



jump into the blue



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CL Publishing

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

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Book Cover Art: Dream Bird © Alice Mason <http://alice-mason.com>

Book Cover Design Christina Lavers

Book Layout © 2014 BookDesignTemplates.com/Christy Lavers

Jump into the Blue/ Christina Lavers. -- 1st ed.

ISBN 978-0-9942382-2-1

To my gorgeous boys, Tom and Jasper,
my heart sings with love for you

*"If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would
appear to man as it is, Infinite. For man has closed himself up,
till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern."
—WILLIAM BLAKE*

*"You must realize that what you are cannot be seen in a
mirror.
What you see in a mirror is but a dim reflection of your true
reality."
—SETH MATERIAL*

introduction

The following is a true story that occurred between November 1991 and March 1997. When I contemplated writing about this period, I felt I could not do it for many reasons. However, the details had been brewing away in the back of my mind for so long that eventually they just bubbled up, and I let them flow. What surfaced is this book, which after much contemplation, I decided to share.

I have attempted to describe the journey as accurately and honestly as possible. Of course, as this is my interpretation of events from my perspective, it is not meant to be presented as an objective depiction of what occurred. The tale is based on memory, journals, and letters. I consulted with others involved in the story to ensure there was minimal misrepresentation, however this was not always possible, and some of the participants may have a different recollection of events. Most of the personal names have been changed. I kept the characters simple and only included details relevant to the storyline. The depictions are basic personal interpretations of the complex people we really are. In places where I have used dialogue to describe events, the phrases are only approximations of what was said.

I have provided details as I saw and understood them at that time, and generally avoided injecting realizations and understandings that came to me beyond the scope of this book.

I anticipate each reader will have their own unique interpretation of the content. For some it may be a case study

in the unfolding of psychosis; for others it may be the magical journey of an awakening soul, or just an intriguing and mysterious tale.

I believe when we reach deep down within ourselves we each have a gift to offer as a contribution to the whole. This contribution does not need to be dazzling or profound, it just needs to be real and reflect the unique attributes of who we are beyond that which we are told to be. The more people are willing to risk putting their inner truth out there, the more our external reality will reflect this and make sense.

This story is a piece of the puzzle that I offer to the collective ... make of it what you will.

warning

I do not encourage anyone to use a Ouija board. I don't believe they are toys, or light forms of divination. For me, the Ouija board is an apparatus that can potentially open us to obscure energies that we may not be prepared to work with. My journey began with a Ouija board; it played a pivotal role in the early part of my learning. I do not regret the influence it played as it contributed to making me who I am today. However, had I known then what I know now, I probably would not have made the same decisions. While the Ouija board opened me up to a new level of reality, I now know that that level can be accessed in much clearer, safer, and gentler ways. At the end of the day I would say that everything that came through the Ouija board was somewhat dubious, whereas the information that came to me through signs, symbols, and my own realizations are the pieces that I feel are the most exciting, solid, and meaningful.

chapter one

seasoning



Nov 17 1991

It was such a slight, subtle entrance for something that would eventually rip the ground from beneath my feet and leave me naked and reeling, unsure of anything beyond my own existence. The catalyst was pepper, just a light sprinkling of tiny black and white flakes on one of the placemats.

My friend, Josh, and I had returned from an evening movie to the empty apartment I was house sitting. He was the first to notice the peculiarity. "What's with the pepper on the placemat?" he asked as he passed the table.

“What pepper?” I didn’t use pepper.

As I approached to see what he was talking about, I saw an even layer of the two-toned spice neatly scattered onto one of the green vinyl placemats. It was the same spot where I had eaten my dinner hours earlier. Mystified, I looked at the white ceramic shakers which sat perfectly upright in their usual spot at the center of the table.

Josh and I, with not much else to do, sat down on the sofa in the living room to discuss possible explanations for the bizarre little mystery.

“Who has a key?” Josh asked.

“Just me, the janitor, and Claire, who’s in Amsterdam.”

“Have you met the janitor?” Josh lit a cigarette. “Does he seem like the type of guy who might play sneaky little jokes?”

Seeing the gruff maintenance man in my mind’s eye, I laughed at the absurdity of the suggestion. “I think a fairy or leprechaun would be more likely culprits than Mr. Renault.”

“Maybe it was a ghost.”

“Hmmm, a supernatural visitor. Well,” I said, thinking of strange stories I’d seen in overly dramatic late night documentaries, “who knows? Maybe. Anything’s possible.”

