

INTRODUCTION

All my life I've had experiences of merging with the natural world. When I was young, I thought everyone was like that. But after a while, I learned not to talk about it. And eventually I buried it.

In my mid-fifties, I began to practice Buddhist meditation and yoga. Finally freeing myself from an abusive marriage, I bought a cabin in the mountains. There I read Buddhist and Taoist literature, the great Sufi poets and the early Christian mystics. A friend taught me to play with the tarot.

I began to write poetry again after many years of silence. Over the following years I published several books of poetry. Writing poetry became the center of my life.

At some point I discovered channels. Some felt true to me and some did not. Eventually I came to know Ailia Mira, a brilliant channel whose writings spoke clearly to me. Over the years Ailia became a friend, attended my poetry readings in Los Angeles, and supported me wholeheartedly as my poems turned more and more strongly to joy.

Gradually I realized that my most authentic poems were coming in from what I called "left field" — they originated in a kind of knowing that was direct, expanded, and immediate. Craft came later, in revision. I wanted to call upon this "true voice" more intentionally. Eventually I took a leap and signed up for one of Ailia's online classes in conscious channeling. That was the beginning.

I knew that becoming a channel would involve openly acknowledging a key aspect of my self, an aspect I had always hidden even from those closest to me. All my life I have lived in an intellectual and family culture in which spirituality was suspect and "channel" equaled "charlatan." Becoming a conscious channel meant coming out of the closet and speaking my true name.

Channeling felt natural and easy — it felt like being who I am. But it went far beyond the intuitive knowing I had experienced as a writer. I was astonished by how quickly and widely the doors flew open. It was fascinating, sometimes hilarious, and ranged from beloved animals and places to Singers and Dolphins and Dragons. Everything communicated — landscapes, rocks, plants, animals, insects, clouds, and vast non-embodied fields of intelligence manifesting as traditional human archetypes and images in order to communicate.

For me channeling involves consciously shifting into an expanded state of awareness, intentionally asking for communication, and opening to receive. Normally communication comes as a knowing in words. I receive and speak concurrently. Because I am a poet, it was natural to me to speak and translate in poetry. So these messages often emerged as poems, or poetic meditations.

When I began channeling, I was in a state of rage and grief over the state of the world and the destruction of the earth I love. In stark contrast to my grief and fear and anger, these channeled messages offered a joyous celebration of actuality. They spoke of *love* as my work.

Although as I experience it, everything is communicating *intentionally*, readers are welcome to interpret these oracles from whatever perspective they choose — as translation or created artifact or pure fantasy! And the book need not be read straight through. It can be opened and read at random. It can be read as a

chronological record of my own journey. It can be read as conversations, as meditations, or as poetry. I hope everyone will find their own nourishment in the book.