

# THE THIRST FOR WHOLENESS:

Addiction, Recovery, And Spirituality

Christina Grof

Today I am going to speak about subjects very close to my heart: addiction, recovery, and spirituality. I have worked for almost forty years in the field of transpersonal psychology as a speaker, writer, and psychotherapist, and I have worked with many addicts. I have had unusual experiences since I was a small child. And I am also a recovering alcoholic and an adult child of alcoholics. So, the topics I have chosen tonight bring together these seemingly incompatible parts of myself, my professional self, my spiritual self, and my addictive self.

Many important lessons from other people, from reading and painting, and from my own experiences. I believe that many of these lessons apply not only to those identified as addicts, but also to many other individuals and to the world situation at large. Now, as we focus on the components of an individual's addiction and recovery, keep in mind how these elements might apply to what might be called „global addictions“. Imagine how much suffering in the world is caused by addiction to money, power, war, petroleum, weapons.

Wherever I am in the world, I like to ask the audience this question: „How many of you have been touched in some way by addiction (whether it is the addiction to alcohol, drugs, sex, food, shopping, relationships, power, money) either your own or that of someone around you: a family member, friend, colleague, the drunk driver that hit your car?“ Without exception, no matter what kind of audience I am addressing, most people raise their hands. How do we make sense of this massive problem of addiction, which affects so many of us individually, as families, and as a culture? And what does our addictive tendency say about us as human beings?

When I use the words „addicts“ and „addictions“ throughout this presentation, I am talking about all kinds of addicts and all kinds of addictions. I like to think about addictions as a mosaic of various factors: physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual. Addictions result partly from genetic disposition, family history, or the habit-forming chemical reaction of addicts' bodies with their drug or drugs of choice. Addictions are linked to the need to escape reality, numb life's pain, or purge unpleasant feelings. And many recognize that the stress of living in a culture that encourages a compulsive, selfish, acquisitive lifestyle is also a factor in our addictive behavior.

However, there is another, essential piece of the mosaic of addiction: the spiritual component. And those who have the insight that they are also dealing with deep, spiritual issues say that the spiritual elements exist under and around all of the rest. Even as they acknowledge and deal with the other aspects of their disease, if they do not directly address the „soul sickness“ or „spiritual bankruptcy,“ as Alcoholics Anonymous calls it, they are not adequately confronting their addiction.

Although there are many facets to the addiction problem, I am the most fascinated by the spiritual dimension. Many people are confused about spirituality. What is it exactly? In my definition, spirituality is a simple but powerful element in human nature that is available to each individual. We discover our innate spirituality through direct, personal, intimate experiences of an expanded sense of identity, an identity beyond our everyday, limited perception of who we are. This awesome realization that „I am more than I thought I was“ gives meaning to our lives by adding a sacred dimension. Some

people find true spirituality within a religious context, but religion does not automatically guarantee spirituality. Spirituality is about inclusivity; religion is often about exclusivity.

Carl Gustav Jung suggested that the craving of an alcoholic for alcohol is „the equivalent on a low level to the spiritual thirst of our being for wholeness“...or...“the union with God.“ Jung also wrote that a useful formula for the treatment of alcoholism is „spiritus contra spiritum“, employing the Spirit with a capital „S“ against the ravages of the spirits or alcohol. Although Jung was speaking about alcohol, his statement applies to addictions of all kinds. His words describe something many people know well, a genuine spiritual thirst that is a natural impulse within us. A fierce hunger for a missing piece in our lives, a gnawing emptiness waiting to be filled.

Mystics of different spiritual systems frequently speak of our craving for the divine. The intensity of the imagery and the urgency of their writing reflect the passionate quality of the spiritual longing. The late twentieth-century Roman Catholic monk and poet Thomas Merton wrote, „**The living water of the spirit that we thirst for, like a hunted deer thirsting after a river in the wilderness.**“ Just outside Mother Teresa’s meditation room in Calcutta, she had placed a small sign that read simply, **I THIRST.**

In this poem, the 15th-century master and poet, Kabir, a 15th-century Indian mystic poet and saint whose writings influenced Hinduism’s Bhakti movement, referred to God as a „lover“ or „the Guest“:

**My body and my mind are in depression because  
you are not with me,  
How much I love you and want you in my house!**

**I don’t really care about food, I don’t really care about sleep,  
I am restless indoors and outdoors.  
The bride (seeker) wants her lover (God) as much as a thirsty man wants water.**

We yearn for the inner marriage, for the obscured Guest or God as much „as a thirsty man wants water.“ In considering the connection between addiction and spirituality, I have been interested to note how often the metaphors of thirst and hunger are used to describe the yearning for God.

