt too hevvy.

“I cant go on like this,” I mutterd. “I hav tu go home.” My flashlite was burnd out by then and it was dark, & yet I was being pushd onward.

Sumone out thare had herd my muttering rebellion. Suddenly a voice came thru, “Turn rite.”

I lookd tu the rite and saw nothing exepst the vague forms of desert brush in the darkness. But I obediently struggled tu my feet & pushed about 5 feet into the shrubbery. Sumthing was wet there. Dampness was cumming thru my tennis shues, wetting my feet. Thare had been no rain...was this a spring? But how cud thare be such a thing wen I was mooving along the top of a ridge?



A living stream in the desert; painting by Maxfield Parrish.

Yu doant fynd a spring at the top but at the *bottom* ov an incline. Springs cum from underground water, wich colects within a mountan & emerges sumware down belo it, in the foothills. I remember the town of Palm Springs, sitting at the bottom of the spectacular drop from Mt. San Jacinto, wich towers over the Coachella Valley. Winter rains in the mountans run down underground. The water becums a series ov springs, one ov wich feeds a rocky creek in the dezert belo, suporting the ancient trees in Palm Canyon.

I stil had no lite, but I wasnt reddy tu argue. I figured water runs downhill. If I folloed this little rivulet downwards, & if it didnt sink in and disapear, it mite lead tu a stream. Even if I cudnt see, I cud travel ware the wetness was.

One thing I rememberd: if u follo a stream yu ar likely tu at least keep going in the same direction rather than travel in a big circle the way peepel tend tu du wen they get lost. I felt releevd & hopeful.

The wetness continued downhill, groing wetter az it went. At the bottom of the ridge I was delited tu fynd a considrable creek running, with the hillsides sloping up from it on boath sides.

The only practicable way tu follo the creek, with the banks rizing sharply upward on both sides, was tu walk in the creek itself. I clymd carefully down, my feet protected by the rubber-soled tennis shoes, avoiding the moast dangerus-looking ov the roks with wich the stream was studded, and stepd into the swiftly running water. It came swirling around my nees in places, but was moastly ankle-deep.

The splashing I made must hav been herd. Nearby, on the far side of the creek, I herd sevral sharp barks, and then eerie howls...a coyote.



Coyote, painting by Theo

“Aha!” I yelld at him. “So yu figure I’m intruding on yur territory?” He yelld bak, with a series ov barks & hy yippings. From that moment on I had him folloing along the creek with me all the way. He seemd tu be calling tu all the other coyotes tu cum & see this

strange fenomenon, this out-ov-place wuman splashing along in their swollen spring creek. Without the least fear I accepted him as a companion, a fello traveler.

If I dy, I thaut, he and his frends wil make a meal out of me. But I had definitely decyded not tu dy out here in the dezert. Meanwile I rather enjoyd boath the sense of companionship from this beast, and the spooky feeling that went with it. I strode along in the emerging moonlite, splashing in the stream, sloing down carefully tu negotiate the roks, and noting one other strange fact. It was this: I had plenty ov energy az long az i stayd in the water. But the moment I stepd out ov it I felt suddenly totaly exhausted. It woz az if the water itself was endowing me with strength for the jurney.

Next month I’ll continue the story, telling about the third strange fact, & wot happend wen I arived bak at civilizacion.

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