

MYSTIC LIGHT



Witnessing a Transition

ALL MY LIFE there has been the pulling to things of the occult. I seemed to absorb, unconsciously at times, the positive knowledge that man lives after he throws off his material body and wings his way to realms unknown. I clung to this belief in spite of my material, scientific education, which only aimed to develop more nearly perfect the five physical senses, and entirely omitted any thought of things beyond what the eyes and ears and intellect might tell us.

However, at the time I was able actually to witness the flight of the Spirit from the body at the moment of actual physical death, there was still some doubt in my mind as to continuous living, whether in or out of the physical body. Therefore the following incident changed the entire course of my reasoning and knowledge of life. I now know that our limited life here on Earth in the physical body is but a moment's duration compared with all the time in eternity wherein we may continue to develop that indestructible part of ourselves—the spirit.

With no idea of my aunt's immediate passing, I had merely called because of personal interest and love for this one who represented all I had left of my mother's family. She was seventy-three years old and presented very decided symptoms of cancer. While she had been suffering severe pain she seemed unusually strong and filled with vitality



Engraving (1797), William Blake, title-page to illustrated version of Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*. Dover Publications, Inc.

for one in her condition, so I had not thought of any immediate danger.

When I first dropped in to see her this day she seemed rational and strong. Her heart was beating rhythmically and normally. She appeared in quite good condition. But after I had been there for a short while I seemed, entirely by intuition, to sense a change in her physical condition: I became aware that her transition was not many hours away.

Then the symptoms of physical dissolution presented themselves so that the physical part of me, the educated fine senses, might know and understand that physical life was in danger. I am happy to recall now that I knew first, without intellectual reasoning, entirely through spiritual perception, that her span of life was finished.

I detected the rapidly failing pulse, irregular shallow breathing, and all the attendant symptoms of failing organism. I saw that the physical expression was changing, the tired lines in her face seemed to increase in prominence, and the violent thrashing to and fro because of the pain commenced to diminish in intensity. Thus the physical part of me knew that "death" was imminent.

Then we called those who were near and dear to us and sat at the bedside awaiting that inevitable angel whose visit we have learned to fear and dread.

The transition covered a period of many hours. The process of death on one plane and birth into a higher one progressed very slowly so that I was indeed much privileged at this time to watch, with the physical and spiritual eye, all the many details of the change.

Beginning signs of death occurred at ten in the evening. The last travails of the physical body did not cease until seven the next morning. All that night was spent in the borderland between the physical and spiritual, while I underwent one of the most amazing experiences of my entire life.

I saw the separation of the spiritual element of the body from the physical envelope; the formation of the cord that joined the ethereal body with the physical. I saw the growth of the higher bodies from vague indistinct foglike substance into

the living beautiful angelic body of my aunt in the vigor of her life. I saw pulsating waves course through the spiritual cord that connected the two bodies, and then the cord was severed and the new life in the new world had begun, even as death on the physical plane had claimed the physical body.

I watched closely each process of the "death" which miraculously turned into a "birth." Life was there, and still is; I saw not death but merely the transition from one plane of life to another.

The first thing I detected with my spiritual eye, as I sat at the bedside of this loved one, was the gradual formation of the etheric body apart and separate from the physical one. Immediately above the pain-wracked physical body I detected a vague hazy outline of mistlike substance which resembled nothing physical so much as a fog or a bit of condensing steam. I watched this form with interest and amazement. It seemed to possess life that was apart from any outline of cloud that I had ever witnessed before.

This substance formed about two feet above the bed and over the physical counterpart. It elongated itself until it was the length of the physical body. Then it commenced molding itself into a definite form.

First appeared the coarse general outline of a body; next came the growth of spiritual draperies; then the beginning of features and the outline of expression upon the face. I was seeing a mirror-like reproduction of my aunt's physical body, except that here was expressed youth and beauty and peace and content. The eyes were closed in an unearthly sleep in which nothing but peace and repose were suggested.

As I looked at the emergence of this spiritual body, it all seemed such a natural thing, as though there were nothing of the struggle and pain that I had seen. My eyes opened wider in wonderment as the spiritual form took on more vividness and life.

Then my spiritual vision seemed to be transferred, through no volition of my own, to watching the physical body. I saw the silver cord which was still connecting the two bodies, furnishing the means of transferring life from the physical to the spiritual.

