

Engella's travels

A short story from the universe of Cosmic Consciousness

by Mike Longmeadow

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1

Engella was beginning to feel tired from the constant doubts that were expressed against her ideas about the influence particle physics could have on our psychic environment. She had based her master's degree on the theory evoked by Wolfgang Pauli and Carl Jung about the existence of an energy field that surrounds the earth which is connected to each human's subconscious. Carl Jung had coined the term collective unconscious as an attempt to give it some credibility. It encompassed the notion that each person's subconscious is connected to a wider energy grid that has influence over our conscious minds in incomprehensible ways. Engella's research into Richard Feynman and Enrico Fermi's exploration of Pauli's work had brought her to the certainty that to make her thesis work, multi disciplinary research was key. And not merely within the scientific community. She felt that to fully understand the notion of collective unconsciousness, there needed to be a merging of contrasting philosophies.

Engella was sure of one thing, science and spirituality were destined to merge. Her understanding of the human nature was something she had created on her own, forging a philosophy based on the understanding we must balance the dark and the light in our souls to thrive. She knew she could defend her view if challenged but wasn't unfavorable to accepting change when confronted with higher truths. This intellectual approach also made it harder for her to make a point, as she had to constantly battle her own perspective on any given subject before being able to give a clear answer.

One morning, she awoke to the realization the time was now. She needed to leave her academic confines and explore the spiritual world to be able to further understand her own developing theory. She went to the university to settle the administrative obligations about her planned absence. After absentmindedly filling out some forms, entering unknown as an answer to the questions that related to the duration of her absence, Engella left the university. She was unsure she would ever return. With the help of her mentor, she had secured some interviews with various spiritual leaders scattered around the world. Wanting to make sure she covered all the bases, Engella was adamant on meeting with representatives of as many creeds as possible. Although she knew she had to delve deeper into the spiritual realm, she also knew she had to keep part of her mind in the scientific field. Her thesis depended on it.

Her first stop was a couple of miles outside the city, at a temple where her mentor goes to spend the occasional weekend for spiritual healing. People could reserve a room and spend the weekend with the permanent residents who were following the teachings of a guru who had incorporated Buddhist and western philosophies into a way of life. They lived like Buddhist monks, but followed Jesuit traditions as well. In this place, everything was accomplished while in contemplation and silence, the act of speaking reserved for important occasions or to guide a newly arrived guest.

Engella stepped off the bus two blocks away from the temple, her head spinning with questions. How would they greet her? She certainly wasn't the first university student to get an interview with members of this temple, would they see her as another soul to convert, or a vacationing parishioner? Would they accept her scientific approach? While these thoughts flooded her mind, she reached the temple. Walking up a steep but short staircase that led to the front door, she tried to gain some control over her spinning mind. She didn't know why, but she felt as nervous as a schoolgirl entering a new class. She paused before pushing the door, taking a deep breath as she thought of all the work that had brought her here while she waited for her mind to calm itself.

Once she managed to settle down, Engella pushed on the large wooden door and walked in. The room she entered was a large one, decorated with highly detailed stained-glass. Different statues adorned the pillars that supported the vaulted ceiling. The inner dome was decorated with gold trimmings and detailed paintings. Engella noticed that the details within the paintings were representations of biblical stories that had been reinterpreted. She was surprised to find so much opulence in the place, as Buddhist and Jesuit monks typically lived in poverty, relying on donations from the community for sustenance. Maybe they inherited an old church and decided to keep its past alive? She didn't know. And if she thought about it a little, when one exists in silence, manual activity becomes the language of choice — hence the art on the walls. Engella admired any community that chose to live in silence. She felt she couldn't adhere to such a discipline. Even when she meditated, she had to do it with a mantra. For Engella, sound was the bearer of secrets, whether it comes by way of music or her surroundings. The respect she had for the permanent residents was complete, and she promised herself she would cherish their reality for her time here.

Engella looked around the room looking for someone who could help her. There were people scattered about, most of them kneeling at a pew, praying or meditating. She noticed one man who was seemingly on clean up duty. She went to him.

"Hello, my name is Engella Iblis."

