

# THE CRUCIBLE OF AWAKENING

Issue 17 September 2006

*Coming through the gates, coming through wild  
Legs a bronzed blur, heels winged delight  
Gates gaping green, inlaid with divine dreams  
Creamy clouds piled dark and boiling bright  
Blue burns the night  
Shivering with bottomless height*

*Coming through the gates, coming through wild  
Skinned to the core, hunger passing pride  
Off drops the armor, off comes the epic headgear  
Gone to shining nothing is the root of fear  
Blue burns the night  
The Supreme Dreamer closer than near*

*Coming through the gates, coming through wild  
Heart streaming through resurrected eyes  
Flesh earth and stars, mind cloudless sky  
Cradling the broken cities' concrete cry  
Blue burns the night  
Death is not the final goodbye*

*Coming through the gates, coming through wild  
Propelled far beyond the reach of mind  
The Great Secret needing no translation  
Understanding replaced by revelation  
Blue burns the night  
True is the light*

# The Dream's Petals Cradle Many a Viewfinder

The dream's petals cradle many a viewfinder.

Like disembodied gypsies, like midnight breezes restlessly adrift, like nothing in particular, a few thoughts wander through old rooms, trying to snare some attention, drumming up a dream. The feeling is that of spectral undersea ruins, lump-headed eels necking out of broken hulls like huge fanged grubs. But the threat does not run deep. Everything seems absorbable, permeable, edible, vividly different yet strangely similar, solidified by my step.

The dream gathers more focus, and an unknown woman soundlessly floats toward me. The floor's a patchwork, a fractured chessboard seemingly about to roll up. The woman has only one eye, in-between and slightly above where her eyebrows ought to be. She starts to leave, then spins around, pushing an immense solid metal box onto me. Quickly I step back, peculiarly unalarmed, and sit down cross-legged with my eyes lightly closed, waiting to be crushed, yet knowing I cannot be harmed. The dream vanishes. So do I.

So many rooms, so many dark and winding trails, the living and the dead so closely intertwined. And so many here yet already gone, refusing to give up the ghost. Dreams are what seem real when we are asleep. Is any thing really more real than a dream? To say it's all a dream is no consolation whatsoever. No "I" can stand apart from it all so as to realize that it's all a dream, for every "I" is itself but dreamstuff, regardless of its beliefs about itself and reality.

We talk of making up our mind, but we mostly just let our mind make us up. An entrancing fiction is the result, so convincingly personified that we take it to be us.

Our innocence doesn't easily outgrow its naiveté. Blinders come with the operational manual for incarnation. The whispers of other worlds get lost in the hustle and muscle of our overdeveloped concerns. Our romancing of tomorrow ties us to yesterday. Nothing lasts the way we want it to. Whether

or not we have what we want, we still experience pain. Worse, we continue dramatizing our pain, thereby turning it into suffering, while addicting ourselves to whatever most pleasurably or potently distracts us from our suffering.

What we refuse to face festers and multiplies within us — and also around us, as if magnetically drawn to us — until it literally takes our place, looking through our eyes and harnessing our energies to its own ends. This isn't necessarily the possession of horror films or voodooistic rites, but it is still possession.

What we suppress suppresses us.

Nevertheless, the opportunity remains the same. The bazaar comes smokily into view, its thousand chattering arms claiming our streets, its raucously clattering wares hauling in our eyes and appetites, its ancient voices calling us by names we've forgotten but not completely forgotten. Chickens run around in swaying wooden cages, their squawks barely heard, their already-torn heads waiting for the axe. Medicinal roots hang against the back walls of dusty stalls, their smell at once pungent and sweetly inviting, packed with labyrinthine power.

Chew on this. Bite into it. Let its bitter aromatics arouse more than your bile. Permit its ambered honey-arrows to unlock your skull, your breath, your dreams. Let its undulating valleys and succulent balm drown you in bliss-blossoms, even as its bloody courtyards echo with your long-ago cries. Do not let its excesses blind you to your own. Undress your pride, and wander a while with these wandering words, without needing to know where you'll be staying for the night.

Everyone is selling something. Like an old junkie once said, we all push our habits. And we are all looking for release from the pain of our habits' grip on us — for we don't have our habits, but they have us — which just creates more pain.

And addiction to release only deepens our addiction to the very pain or tension that makes such release “necessary”. There's more pleasure in removing tight shoes than comfortable shoes.

