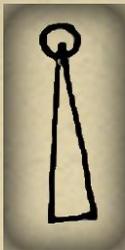


Testimony



TESTIMONY



The following presents excerpts from the book **Testimony**,
written by the Reverend Thomas Brothers, aka James Harmony Hayden,
as found in the ninth volume of the Mary Russell memoirs,

Laurie R. King's *The Language of Bees*

(Bantam books, © 2009)

Breaks in the text are indicated by ellipsis...

PART THE FIRST: HERITAGE



FIRST BIRTH

He came into the world on a night of celestial alignment, when a comet travelled the night and the sky threw forth a million shooting stars, to herald his arrival.

Birth is a nexus, a time in which the Elements come together to form a new thing. Earth and air, fire and water, mingle and transform, to create a living being with the potential to become a vessel, glowing and pulsating with True Spirit.

His mother lay on her birth-bed and saw the meteor shower, and knew it to be an omen. She felt no surprise when, at the very height of her birth pangs, one of the celestial celebrants plummeted to earth in the pond at the foot of the house—a stripe of flame roaring through the air to hit the water with a crash and a billowing of steam—and once she had given the new life suck, she rose from her bloody sheets to oversee the rescue of the precious scrap of metal. It was still hot, even after hours in the water.

The sky-metal—the meteorite—was the boy's first plaything, his constant companion, as it remains to this day, reshaped and resubmitted to the fires to suit his needs.

THE TOOL

The scrap of other-worldly metal sent the boy by the gods was itself a child of the four Elements, proof that Tools are placed in the hands that require them. The meteorite was the sum of the earthy stuff that gave it substance, the fire that twice shaped it, the water that twice received it, and the air through which it arrived.

Even primitives know, a Tool—shaped, carried, used—assumes Power and speaks with a voice of its own. This Testimony exists as a Tool, a history, and a guide, that its Power and voice may be known to others.

THE MOTHER

Soon after the retrieval of the extra-terrestrial knob, the boy's mother took ill, breathing her last when the full moon lay open in the sky, a round and luminous door to eternity.

Thus the boy learned early that human life was transient, that the best of human love was undependable, that even the strongest of human bonds was fragile and untrustworthy. Life is incomplete and unexpected, and the blessing of being Chosen can make for a great burden.

Thus, the boy walked into life alone, as all mankind is alone, and passed without harm through the hands of a series of earthly caretakers.

THE FATHER

The boy spent his early years with no earthly father, raised by the feminine, moon-lit side of his race. All men were his father, all women his mother. This is the way of primitive peoples, when a child's early years are spent in the huts of the women, overhearing their language, learning their mysteries. Only when the boy-child's body asserts its masculinity is he free to take to the stronger light of the male world.

There, most men forget what they have learnt in childhood, cleaving only to the strong and the sun-lit side of life.

Some, however, remember their childhood among women. These few, when they have achieved the mastery of the masculine world, may then reach back and find the shadows to their light, the soft to their harsh, the receiving to their giving, and bring the worlds together.

These few have been called saints, or heroes, or gods.

DARKNESS

When such a man comes of age, standing at the edge of masculine knowledge, there comes for him a period of darkness. From the innocence of youth, when evil is merely a word and despair but a breath on the back of an empty hand, the true horrors of the world are borne upon him; these are the pangs of the second birth. So it was with the boy.

Emptiness and disgust lay all about; every soft thing was turned to thorns, every hard thing carried a jolt to shatter the bones.

There was no beauty in the world, no blue in the sky, no beat of pulse through his veins. Even the lump of meteor-metal he carried always went cold and empty of Power. He stood with equanimity in the face of death, unable to summon fear, or hunger, or passion.

All was darkness on the face of the earth.

WRESTLING WITH ANGELS

Yet because the boy was born of the four Elements, because he bore within him the stuff of gods and heroes, there was that force within him that refused to lie down and let the earth cover him. He went up to the high mountains and there he wrestled with the angels, and because the small spark of Light within would not surrender, he won. Time

and again, he grappled with angels—with Hope, and with Innocence, and Beauty—and time and again, he won.

Still, the stream of Angels was never ending, and the darkness grew no lighter.

And so the boy stood before the waiting Angels and he spread his hands and said, “Take me.” He reached within and he laid hands on his own stubborn spark of hope and innocence, and he quenched it utterly, and he said, “Very well, I am yours, I surrender. Do with me as you will.”

And in that moment of acceptance, of submission to despair and darkness, of sacrifice of his own spark of inner Light, the heavens opened upon the boy and the Light spilled in, overcoming him, filling him to overflowing and then beyond, until the universe rang with beauty and Power and the knowledge of right.

