

## **Public Service Announcement**

[sitting]

The sound of rushing water fills my brain  
My jaw begins to numb  
The dullness travels to my temples  
Overhead the faint lines become brighter and brighter  
An interlaced canopy of stained glass  
Prismatic hues form an ever-expanding roof above me  
Within this rainbow-mix of colors  
The water grows louder and louder

[rising]

Slowly the tides rise  
Dissipating into mist  
The scene transposed into a simple duality  
Of water above  
And sky below

[pacing]

One might argue the reason humans spend most of their lives in an ordinary state of consciousness is because natural selection intended it that way.

Perhaps you believe states outside of consciousness, other than sleep, are aberrations that interfere with survival.

But the human brain carries its own consciousness-altering drugs. It's true. In terms of natural selection, it seems Nature herself has made a decision that an altered state of consciousness is sometimes necessary or at least superior to the mundane.

Shamans have long understood this fact of Nature. So, what's possible in a shamanic state of consciousness? Everything!

[standing at podium]

This is a public service announcement:  
You can be a shaman  
The methods are meant for everyone  
Those in good health  
Even the dispirited or otherwise ill

To benefit seriously:

One must fully understand each step  
Follow in the sequence presented  
Try to suspend any critical prejudgments  
And, simply enjoy the adventure

So, are you with me?

[pausing for responses]

Okay.

Step 1: Locate your soul.

If you don't know where it is, or you're not sure if you even have one...that's okay! Because I believe you can grow one. In order to make one, we should try to nail down what it is exactly. So, what is soul?

[pausing for responses]

Well, if you ask me, soul is alchemy—it's transformation—soul is an ever-changing evolution—it's our multiple experiences of being over the course of our lives and across lifetimes—the soul's evolution is the source of shamanhood.

But, let me set the record straight. I am not a shaman. Not yet anyway. I am just your fellow traveler. This adventure that we're going on is going to force us to face our innermost fears and feelings. As a super-sensitive human who feels like I feel too much already, this is scary stuff. But, since we're all doing this together, I thought maybe I could borrow some courage. Maybe from you, sir, would you let me have some of your courage? I'll give it back, eventually. Thanks.

Step 2: Recognize that non-ordinary reality is entered not for play but for serious reasons.

Healing or recovering something important that's missing are two good examples. To get where you need to go you must find a hole. Each house has one, between the doorway and the fireplace. If you don't have a fireplace, check carefully near your stove.

Step 3: Be ready to assume your new responsibilities of being human.

No more sleepwalking. We each have the capacity to change the world if we want to, even if it is our very tiny piece of it. So, now, I leave you to go out into the world—as you do, take time to lend an ear to that person sitting next to you on the bus, share a hug with your neighbor, or if you're not the touchy-feely type, a smile will do.

Thank you.

[bows, steps down from podium]