Self-suppression and its compensatory addictions eat away our days. A very different, much deeper dance calls to us, but we're committed elsewhere, or so it seems. We may be at different stages, but we're all in the same boat,

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as close to the threat of shipwreck as we are to being unthreatened by fear, loss, and radical change. The more fearful we are of making waves, the more the waves make us. To make wise use of our time in the boat is to recognize that it is already full of holes, already sinking, already empty. The bad news is that in trying to plug all the holes we only plug up ourselves. Avoiding death deadens us.

Let us move more upstream now: Only one sperm ordinarily reaches and penetrates the egg, but all the others, at essence, live through that primordial and totally absorbing arrival, literally dying into Life, reaching the egg through their shared sperm-ness, unless they remain stuck in — or identified with — their apparent separateness and dreams of being a sperm who *really* makes it.

And we are all sperm, at best swimming our heads off, and we're also the egg, the harbor of pure embrace, opening until there is only welcome, and we're also the matchmaker and the music and the dancefloor, the interactive space wherein it all occurs, and the power that makes it all possible. And more.

Though almost all sperm die before reaching the egg, at best living through the one or two that attain the goal, all of them matter, all are unique, all are individual and have the potential to be fully individual. And what is full or true individuality? It is not only unabashedly idiosyncratic, but also is in conscious, dynamic surrender to its Source, wholeheartedly participating in whatever contributes to its ripening, its transition from ego-centeredness to soul-centeredness.

Soul is the last frontier of individuality, existing as, but not only as, the self-illuminating interface between duality and nonduality. Soul is fearlessness incarnate. It doesn't mind death. In fact, many, many deaths constitute its ground. And many, many failures, failures that are gratefully taken as compost for awakening to What-Really-Matters.

The sacrifices required of us are overwhelming to whatever in us is less than soul-centered. "I" may claim to want Ultimate Freedom, God-Realization, etcetera, but no "I" really wants to be dethroned or made obsolete. Almost all of us would be terrified to not be centered by a particularized identity. So we constellate ourselves around the prevailing sensations associated with "I"-ness, rarely noticing that such "location" dislocates us from Being, corralling us in time.

Keeping exits open — confusing hypervigilance with genuine awareness — or keeping secret bank accounts — confusing being overinsured with taking care — keeps our awakening work halfhearted, partial, too low-risk, dulled by unnecessary safety nets. All the sperm die, all the waves end, but it's not the waste that it may seem to be, if the sperm or waves live wholeheartedly, for through such fullness some intimacy with what does not die inevitably occurs.

It's enough to derail regret, not to mention one's train of thought. Acorns that don't become oaks uncomplainingly serve as fertilizer for the rare few that do become oaks. They don't attempt to destroy or discredit those that outgrow their acorn-ness, and nor do they idolize them. The oak towers above the acorn, but does not look down upon it. So too with humans who have awakened from all dreams. It is the slumbering humans who want to tower above other humans, without undergoing the necessary trials that are essential for authentic awakening.

Making it wrong or disreputable or spiritually incorrect to be an acorn only needlessly complicates matters, given that just about all of us are still busy being acorns, brewing up quixotic mindstorms in a nutshell, dreaming of being other than ourselves. We as seeds struggle within our surrounding darkness, afraid to crack our seedcases beyond repair, mistrusting the green imperatives coiled deep within us.

We tend to keep our darkness in the shadows. We let ourselves be enlisted by our past, arming ourselves against what could truly liberate us. We thus become substrate for our dreams, inoculating ourselves against whatever disturbs our slumber.

No matter how many channels we now have, it's still the same damned set, edited and packaged for more than our pleasure and less than our need. Comfortably impaled on false altars, we continue practising the art of distracting ourselves from our pain, the very pain that, if awaredly entered, is our ticket to Freedom.

The dream's petals now birth "I"-dissolving viewfinders.

The ceiling and walls and floor now rocket far beyond the reach of thought. It's all edible in time. Eternity does nothing. So many rooms, so many dark and winding trails, so much sun and rain, all haunted by infinite possibility

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and infinite significance. Every story already dissolved in the Real. Recognition without a recognizer. Emptiness overflowing. Poetry outdancing meaning.

As everything falls away, everything is revealed. Familiarity is effortlessly consumed by Mystery, leaving us sufficiently decentralized to openly be, at least for a little while, the awakened essence of What-Really-Matters. No listener here, no note-taker, no author or authority, no sealed scribblings for future whatevers. No survivors. Just Existence, just Being, just the Is of is, utterly and unimaginably real.

Exactly now.

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Following is an excerpt from the Introduction to my upcoming book of poetry, which will include a CD of some of my poems set to music and sung by my wife Diane...