She paused, as the man didn't respond in any way to her approach. Then he raised his head and jumped back at her sight.

"Whoa, sorry, I didn't see you there." He said as he pulled out ear buds that were blasting out some hard rock music, which made Engella smile. "How can I help you?" He said bowing his head.

"Hello, my name is Engella Iblis, I was supposed to meet with someone."

The man still didn't react although this time he heard her. Engella felt a twang of impatience rise in the pit of her stomach as he leisurely wrapped his ear buds around his hand looking at her. Before she could spoil the moment with an impatient gesture, he spoke up.

"You look different from what I imagined." He said, after which he started to put away his broom, bucket and rags with the slow and deliberate motions of someone who has all the time in the world. Engella watched him with a growing sense that she would soon grab his tools and shove them away, so they could move on to welcoming her and getting on with the interview. But she restrained herself and decided to survey his excruciatingly slow pace as a lesson on the life they lived. As impatient as she was to delve into deeper discussions, this man's demeanor was a reminder to be alert for anything that could help her in her current pursuit. She realized that answers and insights might not specifically come from actual discussions. They could manifest themselves as moments, sounds, events or even emotions that could carry as much information as a three-hour conversation. She hoped she would be able to recognize the situation if that happens. The man finished putting away his cleaning tools and turned to Engella.

"Now then, do you prefer to stay here or go to the back?"

Engella was surprised by the question. But curious to see more of this place, the decision was easy.

"I would prefer if we went to the back."

The man agreed with a nod and began to walk unhurriedly towards the back of the main hall. As they passed the door leading to the resident's quarters, Engella was shocked at how sparse this side of the temple was compared to the main room. Plain plaster walls with basic brown doors were everything the corridor had to offer visually, along with weak light bulbs hanging from a single wire tucked into the ceiling. The hallway was probably a hundred feet deep, with a door every five feet or so. The man stopped at one door and opened it.

"Come on in, it isn't much, but you'll be quiet here." He stretched his arm to invite her in.

Engella walked into a room that had nothing but a single bed and a dresser, with a minuscule window letting in a sliver of light.

"How come it's so opulent in the main room and so spartan on this side?" She asked, unable to keep the question to herself. He looked at her and smiled.

"Simple. What is out in the main hall is for the public. It's our responsibility to show the beauty humans are capable of producing, while back here is the place we come to for rest and heal spiritually." He then added; "At first, we moved into a long-forgotten church and most of the

windows and paintings were pretty much destroyed. We decided to remake the room as it had once stood, but if you look at the artwork attentively, you will see that we have put our own twist on the images, without erasing the story that was once told.”

The man seemed proud to share this, as his shoulders squared up and his chest began to bulge while he spoke. Then he regained his composure and slumped back to a humbler stance, letting his shoulders droop a little and placing his hands in front of him in a cupped position.

“I’m sorry,” he said. “I get excited when I think of all the wonderful hours we put into the main hall. Its beauty reflects the pleasure we had rebuilding it.” He smiled from ear to ear. “I hope that helps you clarify everything. Breakfast is served at seven AM, in the main hall.”

He then turned and left the room, wishing Engella a good night. As the door closed, she wasn’t sure if someone else would come to speak with her. Could it be they misinterpreted her request and thought she wanted a weekend retreat? She looked around the room and decided to settle herself as comfortably as possible and stay the night. She would clear this up in the morning, and a night in a quiet place could help her. Engella pulled out a notepad and a pen and sat cross-legged on the bed.

She awoke the next morning, pulled from sleep by the almost imperceptible sounds of people moving around in the corridor beyond the door. Her notepad was open on the floor, with the pen laying next to it. She seemed to have blackened a couple of pages with some drawings that she didn’t remember doing. As she picked up the notepad, Engella remembered having a strange dream, but couldn’t recall the details. She looked at the drawing and turned back the pages. She had drawn on five of them, each one a different angle on what seemed to be the same image. This had to be what she saw during her dream, as if she had tried to make a composite sketch to help her show what she saw. It looked like she was drawing a dark landscape that was peppered with fireflies or stars. The landscape was out of focus somehow, as if overshadowed by some quasi opaque cloud she drew by tracing short lines throughout the illustrations. Someone knocked at the door. Engella went to open, but no one was there. People were walking by, headed to the main hall for breakfast. She joined in without question and went to have her meal. People were sitting around a large wooden table that ran along the back wall of the hall.