“Chomdyn Tryn Rinpoche was just talking about ghosts the other day after dinner. He was saying something about spirits of the dead that interact with humans. Apparently they can be pretty tricky.”

Josh’s mother Sarah ran a Buddhist center in the city and it was not uncommon to find a group of smiling Tibetan monks at Josh’s dinner table.

“Have you ever tried a Ouija board?” I asked.

“No, have you?”

“No. I did a kind of séance, levitation thing at Anne’s birthday sleepover when she turned twelve. We had fun scaring ourselves,” I said. “But I never tried a Ouija board. Maybe we could do it now.” I was intrigued by the idea.

“Well, I guess we could try. Might be fun. We’ll see if anything happens.”

Though I had never used one before, I had seen the Parker Brothers version, and understood the basic premise. On a piece of paper I wrote the words hello, goodbye, yes and no, then the letters of the alphabet, and the numbers 0-9 at the bottom. I chose a short, squat shot glass from the selection of glasses in the cupboard, and then Josh and I settled in across from one another at the little wooden coffee table to begin our attempt to communicate with the suspected unseen guest.

We held our fingers lightly on the upturned bottom of the glass and waited for something to occur. “Hello,” I said, unsure where I should be looking, “is there anyone here to speak with us?” I wondered if the official version provided a special invocation.

For a moment nothing happened, then, slowly, the glass began to move. Josh and I both looked up. As our eyes met I could tell from the cautious, slightly questioning, look on his face that he was not joking around. The makeshift pointer began to gradually increase its speed, until it was gliding steadily around the board. It finally settled over the number 6, then moved off and returned. It did this three times so that it wrote ‘666’.

Amazed that it seemed to be working, I was curious. I wanted to play this game whose dangerous tone seemed like a horror movie, chilling and exciting, yet, I believed at that time, really just a bit of fun; but Josh refused to continue.

He went to the kitchen, filled a tumbler with water, added some salt to it, and began to sprinkle it around the apartment.

“Purification,” he said.

When he finished he agreed to try again. We decided to move to the kitchen table where the instigating incident had taken place.

This time, when the glass began to move, the energy that came through felt light. It began to circle the word ‘hello’, and then it spelled the word ‘L ... O ... V ... E’.

“Hello,” I said, still unsure of where I should be looking.

The glass began to move smoothly and quickly around the board. The communicating force wrote that it was a spirit named Valerie Onine, and that she was our guardian angel.

Over the next hour she spelled out, letter by letter, many things. The more she wrote, the more the ‘game’ shifted for me from something playful to something transformative. I wish I still had the army green piece of construction paper that I had grabbed to write down the information she shared on that first occasion, but, like most of my early possessions, it is no longer with me. The little I remember was that she told us about a life when she said she had been incarnated with us in Harlem around the turn of the century. Apparently we had all been blues musicians and heroin addicts. My name then had been Araba and we knew her as Val.

Past lives were not part of my reality. Though I had visited a Hindu temple in the eighth grade as part of a school assignment, and, on occasion, heard my father ridiculing Westerners who believed in the notion, I knew very little then about the concept. However, although I had never really taken the time to personally contemplate the plausibility of

reincarnation, there was something that felt right about Valerie's account. On some level it seemed to fit. For one thing, as a child I had a strange, powerful attraction to needles.

One aspect that stands out in my memory of that night was when I asked Valerie where she was. Her answer sent a chill shooting through my veins. *'For you,'* she wrote, *'I am dead.'* There was a palpable weight to the word *'dead'* as it was spelled out. I suddenly felt as though I was tiptoeing in forbidden territory.

Swallowing hard I asked, "Can you read our minds?" The word baby popped into my head; with the enormity of the unknown I faced, I felt as vulnerable as one.

The pointer moved to *'Yes'*, and then spelled out the word *'baby'*.

The answer left me feeling disturbingly exposed. Though it would be a while yet before the fortress of my reality would completely come crashing down, the walls of the safe little box I knew as my world were starting to crack.

At one point the board spelled *'kiss.'* Josh and I had probably already been in love for months, but there was a multitude of social constraints that kept us from expressing our feelings for one another. This single word opened a floodgate of held back emotions and gave us the courage to take the precarious step that we knew would have repercussions in our immediate community. When our lips touched I could almost feel electric currents moving through my cells, opening me to a wider, riskier version of reality.

Before we finished the session Valerie told us we could speak to her again, but not to tell anyone about the experience.

...End Sample...