This cord seemed to be about two feet in length, composed of a soft glistening silver radiance that was almost luminous, so bright did it shine before me. It protruded from the physical body at the base of the skull at the occipital protuberance. Then it passed up and away from the physical body where it joined the spiritual counterpart at the same place at the base of the head in the spiritual body.

The cord itself seemed to be composed of small silverlike strands, each separate and distinct and yet all molded into a ropelike substance. Where the contact was made with the physical body I could see that the strands had separated and become flat so that they attached themselves to the physical body as a single flat surface.

As I watched this structure miraculously grow before me I could see the pulsations of spiritual energy that coursed through the cord to give more life to the spiritual body. As the energy was transferred into the immortal part, so was life lessened in the physical. The freeing of the spiritual essence from the incumbrance of the physical constituted death of the inanimate clay. Thus was given to me the knowledge of the primary attribute of spiritual matter, which is essentially the Activator.

At this time I opened my eyes more fully to the spiritual life which was round and about me. I glanced up and saw the spiritual actuality of my beloved mother who had years before made the transition. Then I saw the form of my uncle, the husband of my aunt who was about to cross over and meet her loved ones. I saw, too, the son, my cousin, who had long ago gone on to new adventures. Others, also, I saw round about me gathered into that little room that had suddenly become for me a shrine, a sacred place, where I might more nearly come into the presence of Life Eternal. I was awed and pleased with the presence of these unexpected visitors.

Again my attention was called to the spiritual body of the one who was about to enter the new plane of existence. Now the spiritual counterpart was more real than the physical; a radiance hovered over it now and life was more nearly manifested there. The expression of the face had

changed and the mouth had assumed a radiant smile. The draperies were bright with the soft light of the astral. The cord connecting the two bodies glowed more brightly. I knew that the transition was almost completed.

I watched the group of loved ones gathered there; they seemed happy beyond any happiness possible in the material. I saw them place a wreath of flowers on the head of the bed, a wreath of red roses having hue and tint impossible to describe. Their beauty could compare with no material flower. Each blossom radiated a splendor superior to anything I had ever before beheld.

As I looked at the scene before me I was struck by the extreme naturalness of it. It all seemed so very logical and ordered. I had watched and assisted at many physical births, and the comparison came very naturally to me.

The death on the physical must certainly mean birth to a new mode of life. All nature led me to believe that. And the birth into the new life would be just as natural, or more so, as a birth into the physical. Then what could be so strange about the fact that those who were vitally interested should come and be the assisting inspiration? I accepted all of this then in a conviction of absolute knowledge.

Now I heard joyful voices chanting. I knew it was the welcoming song calling the loved one into her new home. Then, even as I looked at the bed where lay the poor pathetic form, the white covers of the bed vanished as there came into vision the sight of soft dark red rose petals as they were scattered there by those who were waiting with the heavenly welcome.

A voice, quite softly at my ear, said, "Only twelve minutes more!"

I repeated those words to the watchers at my side. I held my watch expectantly as the minutes ticked on recording the twin process of birth and death.

Again my attention was called to the silver connecting cord. I watched the strands of which it was formed. I saw the first strand snap and curl back, just at the connection to the physical body at the base of the brain. Then another strand snapped and curled back even as does a taut string when it

is cut away from its support. Thus during those long twelve minutes was the preparation made for the loosening of the final earthly connection with the freed etheric body.

Now the time was almost up. The actual time for the severance of the last connecting link of the two bodies was at hand. I was about to witness the final casting off of earthly ties and the winging of the Spirit onward and upward into new experiences that she could not gain while held fast to the physical body.