Unfortunately, this natural drive to know our true selves often becomes distorted into the craving of addiction. I now believe that this fierce thirst for our own wholeness is the underlying impulse behind addictions of all kinds. It is beyond the very real physiological craving of chemical addiction and is different from our desire to escape pain through addictive behavior. We reach for the „spirits“ rather than the true Spirit.

Let us spend the rest of this presentation looking at the human journey through the lens of addiction and healing. As we do this, I will show you some pictures; painting them helped me immensely on my journey of recovery and healing. I will be using them as a backdrop for our discussion. I have arranged in death/rebirth sequence, not chronologically.

I would like to start with a wonderful Hindu story that gives a kind of playful cosmic overview of our human dilemma..

**Before the creation of the world, only God existed. God soon became bored being all alone, so with His/Her ultimate power, God created the world from Himself/Herself so that God could play and have some fun. God also created other gods to help to run the creation. But the beings in God's creation had the knowledge of who they were, and they knew how to merge back to their source. Very soon, they became disinterested in the world and all flocked back to God in Heaven. God was once again bored; God's game was ruined.**

So God called a meeting of the other gods and asked for their help. „Why not throw everyone out of Heaven, close the gates, and hide the key? And erect the veils of forgetfulness so that these beings do not remember easily where they came from,“ suggested one.

God thought that this was an excellent idea.  
„But where should we hide the key to Heaven?“ God asked.

„In the deepest depths of the Pacific Ocean“, suggested one god.

„How about the top of the Himalayan mountains?“, said another.  
„No, no. Put it on the moon. It is so far away, they will never reach it.

Everyone became excited and God sat in meditation to see the future. God shook His/Her head and said, „None of our plans will work. I see humans exploring every nook and corner of the universe. Not only will they conquer the Himalayas and swim to the bottom of the ocean, but they will also land on the moon, explore the planets and attempt to find other universes through black holes.“

Everyone became silent. Then, suddenly, God said, „I've got it! I know one place that humans will never look for the key to Heaven. That place is within themselves, right in the centers of their own bodies. They will go millions of miles into space, but they will never go one, two steps within themselves to explore their own inner beings.“

**The gods all applauded and unanimously agreed. (PAUSE) And God has delighted in watching human beings' search for the way home ever since.**

According to this story, we are all involved in a wonderful divine play, a long and complex treasure hunt for the key that will unlock our true nature. Let us follow this metaphor for a while. Remember that this is only a story, one which might be a useful way of thinking about our human experience.