When the boy came down from the high mountain, he found he had been marked by the Lights, and that he bore on his body forevermore the stigmata of divinity.

THE TRANCE

When the boy came down from the mountain, where he had achieved victory through surrender, he was stunned with the deluge of Power, overwhelmed by the dual sensations of complete fullness and utter emptiness: full he was of Light and potential, empty he was of knowledge and design.

He waited long in wonder, dazzled by the brightness within and without, silenced by the joy that filled his bones, a state the Yogis call Samadhi. No man heard him, no woman could reach through the barrier that kept him from them, and although the boy

was filled with Light and joy, it felt the same as the darkness, for his eyes could discern no detail.

And then in the dark and the light, he felt the clasp of a hand taking his: a teacher had found him.

THE SEEKER

An artist grinds lapis to make blue, lead to make white, a hundred other substances to give colour and dimension to the artifice on the canvas. How does he know this? How does he not spend his entire career inventing techniques known by painters in the past?

Every man, however god-like and gifted, requires a guide to set him upon the path, to show him how other artists have achieved their results, to show how other Seekers have found their answers. For some, the teacher is a lifetime friend; for others, the briefest of acquaintances.

The man who accepts guidance is by no means limited by what he has been shown: as a great artist goes beyond what he has learned, surpassing both his teacher and the painters before him, so the Seeker has to conquer known techniques before he can take his first steps into unexplored territory.

PART THE SECOND: LEARNING



THE GUIDE

For the boy, the path was shown him in the course of a very few days, before the hand clasp fell away and he was free to walk on his own.

A guide is rarely a person whom society will invite to its garden parties. Guides have reached their intimate knowledge of the Way by exploring the world's rough terrain all on their own, and show the results. In the boy's case, the Guide was a coarse bully with compelling eyes and the overweening pride of a man who has conquered mountains: it mattered not, for the Guide had returned from his travels bearing both knowledge and wisdom, which he was willing to share with those whose heart was true.

The boy became a man under the short-lived tutorial of his Guide, in a manner that illustrates the inevitability of Transformation when Transformation is required.

See the steps, lit clear: He had forgot the circumstances of his birth, had been tormented in soul and drowning in darkness, his spirits crushed, his eyes seeing naught

but a gray, dull future. Therefore he went up to the high places to wrestle with the angels. By doing so, had took on some of their volatile essence, so that when he encountered his Guide, although it was the briefest of meetings, he was set alight, as a volatile substance is set alight by a mere touch of flame.

SUBMISSION

Submission and aggression are the night and day of human nature: man stands proud, woman envelops, the yang and yin of Creation.

But for a man to become whole and entire, it is necessary for him to embrace his shadow, to envelop his own masculine nature.

And for a woman to become whole and entire, she must push past her own submissive nature and allow her forceful energies to rise.

This the man did, twice-fold: He submitted to the Angels, allowing their flame to overcome him, and when he had come down from the mountain, he submitted to the Guide, who set him alight.

REWARD

See the ready rewards of submission: Mere weeks after he has been transformed, the new-born man discovers that, by his mere presence and acceptance of a Guide, by his

participation in this most ephemeral of apprenticeships, he has preserved the mortal life of the Guide from the flames and the turmoil of an angry earth.

Rewards come at each stage of the Work, as progress is hard won, then rewarded. There are times when the reward is withheld, times it is given only to be taken later, but even the taking-away is a step on the path.

No man can look at the reality of the Unseen and remain unchanged. As the man bore on his visage the mark of the gods' touch, so now he bore on his soul the mark of his Guide. His eyes were opened, and he found himself possessed of gifts both profound and primitive, insights human and divine. He read the signs and symbols of the times, and perceived a path through them: what men call clairvoyance. He woke in others an awareness of their own divine spark within, and set them craving what answers he had to give: what men call mind control

With the Guide moved on, the man was left, knowing the path but without the Tools to explore it; sensing his divinity but lacking the means of bringing it to the fore.

Thus began the greater apprenticeship, with his own self for a guide, and the world's broad panoply of Wisdom to follow. The boy, now a man, became a Seeker.

ASSISTANCE

He found, as he sought out Wisdom, that he had the ability to absorb and use the assembled energies and will of those who had been drawn to him.

When a hand requires a Tool, the Tool is provided: When help is needed, then help comes. The man found, when his progress had reached the stage at which a Helpmeet was required, that he might continue his Work unhindered, so one came to him, and stayed while he needed it, during his inner labours.