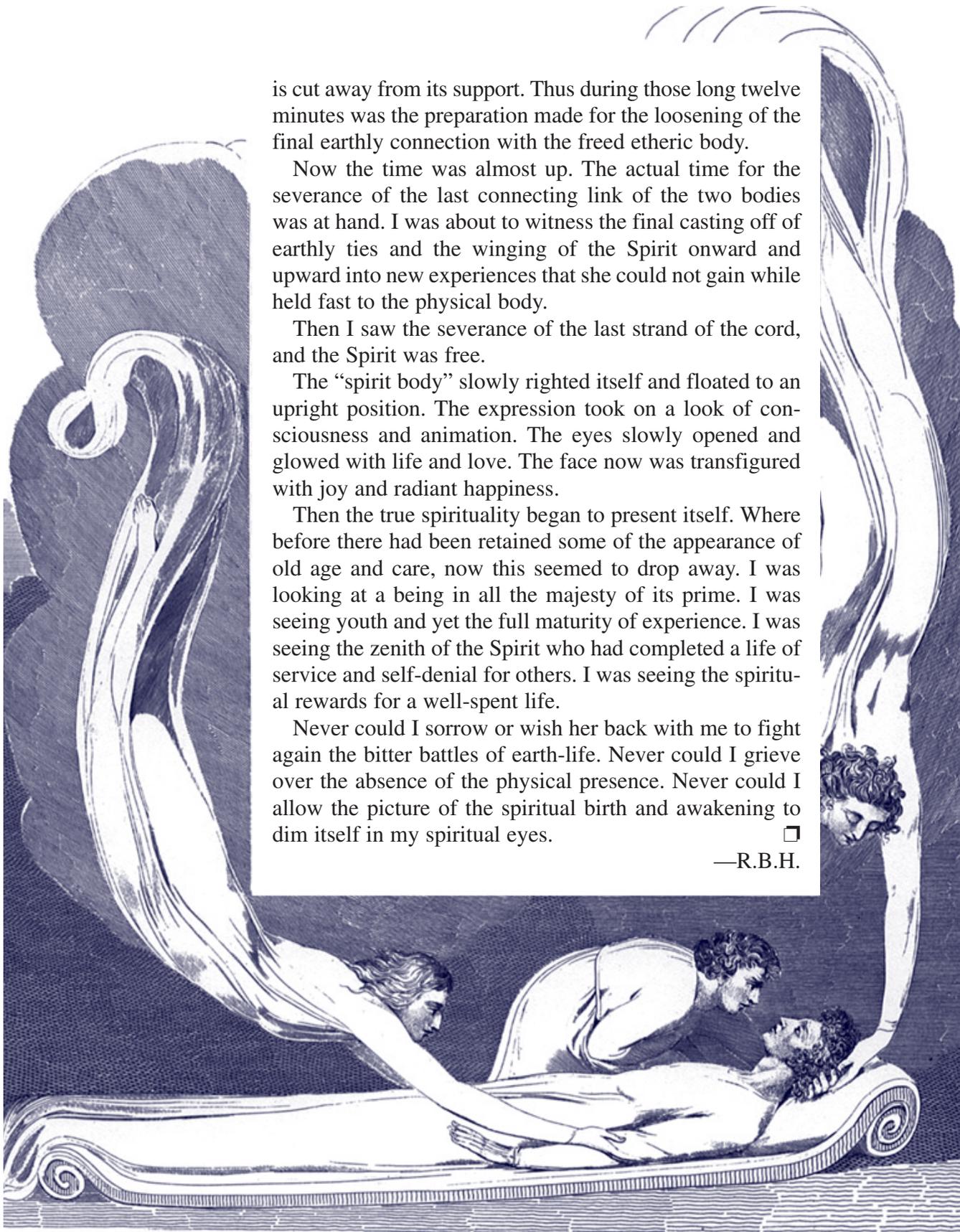
Then I saw the severance of the last strand of the cord, and the Spirit was free.

The "spirit body" slowly righted itself and floated to an upright position. The expression took on a look of consciousness and animation. The eyes slowly opened and glowed with life and love. The face now was transfigured with joy and radiant happiness.

Then the true spirituality began to present itself. Where before there had been retained some of the appearance of old age and care, now this seemed to drop away. I was looking at a being in all the majesty of its prime. I was seeing youth and yet the full maturity of experience. I was seeing the zenith of the Spirit who had completed a life of service and self-denial for others. I was seeing the spiritual rewards for a well-spent life.

Never could I sorrow or wish her back with me to fight again the bitter battles of earth-life. Never could I grieve over the absence of the physical presence. Never could I allow the picture of the spiritual birth and awakening to dim itself in my spiritual eyes. □

—R.B.H.



Engraving (1797), William Blake, illustrated version of Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*, Dover Publications, Inc.

Above, spirit beings and a human attend the death-bed of the righteous, administering consolation in his last moments. In another illustration (not shown) angels convey the spirit of the same man, bearing the same features, to heaven.