Everyone ate in silence, and once finished, either returned to their room or left. Engella finished her plate and decided to wait, thinking someone might call on her to have an actual discussion about the reasons for her visit. The room gradually emptied, and no one came. One man was cleaning up, but undoubtedly had no intention to spark up a conversation as he went about his business head down, focused on cleaning up and nothing more. Engella waited for another hour before returning to her room. She gathered her belongings and went to find the main office. They had obviously thought she wanted a weekend retreat, and she needed to rectify this. Beyond the corridor of doors in the back was an emergency exit and the main hall wasn’t connected to any waiting room or office. Thinking one of the doors in the back must be the

office, Engella went to try to speak with someone. All she got were head nods or shoulder shrugs when she asked if she could speak with someone about the reason for her visit. She left the place disappointed she couldn't have any meaningful discussions but was curious about the pages she blackened in her notebook. Now, she needed to find the meaning behind the drawings, she knew her mind would fixate on it.

2

Still perplexed from her non meeting with the earlier group of spiritual explorers, Engella arrived at her new destination filled with anxiety. Was this trip promised to fail? The people she was meeting had no reason to accept her research pursuits. If she thought that she would be exchanging with eager participants, in reality she was walking into closed doors and closed minds. She stopped on the porch of a church and took a deep breath before walking in. The door echoed throughout the inside as it closed with a loud clang. Engella stood besides the stoup and dipped her fingers in the holy water.

“You shouldn’t do that.” Said a voice she couldn’t see.

Engella pulled her hand away as if burned, looking for the source of the voice. A young priest walked into sight. He was smiling, which reassured her a little, worried that she had made a serious faux pas. He invited her to join him, and they left the nave by a side door. After walking along a strangely long corridor that bared no doors, they entered an office. It seemed small, but that might have been because of the large desk in the middle. It took up most of the space, making the wall behind the desk the only place any storage shelves were present. A large window with thick drapes allowed a single sun ray in. It bathed an armchair with its light.

“Almost seems like a sign, doesn’t it?”

The priest was looking at her with smiling eyes, hoping for a reaction on her part.

“Don’t know about that, but it will be nice to have a warm seat.”

Engella returned the priest’s gaze, unable to hide a smile. They broke out in a joyous laugh and sat at their respective seat. The priest was relieved Engella wasn’t here to beg for money, and she was relieved he wasn’t on some sort of conversion trip. Both now fully at ease with one and other, Engella started.

“The reason I wanted to speak with you was to have an exchange on the gap that exists between scientific research and spiritual pursuits.” She paused, waiting to see if the priest wanted to intervene, which he didn’t. “I’m at the start of a doctorate that will be centered on the idea that some shamanistic and spiritual approaches to a variety of problems have real scientific value. Also, that some scientific theories have deep spiritual meaning when we look at them with a different lens.” Engella looked straight at the priest. “How do you see your faith, your beliefs in this context?”

He took a moment, rubbing his chin to signify to Engella he was pondering her words.

“Well, first off, you say belief, I say truth. You know, I’m aware most miracles are scientifically explainable, but to me, that doesn’t take away the fact a miracle is possible. Even if you explain it away with science, the impact on the psyche is still incredibly strong. That’s something that emanates from our soul and cannot be discounted.”

Engella smiled at his comment.

“My point exactly.” She said. “Whether we look at a situation with scientific logic or spiritual perception, there’s always something missing. I believe that’s because we have reached a time in human history where both philosophies are heading in the same direction. There are people who think we must make a choice between scientific advancement and spiritual pursuits, I say we must merge the two together.” Engella paused, surprised she was getting so worked up. “I mean, it might be represented by two parallel philosophies, it could be by way of an accumulation of single events that come to change the fabric of our existence, I don’t know. What I do know is that we have to change our outlook on the way we confront problems.”