Later, the Helpmeet would provide another lesson in the transience of human relations. At the time, this proof of how lesser being cannot truly devote themselves to a spiritual Quest was a distraction and a bitterness of heart. In time, he came to see that not all are meant to walk on the Path, and that any companion who seeks to break the concentration of the Seeker must be shunned and immediately set aside.

A hard lesson, which only proves that help comes in unexpected ways.

STUDY

The next years were spent in a study of Transformation: the man himself had been Transformed, but how could he now control the process? What Tools were there to shape Transformation, what methods to bring it about?

Long years followed, with Despair at his heels and hunger all around him, as he followed the faint, often deliberately disguised, paths laid down by those who had gone before.

And thus he found the keys he sought.

The first of those keys were the Elements, and Sacrifice.

THE ELEMENTS

Magic rituals cover the earth, in all times and in all places, but most so-called magic witnessed by the common soul is but sleight-of-hand, deceptions laid down by the true Magus lest a lesser mind stumble across a Truth.

Take, for example, the ritual of the written word, dissolved and drunk as if the ink alone can impart the essence of what has been written.

A word is air shaped by earth, when the tongue manipulates the breath passing across it. That word written on a piece of paper thus binds the Element of air to its opposite, earth. If a word is first spoken, then written, and finally burnt, and the ashes stirred into water, one grows closer to the essential Elements of summoning, for the water contains the essences of all four Elements in one, awaiting the throat of a man to consume it.

But even those actions do not impart the essential word to the being of the man holding the glass, because they do not reflect the proper time, and they lack the impetus of Power.

Step by step, the man learnt the manipulation of the Elements. As earlier he had assumed the Power of controlling those with weak wills, now he followed his inner Guide to learn to turn the Elements to his divine will.

THE SPARK

The ancients spoke of a divine spark that exists even within every individual, no matter how mean, a spark that might be nurtured, fed, and coaxed into open flame. In some, the spark is so tiny it is unable to respond set alight even the driest of tinder; the dullness of the person drives it down, and extinguishes it.

In others, the spark may be protected and kept alive, but due to the nature of its surroundings, it will not grow and come to life.

But in a few, those willing to devote themselves to an unbending concentration of will and effort, the spark will begin to smoulder against the fuel it is given. And with greater effort, with unbroken concentration, a tiny flame will appear. Energy from outside will burn the flame brighter; the divine spark reaches out, greedily, for more and more sources of power, and the time of transformation is at hand.

SACRIFICE AND SUBMISSION

Be clear: sacrifice is whole-hearted submission; it is not surrender.

There is no benefit to a half-hearted or cheap sacrifice: a sacrifice must cost dearly the man (or woman) making it—Abraham offering up his son Isaac was submitting all that he had to prove his faithfulness; the Buddha starved to reach enlightenment; Woden hung himself in a tree for nine days to learn the Power of the sung and written words; the Son of Man offered himself up for the salvation of mankind. If there is no pain in the sacrifice, then there is no Power. The greater the cost, the greater the approval and protection it buys, the greater the energies loosed into the world.

Sacrifice is the flame that sets quiescent Power alight, and consumes the world in a roar and a whisper.

PART THE THIRD: POWERS



SECOND BIRTH

When one is born for the first time—bodily birth—he possesses no knowledge of good or evil. To a child, any evil worked against him is the same as good, merely an experience to be considered, absorbed, shaped by.

Many go through life born but once, seeing good and evil but not understanding them, feeling their effects but not knowing how to choose one or the other.

Those who are born anew—spiritual birth—take their first step outside of the Garden the very instant they perceive the difference between good and evil.

PANIC

A newborn infant screams with the unfamiliarity of being thrust into the bright, cold, dry, unfettered world. So with the man who suddenly sees the world without barrier or delusion.

Terror waits for the second-born, terror and exhilaration as the air of self-knowledge fills his lungs for the first time. The world is bright, with sharp edges and incomprehensible motions and noises, and the new-born man feels weak and vulnerable in a way he has not since he was born in the body.

BLOOD

Blood is a companion of birth, blood and pain. In a second birth, too, there is blood in the severing of the cord that keeps him safe and fed and limited. The second-born man is torn from the womb of his former life and made to stand free of belief, unfed by society, unsheltered from the storms of the world.

In his panic, the man may flee, and cut his body on the dangerous edges of the world. Knowing good and evil, seeing them for the first time as both distinct and yet connected, he may convince himself that he can reach the good within the evil, and trust those whom he should not.

A second-born man is not more wise, he is merely more vulnerable: This is the mystery of birth.

THE GODS

Man learns by experience, but teaches by story. A story is a distillation of experience, a means of passing knowledge and wisdom to others.

