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GHOST DANCING BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

by

R. L. Boyer

1.

The ancients knew what poets know: that there are two worlds here not just one. I found out about

that one night while lying in my bed listening for the beat of my heart until I heard its rhythm

grow strong inside my ears like the beating of drums and I held onto that heartbeat rhythm

like a lifeline held the beats of my heart like the steps of a long rope-ladder descending

into that bottomless well of being that leads down secret corridors to the other side of sleep.

2.

If only I can hold this rope on the other side of that deep well ... my last fading thought as the

spell cast by heartbeats covers me like a blanket of ether and without knowing I swoon into

that familiar and utterly mysterious black depth until I suddenly awake there

— somewhere on the other side — fully conscious within the dreamscape. But this is crazy because

I am still lying in my bedroom and awake enough to see if I am really fast asleep or

not and my body lies motionless paralyzed from toe to crown and I can't move at all but

my consciousness is all there, alert and watching with great intensity, wide awake through

open eyes. The room is somehow different than it had been only minutes ago — before

time stopped — and there before me, creeping across my bedroom floor a thick supernatural mist

flows like some great theatrical trick using dry ice for atmosphere and in the mist I see

them wide awake through open eyes.

3.

They enter dancing in a tight row to the heartbeat rhythm still pounding in my inner

ear as they glide silently to ancient rhythms — four of them — with the looks of giant kachinas

4.

Suddenly, my left hand begins to stir and it grows like magic into the shape of a long spirit catcher — a great, long wand like a narrow bamboo pole grows longer than a mandarin's fingernails from my fingertips (longer than a fishing pole!) and as it grows it shakes itself faster and faster in a rhythm perfectly its own until the spirit in my hand begins to sing its voice low and breaks the air with a loud deep rhythmic hum its mystic vibrations fill the room like an aboriginal bull-roarer. And as it hums a wind grows from it and the wind blows softly across the floor like a breeze as I lay here without moving watching with my eyes wide open and the wind moves swiftly and blows the mist away as the black and white ghost men dance backward like a silent motion picture in reverse right back into the invisibility of the bedroom hallway that leads to the other world.

5.

Then my eyes go dark again like sleep until my ears wake up and hear something way down there the sound of my heartbeat rising the secret inner heartbeat rhythm of drums and there I am again still riding that drumbeat bareback like a wild horse and holding on to that lifeline climbing out from those depths. I awake fully this time — in my body — in utter astonishment and the room is empty now but still charged with the presence of the ancient ones and the hair stands thrilled on the back of my neck as I raise myself slowly to look around and I think I can still see the faint traces of the mist evaporating on my bedroom floor. Outside the room a wind roars suddenly vibrating like a great bull-roarer a thunderous wind-spirit riding across the autumn lake shaking the house with its terror and I listen to that rampaging spirit wailing out there against the windows of my bedroom and

I look down at her resting peacefully beside me and thank god she is still asleep and

I know she'll think I'm crazy in the morning and I probably am since this

kind of thing has happened to me before and
it will again someday too because...

6.

The ancients knew what poets know — that there are two
worlds here, not just one and sometimes if you

listen until your heartbeat grows as loud as the
beating of war drums the spaces of the two

worlds might grow together again and on the
feet of ghost dancers the other world might step

through the ancient doorsill that always stands open
between them and for a timeless moment 'reality'

and the stuff of dreams can get terribly confused.