The priest seemed to take offense to her last remark and sat back, crossing his arms on his chest.

“How could that happen? If I’m comfortable with my truth, why would I consider changing my outlook?” He looked at Engella with stern eyes as he asked his question.

“Because it won’t nullify your belief. It can even make it stronger.” She said. “For example, if you accept that Jesus had medical knowledge that helped Lazarus “rise”, it doesn’t take away from the spectacular act he accomplished. If anything, I feel it raises Him to an even higher level to know he possessed such great knowledge.”

The priest unfolded his arms, surprised by her answer.

“That’s a risk I wouldn’t be ready to take. Faith doesn’t need proof; it merely needs conviction. It’s my job to keep the flock in tune with God’s message and I don’t see how I could realize that if I was to integrate notions of science in the interpretations of biblical writings.” He raised his hand. “That will be enough for today. I thought we would be having a more personal conversation, but if your goal is to discredit my faith, I must ask you to leave.”

Engella was startled.

“I’m not challenging your faith in any way. What I’m saying is you could make it stronger. You could bring your followers to higher knowledge.”

Her argument didn't sway the priest, who was already at the door, holding it open for her to leave.

"I respect your quest, but I can't take part in something that will subject the foundations of my faith to philosophical tremors. When someone comes to me, they seek personal guidance, which I give them. Their questions are always of a private nature and integrating cold logic into my guidance would cause confusion."

As he said this, he placed his hand on Engella's back, pushing her out the door.

"But..." Was all she managed to say before being pushed out.

The door closed, leaving Engella stranded. She wondered what she might have said to trigger this. Undaunted by the priest's lack of openness, she reached into her bag and pulled out her notepad. She wrote down one word; acceptance. She was beginning to realize that the change she's proposing would be a hard sell in the end.

Engella looked at her schedule and laughed. If every meeting was to be so short, she would be back at the university in a couple of months at most. And with nothing to show for her travels. Her next stop was in a Mosque. At this point she knew she wouldn't gather much information by confronting people's beliefs. She realized she may need to broaden her search to meet with communal groups as well just to get some data to work with. She was afraid the religious and spiritual leaders she had on her list now would all be refractory to her line of questioning. She decided to expand to more multi-faith groups and see what kind of data that could produce.

3

Engella settled into bed after going over her line of questioning, trying to see if she could soften her approach or at least find a way to extend the meetings, have more meaningful conversations. Sleep descended fast on her, as she slipped into a deep slumber in minutes. She awoke in a dream, surrounded by pictures of her at every moment in her life hanging from strings that disappeared into the sky. A voice rang out.

“This is you; you are everything, yet you are alone.”

Engella walked around in the maze of pictures, not even recognizing herself in many of them. She was surprised to feel the air on her skin in the dream. It felt as though she was physically present. The sensation she felt in this place was magical. Her whole body was imbued with a deep sensation of freedom. Here, the limitations of the physical world seemed to have no hold. She walked cautiously; afraid she might start flying if she wasn't careful. A wide smile spread across her face as she looked at photos of herself at different ages. Those she recognized filled her heart with bliss, the memories of these moments still alive in her mind. The same voice as before then rang out.

“We will speak soon.”

Then the sky opened and Engella was sucked into the void that had ripped across the sky. If she tried to resist at first, she realized there would be no fighting this. Her body was pulled from the ground with the same disregard as a dry leaf is twisted up in the air by the wind in the fall. As she approached the opening, the light became too bright to handle, and she closed her eyes.

She awoke in her bed, sweat running down her face and back, spreading to the sheets. She couldn't go back to sleep. It wasn't a little damp; the bed was drenched in sweat. She got up to look for fresh linens, thinking the hotel may leave an extra set in the closet. Her dream was already fading in her mind, but Engella could recall feeling she was physically there. This gave her hope she was following the right track and saw the dream as a sign to keep pushing. This kind of dream was consistent with a great variety of beliefs that regard our soul as a transient being capable of traveling to different realms. She took note of what she remembered and proceeded to pack up her gear and leave for her next destination. As she walked out the door of her room, the dream was a long-gone memory, the words scribbled in her notepad the sole remnants of the event.