The earliest stories, the stories that have only gained in Power over the millennia, are about the gods. In the gods and their tales, human form and impulse overlap with divine authority and the vast scope of the entire Universe. Gods perform acts of inhuman strength and morality, and gods reveal themselves as incredibly stupid, stupefyingly gullible, and pityingly weak.

The extremes of the Gods are where the lessons lie, whether it be the heroism of the Greek stories or the trickery of Loki. And much of the teaching Power of a myth lies in the conundrum of good and evil: Odysseus is a hero, yet he can also be a cruel and low-handed trickster. Loki is a coward, a cheat, and a murderer, but he is brother to Odin, and it is thanks to him that Thor has his hammer of Power.

The lessons of the world's myths are not to be found on the surface; the lessons are there for those willing to sit at the gods' feet, and learn.

TRANSCENDENCE

A man born of the Elements spends his life striving to unify them again. The work performed by the ancient Alchemists inside their alembic is the work this man shapes in the world outside: earth converted to fire, water dissolved in air.

Elements are Power, pure and simple. The greater the number of Elements a Work combines, the greater the Power is summoned, there for the man of knowledge to free and take into himself.

What does this mean, to summon, free, and take into one's self?

When a word is written, then immersed in water, the glass holds little but dilute ink. When a word is spoken, written, burnt, and its ashes stirred into water, then all four Elements are found, awaiting the throat of a man to consume it.

This is simple to an extreme, a child's magic. Nonetheless, it contains a grain of the Truth.

POWER

Clearly, a man may not take his pen, write the word Strength on a page, burn and drink the page, and expect to take on the quality of strength. Yet, if all things are joined in the Universe, if God has linked all creatures by ethereal threads, then the Power is in fact there to be absorbed, and the symbolic imbibing of a word can be more than empty ritual. Primitive peoples see the shadow of this idea, those who attempt to absorb the energies of conquered enemies by consuming their hearts, and the braver the enemy, the greater the Power available for absorption. This is, of course, similar to drinking inky

water in an attempt to become the word that was written, an oversimplification of a complex piece of spiritual machinery.

What, then, determines the emptiness or fullness of an act?

It is the mind of the Practitioner, focusing Power into the word as a magnifying-glass focuses the sun.

It is the heart of the community, lending strength of will to the Practitioner's mind and hands.

It is the Tool, that cuts through empty pretense and looses the contents of a vessel.

And it is the precise arrangement of time, place, and sequence that align the Universe into accepting the efficacy of the act.

This is what we mean by The Art.

It takes a practiced mind and a purified heart to discern the subtle patterns of the heavens, to pull what is essential from the tangle of what is obvious, to free sources of Power, that they might fuel the spark within.

Thus the manipulation of the Elements is a life-time's work.

LOVE

Love is yearning: love is healing: love is the pull the world feels between light and dark, up and down, good and evil.

Love is the Power that both draws and repels the four Elements.

Love is the bitterness at the heart of the sweet.

Love is the mask that conceals the face of Truth.

Love is danger and love is transformation, because love is the greatest Power.

THIRD BIRTH

A man born once lives unaware of the opposing forces of good and evil in the world around him. A man is born a second time when he can perceive where good and evil lie, within and without.

Some then spend their lives in perfecting this knowledge, in seeking to eradicate all traces of evil in their persons, while gathering in and nurturing all forms of good.

A few, a very few, are given to take the next step on the path, and achieve a third birth, birth into divinity.

To this person is given the next level of insight: that good and evil are not merely opposing forces, but intertwining gifts that together make the burning heart of all Power.

A third-born man is little less than the angels. A third-born man walks in the image of God.

PART THE FOURTH: THE ART



GREAT WORK

As the purpose of the once-born is simple life, and the goal of the twice-born is true understanding, so the purpose of the thrice-born, divine-man lies in the shaping of the world.

As the Potter of Genesis shaped Adam from clay, to do his Work the thrice-born needs base Elements, his life's knowledge, the proper Tools in his hands, the alignment of the universe in place and time, and a mastery of the means of setting alight volatile Spirit.

This is the Great Work of the thrice-born man.

As all the complex gears, rods, and springs of a clock must align before the hour can strike, so must the stars and planets align, before a Great Work can be done.

The practitioner must be thrice-born.

He must be able to focus his will.

He must be able to concentrate the will of others, to aid his own Power.

He must have the proper Tool.

He must know the Time.

He must calculate the Place.

The Stars must be aligned to his Will.

FOCUS

A life's work goes into the Great Work: all the pains and joys and injuries and years of learning are the lessons, teaching the practitioner how to focus.

