

Creativity as Mediator Between the Worlds, or Wild Dog's Kingdom

Emily Hanlon

Creativity is a mysterious journey that connects us to the unseen worlds. There was a time when all people had access to the unseen worlds, although it was the shamans, story tellers and healers who mediated between the worlds as they journeyed into the Mystery and interpreted the images found there. Today we have our contemporary journeyers into the cosmic unseen worlds--many creative people are such journeyers--but as a culture we have lost the connection to our instinctual nature. With the development of the human brain and the march of history, the pendulum has swung so far that an overwhelming majority of people do not consider the journey into the unseen worlds a possibility, much less a necessity.

It has become trite to say that modern society has lost its soul, but in truth, that's just what has happened. Soul is something that cannot be experienced in the outer world. It cannot be understood, evaluated, judged. Soul is the groundswell of the inner world, and the eyes with which we view the outer world are blind when turned inward. It is only with the eyes of the heart--the instinctual nature of our deep internal knowing--that we traverse the inner landscape and find our way to soul.

If our outer eyes are perceptive, however, and guided by our inner knowing, we can see the outcome of mystery. This happens when, for example, the invisible becomes suddenly visible, or the impossible becomes suddenly possible in ways that cannot be explained by the rational mind. Such things often happen on both a small and large scale, but in Western culture we are quick to attribute them to coincidence; if coincidence isn't sufficient, then the doubting Thomas is convinced it can "figure out" a rational explanation of the mystery.

How much richer life can be when we are open to Mystery. But to do this, we must be brave warriors of the spirit, with creativity as both our fire and our sword. I see Creative Soul Works as a community in which we support each other as we journey into the unseen worlds to bring back sacred knowledge. We support each other despite our fears and insecurities. We guide one another as we reclaim the role of mediator between the worlds.

What follows is a recent experience from my life in which the Mystery was revealed and, I believe, I unexpectedly became a mediator between the worlds.

About six months before my husband's beloved dog D'art died, he had two dreams. In the first dream, D'art ran off with a pack of dogs. My husband, Ned, feared he would never see D'art again, but finally the pack reappeared. The first

two dogs ran past him, neither of them D'art. The third dog thankfully was. As D'art raced in great joy he called out (in English!) "Dad, I went to my kingdom and it was so wonderful!"

In the second dream, about a month later, Ned was walking down a road when a pack of wild dogs raced by him. One wild dog broke suddenly from the pack and, looking up at Ned with great love, said, "I missed you as much as you missed me." My husband drew back in fear and wild dog ran off. When he woke up, he was very sad that he hadn't embraced Wild Dog. To this day, whenever he thinks of these dreams, tears come to his eyes.

About six months later, D'art became seriously ill. When the decision to ease his passing was made, the vet, who is a family friend, came to the house. It was about 8 pm on a lovely summer evening. Any thoughts of Wild Dog and Dart's kingdom were far away. We were grieving for the loss of D'art, and I was concerned about the impact Dart's passing was having on my husband. But we knew the time had come, and Ned, Myself, my son and the vet formed an ad hoc circle around D'art.

I saw this circle of connection forming as Ned placed his hands on D'art. I knelt by his side with one hand on Ned and another on D'art. My son had his hands on D'art. The vet administered the drug into D'art with one hand while laying her other hand on D'art. We were all connected through D'art, who slipped into blessed calm as the vet administered a sedative. We sat in the deep silence of the unfolding mystery, and finally, the vet quietly asked Ned if he was ready. Ned nodded and within seconds Darty was gone.

Relieved by the stillness and the knowing that Dart's suffering was at an end, I closed my eyes. It was then that the inner world flew open. Instantly I saw a pack of dog spirits racing across a sun-drenched field. D'art, freed of a sick body, was bounding with the energy of a pup. He was racing to join his pack, and all of a sudden he turned toward me and sat, as if waiting. Our eyes met and I saw that gleefully naughty expression D'art wore when he was about to take off for parts unknown in the outer reality. But this time, he seemed to hesitate, and I felt he was asking me if it was all right to go. I nodded and called to him, "Safe journey, Darty! We love you!"

He looked at me one last time with such love and joy, then was on his feet and off and running with his pack of wild spirits, most assuredly to his kingdom! This was very real for me, but not something I felt Ned, our son or the vet would let in, and so I said nothing. We finally decided it was time to continue with the burial. Ned wrapped D'art in a sheet and carried him out to the grave my son had dug. It was a very big grave. D'art, a Rhodesian Ridgeback, weighed almost 100 pounds.

Ned laid him in the grave, we all said our goodbyes and began to shovel in the dirt. That's when we heard the first howl.

We live in the country, on a mountain, and there are only a few other houses near by, none of which had dogs. The howling was clearly coming from the woods that abuts our property. Now, however, there was not one but several dogs howling. It was an eerie, otherworldly sound and we all stopped and listened.

"Those aren't dogs," I said.

"Coyotes," said my son.

"Really?" asked the vet. She listened again and nodded. "Yes, I think they are coyotes. Do you often hear them?"

"No," I said. "There are coyotes around but we've never seen or heard them."

The whole time we were burying D'art, the howling continued, its song rising and falling. No one spoke. We were connected by this call of the wild. We haven't heard or seen another dog, much less a coyote, on the mountain since that night.

Were these coyotes? Were they wild dogs from Ned's dreams? Had D'art run into the wild of spirit with them? Were they welcoming him home? Thoughts such as these don't hold much interest for me; rather I am honored to have been a part of this mysterious opening. Even my husband and son, who are staunch believers in the what you see is what you get world, remain awed by this event. We don't speak about it often.

My family is fortunate to live in a place where silence and nature are ready companions. The most noise we hear are the birds, occasionally the neighbor's children, a lawn mower, snow blower, or helicopter, and the distant hum of a nearby parkway where no trucks are allowed. I feel certain that having the privilege of having the vet come to the house, of being by ourselves on the mountain on a serene summer evening, are part of what made this experience possible. Perhaps D'art's spirit and I, with my comfort in the unseen and my absolute belief in the power of creativity to mediate between the worlds, became the necessary mediators that night.

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