

THE PEARL WITHIN
DISCOVERING THE RICHES
OF THE UNDERWORLD

PHILIP LEVINE, M.A.

Copyright © 2003 by Philip Levine

Contact:

Philip Levine
490 Spurwink Avenue
Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107
philip@cosmicwindow.com

Appendix

A Taste of Alchemy: Jung and the Fountain of Treviso

If thou knowest how to moisten this dry earth with its own water, thou wilt loosen the pores of the earth, and this thief from outside will be cast out with the workers of wickedness, and the water, by an admixture of the true Sulphur, will be cleansed from the leprous filth and from the superfluous dropsical fluid, and thou wilt have in thy power the fount of the Knight of Treviso, whose waters are rightfully dedicated to the maiden Diana. Worthless is this thief, armed with the malignity of arsenic, from whom the winged youth fleeth, shuddering. And though the central water is his bride, yet dare he not display his most ardent love to-wards her, because of the snares of the thief, whose machinations are in truth unavoidable...²

THE FOREMOST STUDENT OF MEDIEVAL ALCHEMY in the 20th century was Carl G. Jung. His dreams led him to its study—even though he was a scientifically trained physician—and he spent decades researching and writing about obscure texts. He was not constrained by the prejudices of his education or religious upbringing. Let us look at one such jewel, buried but not lost in the alchemical writings of the 17th century (1645). This is part of his interpretation of the above “Fountain of Treviso” :

If thou knowest how to moisten this dry earth with its own water, thou wilt loosen the pores of the earth, ...

“If you will contemplate your lack of fantasy, of inspiration and inner aliveness, which you feel as sheer stagnation and a barren wilderness, and impregnate it with the interest born of alarm at your inner death, then something can take shape in you, for your inner emptiness conceals just as great a fullness if only you will allow it to penetrate into you. If you prove receptive to this ‘call of the wild’, the longing for fulfillment will quicken the sterile wilderness of your soul as rain quickens the dry earth.”

... and this thief from outside will be cast out with the workers of wickedness,...

“You are so sterile because, without your knowledge, something like an evil spirit has stopped up the source of your fantasy, the fountain of your soul. The enemy is your own crude sulphur, which burns you with the hellish fire of desirousness... You would like to make gold because ‘poverty is the greatest plague, wealth the highest good.’ You wish to have results that flatter your pride, you

² C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, CW 14 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 160-168.

expect something useful, but there can be no question of that as you have realized with a shock. Because of this you no longer even want to be fruitful, as it would only be for God's sake but unfortunately not for your own."

... And the water, by an admixture of the true Sulphur, will be cleansed from the leprous filth and from the superfluous dropsical fluid...

"Therefore away with your crude and vulgar desirousness, which childishly and shortsightedly sees only goals within its own narrow horizon... The water of your interest is not pure, it is poisoned by the leprosy of desirousness which is the common ill. You too are infected with this collective sickness. Therefore... consider: What is behind all this desirousness? A thirsting for the eternal, which as you see can never be satisfied with the best... The more you cling to that which all the world desires, the more you are Everyman, who has not yet discovered himself and stumbles through the world like a blind man leading the blind with somnambulistic certainty into the ditch."

... The unconscious demands your interest for its own sake and wants to be accepted for what it is. Once the existence of this opposite is accepted, the ego can and should come to terms with its demands...

... And thou wilt have in thy power the Fount of the Knight of Treviso, whose waters are rightfully dedicated to the maiden Diana...

"The ever-flowing fountain expresses a continual flow of interest toward the unconscious, a kind of constant attention or '*religio*', which might be called devotion. The crossing of unconscious contents into consciousness is thus made considerably easier, and this is bound to benefit the psychic balance in the long run... If attention is directed to the unconscious, the unconscious will yield up its contents, and these in turn will fructify the conscious like a fountain of living water. For consciousness is just as arid as the unconscious if the two halves of our psychic life are separated."