She hopped into a taxi to get to the airport, her head full of contradicting thoughts on how to adapt her approach based on these first meetings. Engella had begun this journey with the

hopes of deepening her understanding of human nature. But the first meetings seem to show she will have to fight against preconceived notions of faith and belief which block any effort to open the discussion to constructive exchanges. If she expected the people she was meeting to boast about their own faith, she didn't expect resistance or unwillingness to discuss candidly about our interpretation of reality. Engella often wondered if her interpretation that we are all both light and dark was valid. She thought the pilgrimage she had embarked on would bring more clarity, but was now fighting the urge to quit, repulsed by the lack of input she had gathered so far. The taxi reached the airport without a hitch and Engella embarked on the next part of her journey, forcing herself on the plane, repeating to herself the best was yet to come. Although she couldn't bring herself to believe anything would change, her mantra was enough to get her onboard her flight. As soon as it took off, Engella was overwhelmed by the need to sleep. After the flight attendant brought her a blanket and pillow, Engella laid on her side in the fetal position since she had no one next to her and fell asleep almost instantly.

Within seconds of falling asleep, Engella was back in the room where the pictures of her life were hanging. Realizing she remembered everything from the other dream, she wondered why she came back to this place and began to focus on finding the reason she's here. She walked around, glancing at the pictures as she passed them, not seeing anything that could explain this dream. Although the sensations she had last time were confusing, she now felt comfortable in this environment. She had studied the possibilities of having waking dreams but didn't expect them to feel like this. As she thought she was reaching the end of the "picture room", one large photo dropped in front of her. It seemed to be a picture of her, but she couldn't make out when or where this was. She was standing in the middle of some sort of large permanent looking campsite, smiling broadly. Behind the photo was an open landscape that looked to Engella like desert fauna. Engella couldn't take her eyes off the photo when the voice she heard the last time spoke up.

"Beyond this photo is your destiny. What lies beyond will be difficult to understand, you have yet to live it. For now, return to your realm, we will speak again."

Engella awoke startled, the flight attendant poking her on the shoulder.

"I'm sorry I had to wake you. You can't lay down like that during the flight." He said curtly.

The attendant walked away in a huff, Engella laughing at his frustration. She sat up and shook away the cobwebs of sleep in her mind. What did those dreams mean? The plane began its descent as Engella promised herself to try to return to that place the next time she slept.

For the next two months, she met with spiritual leaders of a wide variety of faiths, gleaning bits of information she could use in her thesis but getting more and more discouraged at the

incapacity everyone had to open their minds to different lines of thought. At the university, she was constantly challenged on what her colleagues called her “esoteric musings”, throwing scientific facts at her as if they held every truth. But somehow she expected that from them. After all, they had been educated to believe science had all the answers, so she didn’t hold any grudge in that regard. But she hoped she would meet with more open-minded people during this pilgrimage. Thinking they were the product of spiritual teachings; they should hypothetically be more receptive to her theories. But apart from two meetings, she had met fierce resistance. She felt as though they thought she was there to challenge them to rescind their faith. Adding to her frustration, the dreams were becoming more and more enigmatic. She could never remember much, trying to jot down what she could recall in her notebook. She did remember a voice communicating with her, but beyond that, everything was foggy. She looked at her notes as if they represented someone else’s situation, unable to evoke any image or memory of the room of pictures she noted over and over in her notebook.

Her next meeting was with a Mormon priest. With everything that had happened so far, she expected this one to be short. But she didn’t count on the fact the priest she was meeting with had a strong propensity to talk a lot. Engella started with a bang, eager to leave at the first sign of resistance on the priest’s part.

“Where does scientific research fit into your sermons, and by extension, your everyday life?”

The priest chuckled.

“Straight to the point, huh?” He straightened himself in his chair, seemingly eager to get this conversation to another level. “Well... I appreciate the discoveries made to better all our lives, but I’m skeptical it will find the answers we’re really asking.”

His answer excited Engella. *Finally, someone who’s ready to debate openly*, she thought.