Life is an unending string of distractions: love and hunger and fear and pride and want, all serve to tempt the mind from the central Work of life. The great religions all develop means of separating from the distractions of the world, but what they fail to grasp is that in the distraction lies the lesson.

All things in life can be turned to honing the powers of concentration. If a man can remove himself from the fray even as it breaks and foams around him, if a man can keep his concentration on the goal of his life as all around him insist that his goal is mere selfishness, corruption, and emptiness, then a man is ready for his Great Work.

WILL

Will is a component of an individual's focus, but Will is also an Energy that one may build and concentrate from a community of like-minded individuals. When a group of people are similarly devoted to a goal, when they are consecrated into a way of living, tutored into a form of belief, and dedicated to a labour greater than the whole, their communal Will becomes a form of Energy all its own, glowing and pulsing like a small sun that illuminates and warms the one and the all.

The key to a group Will is a constant renewal of attention, that the focus of each remain unbroken by external distractions, that the outpouring of Energies from each continue to gather and build in the centre, where the practitioner can draw upon it for his Work.

THE TOOL

Tools vary, as no other part of a Great Work. For some, a word can be a Tool, used to cut away pretence and enter the centre of Light. For others, a physical object manifests the Tool essence, enabling an interaction between the practitioner's physical and spiritual selves.

A Tool must incorporate all four Elements, but beyond that, the Tool must have been shaped by the practitioner to take on a life of its own, to gather and to emanate its own Power. The Tool must be shaped as an integral part of the Work, moving the hand even as the hand moves it.

TIME

There is a reason the clock is shaped in the round: This reminds us of the circuit of our days, and that we are always given another chance to strike the moment. Midnight is said to be the witching hour, because in that instant, time suspends between a late night and an early morning, between one day and the next.

And there is a reason why we arrange calendars in a line, to give ourselves a visual reminder that no two days are the same, that if we miss one opportunity, we will never have it again.

Opposite concepts, only brought together in a Work.

It can take a life's span before a man can understand how to calculate the Time for his Work. He must have known not only the ordinary human time, minutes and years, but he must also have stepped aside from the inexorable progress of the clock and experienced the reality outside of time, when the ticking of the second hand could be suspended, even reversed, at the whim of the man's mind.

PLACE

Even the most unenlightened individual can see the gross and obvious influence of the worlds around us. One need only remark on the effect of the moon on the tides.

In such a way has history shaped the places around us. Britain, for example, is the culmination of countless peoples over millennia: the ancients; the Romans; the Angles and Saxons; the North Peoples; the Normans, all were drawn to the island, where they built their roads, raised their monuments, and left their names, their gods, and their Powers.

All these are considerations in choosing the site for a Work: central and apart, it must draw from the ages yet be ageless, between the worlds yet of the world, recognised as holy yet wholly secular.

A man can search his whole life, for such a place.

THE STARS

The man was but a child when he began to hear the message of the stars, to grasp the precision of their meaning, to feel the tenuous link between their paths and those of human beings.

It is no secret that greatness and celestial motions go hand-in-hand. Throughout the ages, the heavens have recognized the births of notables, providing a hanging star for the sages to find the infant Jesus. And celestial bodies at times cooperate, sending a shooting star to convey heavenly approbation of a human endeavour, or even lending an

assist to the actions of mere men: William the Conqueror moved to the throne with a comet in the night sky overhead; when Joshua needed more hours in which to complete his conquest, the sun lingered in the sky to lighten his way.

SACRIFICE AND SETTING LOOSE

A sacrifice that does not cost the giver, has no Power. The greater the cost, the greater the energies loosed into the world.

We live in a time of War, when the blood of millions has seeped into the earth, a sacrifice of whole families, entire towns, the better portion of nations. The earth lies primed, for a transformative spark.

This is when the practitioner knows that the Work is ready:

When his Focus is absolute, with his mind fully aware of every minute object and action around him, yet each object and act seems to be aimed at the Work.

When he can feel the Will of his community behind him, boosting his Focus.

When the Tool is in his hand and his hand is in the Tool.

When the time moves inexorably forward, yet nears the point at which it will stand still.

When the Place is understood, and arranged, and reached.

When all the worlds and the stars are in alignment, and he can feel the quiver as its mechanism prepares to strike.

When his masculine half prepares to act, and his feminine side prepares to receive the results of his act.

At that moment, the Work is ready for consummation.

PART THE FIFTH

THE END AND THE BEGINNING



When the stars are in alignment, when the ages look down in approval, when the Elements are brought together in the man and in his Work, placed in the right site and at the right moment: then, divinity is loosed on the earth.

THUS TESTIFIES A MAN.