Poetry is what happens when language's preconceptual roots get lucidly and sensually entangled with transconceptual vision. New ground, fresh ground, surging with green, too wildly fertile not to give birth to the unseen.

Poetry is beauty in its spoken dimension, at once polished and raw, vast and minute, memorable and ephemeral.

Poetry is language that goes beyond language, holding the tiniest detail with care, extracting from it forgotten gems, hidden labyrinths, secret corridors, sudden reminders, misplaced universes.

Poetry is the soul's native tongue, awake to both the finest of distinctions and the most immense of realizations, holding both with equal curiosity and care.

Poetry is articulation that uses not only words, but also the spaces

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between, below, beside, and above words, spawning shapings of insight and realization which reel us into unsuspected depths of understanding. Realing us in...

What is the intoxicatingly sober, relentlessly lucid, viscerally trued, esthetically precise highlighter of significances large and small? Poetry.

Poetry is simply prose gone native, prose on the loose, skinny-dipping in felt significances, arranging itself so as to maximize the odds that it won't be read like standard fare, nor like a handful of symbols, nor like something in need of dissection.

Poetry says a lot without saying or having to say a lot, being just as intimate with existential paradox as it is with the soapy dishes that don't give a damn if whoever's washing them is young or old, wise or foolish, loose or tight, sinking or rising.

Poetry is what happens when we are outwritten by what we are writing, and not just outwritten, but outdanced, outshone, outlived.

Poetry wings the ordinary and roots the extraordinary.

Where prose reports, Poetry unveils.

Where prose marches, Poetry dances. Where prose makes sense, Poetry makes more than sense.

Prose proclaims the mystical to be ineffable, but Poetry gives it a voice, daring to express the supposedly inexpressible, while providing its audience with hearing aids and front-row seats.

Poetry is esthetically translated epiphany. All we need do is permit ourselves to see firsthand the dancing particles and pulsing fluidity in its crystallized presentations.

Poetry is more invitation than presentation...

## **BLOODSAP GREENING**

*Almost moist already shedding its cool  
The ground plunges up to meet my feet  
Rosemary and lemon balm rushing  
Straight from my fingertips to my brain  
Handfuls of basil exploding above my palate  
While a trace of rain blows electric and so soft  
The soil a barely burnt shade of dark  
Plumply atop with flowerbeds and uncurling green  
In an ultravivid lushly framed divinely edible scene  
Bloom-heavy vines wrap around me  
And so too the cool bliss of sunrise-petalled roses  
The soil singing with what stretches below it  
Tubes of sunlight stripe the garden  
And it all starts to silently and ecstatically scream  
The sap, the nectar, all the reaching green  
Green, green, so green, soaked in green  
My blood rushing without brakes  
Through my roots branches and trunk  
Fleshing out the pale flower atop my spine  
Fast expanding petals opening the roof of my skull  
While the ground pours up through my feet  
The breeze stained with lavender and traces of sea  
And through my eyes the gardener gazes  
Silently crying for this, no more than this  
Quietly working in even quieter bliss*

# FREEDOM THROUGH INTIMACY

## A Weekend Intensive For Couples

November 18th-19th, 2006

with **Robert Masters & Diane Bardwell**

Intimate relationship has immense transformational possibility, especially when we approach its difficulties as opportunities instead of as problems. Opportunities for what? To know ourselves more deeply, to love and live more fully, to become intimate with *all* that we are — in short, to be freed from our suffering.

In the liberating bondage of committed intimacy, we enter the One through the two, finding the Beloved in both depth and surface, so that the very details of daily life become a potent awakening path. Freedom through intimacy.

**This group is for couples who want a more conscious, loving, and liberating relationship with each other, and are ready to cut through whatever's in the way.**

**Even if you already have a good relationship, consider coming, and taking your relationship from good to great to what it really can be.**

Individual work will be given as much emphasis as couples work, using a spontaneously structured approach that creatively mixes psychotherapy, bodywork, dream exploration, spiritual practices, and dyadic deepenings.

**TUITION & LOGISTICS:** 10am to 6pm both days. Limited to 5 couples only. \$1250 plus GST per couple. \$300 deposit required.

***For more information or to register, contact  
info@RobertMasters.com***

# **RADICAL OPENING**

## **THREE DAYS OF GROUPWORK DEVOTED TO DEEP HEALING & AWAKENING**

**with**

**Robert Masters & Diane Bardwell**

**December 1st to 3rd, 2006, Brew Creek Lodge, BC**

This 3-day residential intensive is for those who want to make wise use of their difficulties and who are ready to work through whatever is obstructing their liberation. It is especially suited for those whose longing to be truly free is stronger than their longing to continue distracting themselves from their suffering.