“But doesn’t that view limit our capacity to better find new ways to advance? I mean, if we sit back and wait for things to happen, doesn’t that nullify human evolution?” She asked, challenging the priest.

Excited to have this conversation as well, he smiled at her intervention.

“But when you look at something from God’s perspective, you don’t need to understand everything around us. Confidence in His all-knowing power is enough to let us navigate our lives with joy and serenity.”

The priest looked at Engella defiantly, as if saying; “Come on, break down that argument.”

“Which is the same thing if you look at something from a scientific perspective. There’s a firm belief in the scientific community that all the answers are there, waiting for us to find them. But I have two questions for you. First, how do you explain that God is sentient? I mean with all the chaos that exists, it’s hard to conceive that a sentient being produced this. And second, wouldn’t a more observant mind be a plus for the community? Believing that scientific research can further advance our knowledge on a spiritual level could be something the church adheres to, no?” Engella shot back the same defiant glance at the priest, who laughed.

“This reminds me of my college years.” He said, going off on a tangent. “We would go to a restaurant once a week to unwind. The food was good, and it felt nice to pull away from the confines of the dormitory once in a while. One time, there was a group of Utah university physics students who overheard us talking about a course on sermon writing. What followed were animated but respectful exchanges. We would expose our personal philosophical positions and argue to no end. Those meetings happened about ten times.” He cleared his throat. “To summarize, I agree with you that open communication between two philosophies that apparently clash is a good thing. What I don’t believe is that it can help us elevate our minds. In my experience, the result is more along the lines of philosophical entrenchment.”

Engella didn’t know how to interpret his last remark and remained silent. After mulling over a response, she tried a different approach.

“What about dreams, what are your thoughts?”

“Super important, without a dream, there’s nothing to reach for.” The priest looked at her curiously. “Do scientists have no dreams?” He said this with his tongue literally poking his cheek out.

Engella rolled her eyes.

“Not in the sense of striving for something. I mean dreams we have when we sleep. There're many cultures that believe dreams represent a different reality. Others believe it’s a connection to other worlds. Not to mention those who say it’s a peek into the future.”

Engella paused to gauge the priest’s reaction. He remained unfazed, so she continued.

“For me, it shows our mind a different layer of something our consciousness has absorbed any given day. It’s a light show produced by our brain that shows us the memory being stored. Or at least it's what I thought.”

Engella stopped short about telling the priest about her recent dreams. Her grasp on them was so tenuous, she didn’t think she could withstand any level of questioning. But her comment peaked the priest’s interest. He squirmed in his seat, as if leaning in to tell a secret.

“I do have strange dreams, sometimes,” he whispered, “if that’s your question, the answer is simple, God is speaking.” He then leaned back, satisfied by his answer.

“And would you accept the idea that each human’s subconscious minds are linked together in this realm? Couldn’t this be the plain of existence where time and reality are present but different? Is it possible that God created this place for our souls to remain eternally linked?”

The last question shook the priest, who’s cheeks became red in a hot second. He took a breath to calm himself down.

“I’ve actually had this discussion before, in the restaurant I told you about. After long deliberation, I conceded that the dream realm could be some sort of purgatory where our souls aren’t constrained by the laws that govern our physical lives. But there's no eternal link in this realm, since the dead souls go to heaven. I still stand by that.”

The priest placed his hands on the table, signifying to Engella that the conversation was over. She got up, they shook hands, and she left. Walking out to the street, she pulled out her schedule. There were almost no meetings left on her agenda, but she was nowhere close to having gathered enough data for her doctoral thesis. Engella was bemused. Shouldn’t the spiritual leaders be the ones most open to the impossible? Their refusal to discuss beyond the realm of their own personal faith discouraged Engella, who couldn’t understand this stance. Adding to her confusion were the strange dreams that were inhabiting her nights, seemingly calling her to another place. She decided to return to the hotel and reserved three extra days, wanting to erase the jet lag from her tired body. As she returned to her room, she dropped her bags and slipped into bed for a nap, happy to have a couple of days off. She would reschedule her coming meetings tomorrow.