The group will be small and intimate, being limited to 14 participants only, so that there is enough time for everyone to receive in-depth attention.

The group will involve therapy (in its focus on personal history), and will also involve much more than therapy, given its integral nature. Deep catharsis, psychodrama, and spiritual breakthroughs will flow in and out of each other during the group, in spontaneously apt ways. All emotions are welcome.

All kinds of issues and concerns — from the deepest trauma to the seemingly trivial — will be dealt with, through a dynamic, creative mix of psychotherapy, bodywork, spiritual disciplines, conscious movement, dreamwork, and group practices.

The atmosphere will be one of deep trust; the group will be a safe place to let go of being safe, providing a crucible not only for personal healing, but also for awakening from all of our entrapping dreams.

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Participants will learn to become more intimate with all that they are — dark and light, high and low, shallow and deep, neurotic and transcendent, dying and undying.

The structuring of the group will not be preset, but instead will arise in accordance with group and individual needs. Each participant will have an opportunity to work, in relevant detail and in sufficient depth, with his or her particular issues, and not necessarily just once in the group.

**LOCATION:** Brew Creek Lodge (15 minutes south of Whistler, BC), a magnificent, secluded resort featuring rustic luxury set amidst lush forest. Buffet breakfasts start the day; gourmet lunches and dinners (three courses) follow group sessions. A river flows directly below the group meeting room; previous participants have especially enjoyed braving the river's cool depths after spending some time in the hot tub right beside the river.

**FEE:** Tuition: \$775 plus GST.

Lodging & all meals: \$250 (includes hotel tax).

A deposit (nonrefundable after October 15, 2006) of \$200.00 is required.

**Contact [info@robertmasters.com](mailto:info@robertmasters.com) to register, or for more information. Registration as soon as possible is advised, as there are only 5 spaces left .**

# *Letting Go*

## **A DAY OF DEEP HEALING**

**October 14th, 2006, in White Rock, BC**

**with Robert Masters  
(assisted by Diane Bardwell)**

Real happiness takes root when our longing to be truly free is stronger — or permitted to be more central — than our longing to be distracted from our pain. In entering our pain, we lessen our suffering.

In this group we'll face, move toward, and learn to make wise use of our pain and difficulties. The group will involve therapy (in its focus on personal history), and it will also involve much more than therapy, given its integral nature and intention. Deep catharsis, psychodrama, and spiritual breakthroughs will flow in and out of each other during the group, in spontaneously apt ways. All emotions are welcome.

All kinds of issues and concerns — from the deepest trauma to the seeming trivial — will be dealt with, through a dynamic, creative mix of psychotherapy, bodywork, spiritual disciplines, dreamwork, and group practices. Each participant will have an opportunity to work, in relevant detail and in sufficient depth, with his or her particular issues, and not necessarily just once in the group.

**TUITION:** US\$265, or CDN\$275 plus GST. \$100 deposit required, payable to Robert Masters, at 16133 9th Avenue, Surrey, BC V4A 1A5.

**LOGISTICS:** 10am to 6pm. Limited to 8 participants only.

**For more information or to register,  
contact [info@robertmasters.com](mailto:info@robertmasters.com)**

# Embodying the Deep Masculine

## A ONE-DAY GROUP FOR MEN

with **Robert Masters**

**October 7th and November 25th, 2006**

Embodying the Deep Masculine is about doing what's necessary to reclaim our balls without armoring or numbing ourselves, becoming warriors who, finding a source of strength in their vulnerability, can take needed stands with both heart and full-blooded power.

To enter our true manhood, we need to stop turning away from the wounded boy in us, both protecting him and giving him what he needs to heal. We also need to become more emotionally literate, not turning our anger into aggression, nor our shame into guilt, nor our hurt into an excuse to shut down or get heady.

As we assume our real power, we must at the same time step more fully into our heart; otherwise, we won't be capable of real intimacy. No more hiding out in cognitive strongholds, no more avoidance of our raw strength, no more bypassing of our wounds, no more avoidance of the Deep Feminine. In short, birthing the man.

This group is about working through whatever's in the way of entering and living our full manhood, through a dynamic, spontaneously structured mix of psychotherapy, bodywork, dyadic encounters, dream exploration, and spiritual deepening practices.

**TUITION & LOGISTICS:** US\$250 or CDN\$275 plus GST. A \$100 deposit is required. Limited to 8 men only. Early registration is highly recommended. There are 2 spaces left in the October 7th group.