After a long deliberation with herself, Engella decided to take a break and put her thesis on hold. She hoped she would continue to meet as many spiritual explorers as she could, that over time she could gather enough data to go back to the university. Years passed, and during this time sleep had become a rare commodity. She hadn’t spoken with any new spiritual guru since the Mormon priest, feeling unable to suppress the feeling of discouragement her research was causing in her heart and mind. What was most alarming for her was the fact she hadn’t had any dreams in a long time. Not only the ones that made her scribble incomprehensible drawings in her notebook, no dreams at all.

One night, as usual, sleep didn't come. Engella’s mind was racing in all directions, not letting her close her eyes. Using some breathing techniques to calm her mind down, she couldn't appreciate how splendidly it worked as she slipped into sleep without even realizing it. She awoke in the picture filled room, feeling as if she had been here just yesterday. Except this time

the photos were different. She still recognized herself in them but couldn't remember any of the moments they represented. A light breeze arose, and the photos began to wiggle under its impulse. The sound they made was the same as a tree makes when its leaves dance around in the wind. Engella could make out the smell of flowers in the air and sounds of human activity could be overheard beyond the border marked by the pictures. Then someone tapped her on the shoulder, and she turned to see who it was.

"Hello," she said, surprised at the calmness she displayed.

"Hello. You must follow me, there's a place I need you to see."

Engella could see a presence that was bathed in light, but couldn't make out any distinguishing features, which troubled her.

"Why?" She asked. "What's there?"

"Answers. Your true destiny."

The entity tried to pull her dreaming energy, but Engella resisted, surprised she could consciously choose to stand her ground.

"My destiny is my own, you can't impose one on me."

She didn't know where that came from, but the comment made Engella feel powerful, as she could feel the entity was pulling at her. Knowing she could resist, Engella wondered if she could pull it back.

"Who are you?" She asked forcefully.

"I was tasked to find you. We need to meet with you." He answered flatly.

His answer threw Engella, who let down her guard and abruptly felt herself being pulled along. The surrounding landscape was shadowy, like the darkness on a moonless night in the countryside. Star like specks of light were sprinkled across the sky. Except Engella could see that the lights on the horizon weren't stars. They moved around freely, looking like super fast fireflies. The drawings she had made came into her mind. The man then stopped.

"You must come here." A rusted road sign appeared before her eyes.

Engella opened her eyes in the hotel bed and grabbed her notebook. She jotted down the name of the village, then tried to remember the rest of the dream but could do nothing more than pluck snippets of information from her mind. Her consciousness was somehow blocking the

memories from the dream. Instead of racking her brain to remember, she looked up the name of the village and found it was situated in the Sonora region of Mexico.

“My next stop.” She said to herself.

Engella packed her bags, went to settle her bill with the hotel she was staying at, and left for Mexico, unaware she was entering a whole new phase of her life. She felt reinvigorated, as if all the energy stored in the time she was immobile was surging forth.

At the airport she had difficulty finding some transportation. The village was isolated, and no one wanted to lose precious time going down there. Then a man tapped her on the shoulder precisely the same way as had happened in her dream. Engella jumped and turned to see a small, smiling man.

“I’m here to bring you to the village.” He said.

Engella recognized him at once, which filled her with a mixture of joy and anxiety. Although she couldn’t be sure this man was the one from her dream, she followed him to a run-down vehicle you could hardly define as a car and got in. The drive to the village was bumpy and loud. As much as Engella would have liked to admire the landscape, she was too busy hanging on as they could feel every single bump in the road due to the vehicle’s non-existent suspension. About an hour into the drive, the vehicle died on them.

“You go ahead, I’ll wait here for help.” The man said as he pointed down the road towards a village. The rooftops were dancing in the midday heat and Engella smiled.

She hesitated, then began walking down the road. She noticed the surrounding trees were making the same noise that she heard in her dream under the impulse of the breeze. Almost pulling out her notebook to take note of that, she decided to let things happen this time, feeling this meeting would be different from the others. She reached the village in minutes. A woman came to meet her.

“Welcome, we’ve been waiting.”

She took Engella’s hand and guided her to a small house.

The end