**For more information, or to register,  
contact [info@robertmasters.com](mailto:info@robertmasters.com)**

# Reclaiming Your True Voice

## *A ONE-DAY GROUP FOR WOMEN*

**Sept. 23rd, Oct. 28th, and Dec. 9th, 2006**

**with Robert Masters and Diane Bardwell**

Many women do not have full access to their true voice, and as a result have not sufficiently represented themselves, attracting situations and relationships that have only reinforced their inability to truly speak for themselves.

This group is about taking back power that originally was given away in order to survive difficult conditions, and taking it back not just cognitively, but physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Doing so involves expressing, *fully* expressing, what has been held back in the name of fear, insecurity, and social pressures.

Part of what is needed is a reclamation of anger (plus a clear differentiation between anger and aggression), so that it becomes a resource, a guardian of boundaries, a potent catalyst for needed change.

This group'll involve deep letting go, through a creative mix of psychotherapy, bodywork, and spiritual deepening practices (led by Robert), and it will also involve toning, chanting, singing, and healing through sound (led by Diane). The release-work facilitated by Robert will let loose *your* voice, and the sound-work guided by Diane will wing, fill out, and celebrate *your* voice.

**TUITION & LOGISTICS:** US\$250 or CDN\$275 plus GST. A \$100 deposit is required. Limited to 8 women. Early registration is highly recommended. There are 2 spaces left in the September 23rd group.

**Diane** (Robert's wife), is an intuitive energy healer and Reiki master, using sound to deepen healing and well-being. She is a songwriter and professional singer, with a gift for accessing the Sacred through sound and song. See [www.dianebardwell.com](http://www.dianebardwell.com).

**For more information, or to register,  
contact [info@robertmasters.com](mailto:info@robertmasters.com)**

**An opportunity to learn (1) unique and exceptionally effective psychotherapeutic, spiritual, and bodywork skills; and (2) how to combine these in counselling work.**

# **Integral Psychotherapy Practicum**

## **2007 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**

The purpose of this training is to deepen the capacity of participants to effectively counsel others through a dynamic, intuitively structured approach that integrates body, mind, emotion, and spirit.

To this end, the training will blend deep work on oneself and equally deep work with others, in personal, social, and spiritual contexts. Healing will be the primary intention and activity. Approaches that are taught and practised will be held, as much as possible, in a perspective that transcends them.

You'll learn to not rely upon nor necessarily impose structure, but rather to let it naturally arise from your relationship and interaction with those you're counselling. Working this way weans us from the security — the eventually deadening security — of operating from behind a preset structure or methodology, leaving us in a position that requires an appropriately creative response from us. Such creativity keeps us fresh, open, and alert.

Throughout the training we will be working with body, mind, emotion, and spirit. Love, integrity, and presence will be the cornerstones of our practice.

The training will take place over 6 three-day weekends, beginning February 2nd, 2007. Tuition is \$5400 plus GST. A deposit of \$750 is required. The training is limited to 10 participants.

The training is a prerequisite for further trainings, including the annual **Bodywork-in-Psychotherapy Training module.**

**Applications for the 2007 Practicum are now being taken.**

### **Practicum Schedule**

Feb. 2-4, April 6-8, June 1-3, July 27-29, Oct. 5-7, and Dec. 7-9, 2007

**To view previous newsletters, go to the links below:**

- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/May05.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/June2005.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/July2005.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/August2005.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/September2005.pdf>
- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/October2005.pdf>
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- <http://www.RobertMasters.com/newsletter/August2006.pdf>

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## **Robert's Remaining 2006 Work Schedule**

- Sept. 8, 9, 10     2005/2006 Practicum: White Rock, BC
- Sept. 15, 16, 17     2006/2007 Practicum: White Rock, BC
- Sept. 23     Reclaiming Your True Voice: White Rock, BC
- Sept. 30-Oct. 1     Freedom Through Intimacy: White Rock, BC
- Oct. 7     Embodying the Deep Masculine: White Rock, BC
- Oct. 14     Letting Go: White Rock, BC
- Oct. 28     Reclaiming Your True Voice: White Rock, BC
- Nov. 3, 4, 5     2006/2007 Practicum: White Rock, BC
- Nov. 18 & 19     Freedom Through Intimacy: White Rock, BC
- Nov. 25     Embodying the Deep Masculine: White Rock, BC
- December 1-3     Radical Opening: Whistler, BC
- December 9     Reclaiming Your True Voice: White Rock, BC