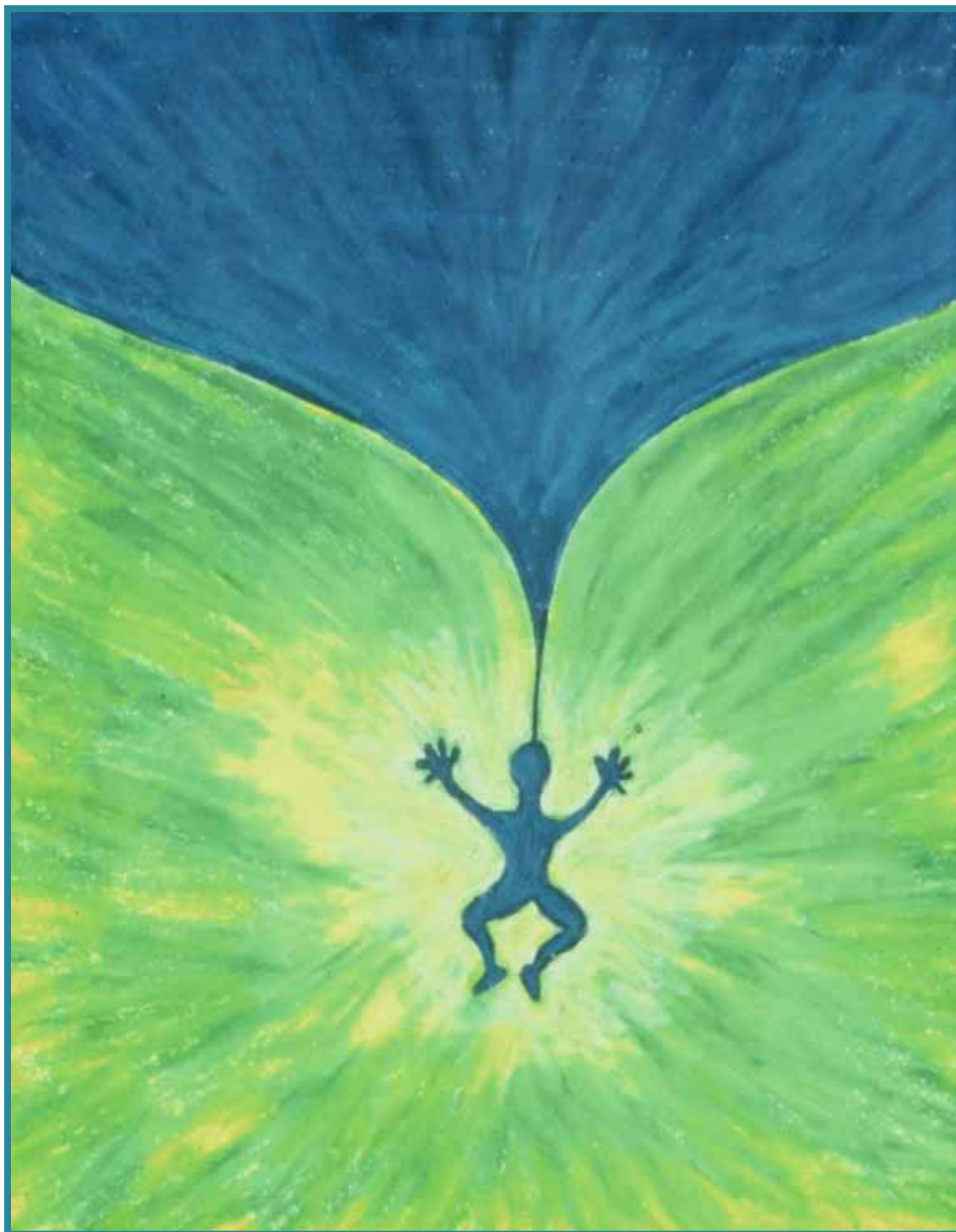
According to many spiritual systems, we are born with a connection to our spiritual source or our deeper self. From an original unitive state, we come into material form, „trailing clouds of glory“, as poet William Wordsworth put it.

# 1. MERGE INTO GOD



During conception, we are wrenched away from the deeper Self into our individual selves and „the shades of the prison house begin to close,“ in Wordsworth’s words. We become spirit encased in matter, entering a complex world full of opposing forces where we are dependent upon others for nurturing and care.

## 2. CUT OFF FROM GOD



Some people are born to loving, aware parents who encourage our unique gifts as individuals while recognizing and nourishing our spiritual nature. As a result of their nurturing, we are able to keep the lines open between our limited, material selves and our spiritual or deeper Self.

### 3. and 4. (PARENTS AND CHILD)



However, many others of us are born into painful survival in the face of (physical, emotional, mental, sexual, or religious) abuse, and a world that repeatedly tells us that we are bad or inadequate or shameful. Children who endure the pain and indignity.

## 5. RAGE



Some children experience incest or beatings.



## 6. INCEST



Other children are repeatedly yelled at and consistently given messages such as, „What a stupid thing to do!“ „What’s wrong with you?“ or „I wish you had never been born“

# 7. INCEST MONSTER



Abused children are deeply wounded. They adopt the shame and guilt, fear, the anger, confusion, and mistrust that they feel as the foundation for their self-image.

# 8. SHAME



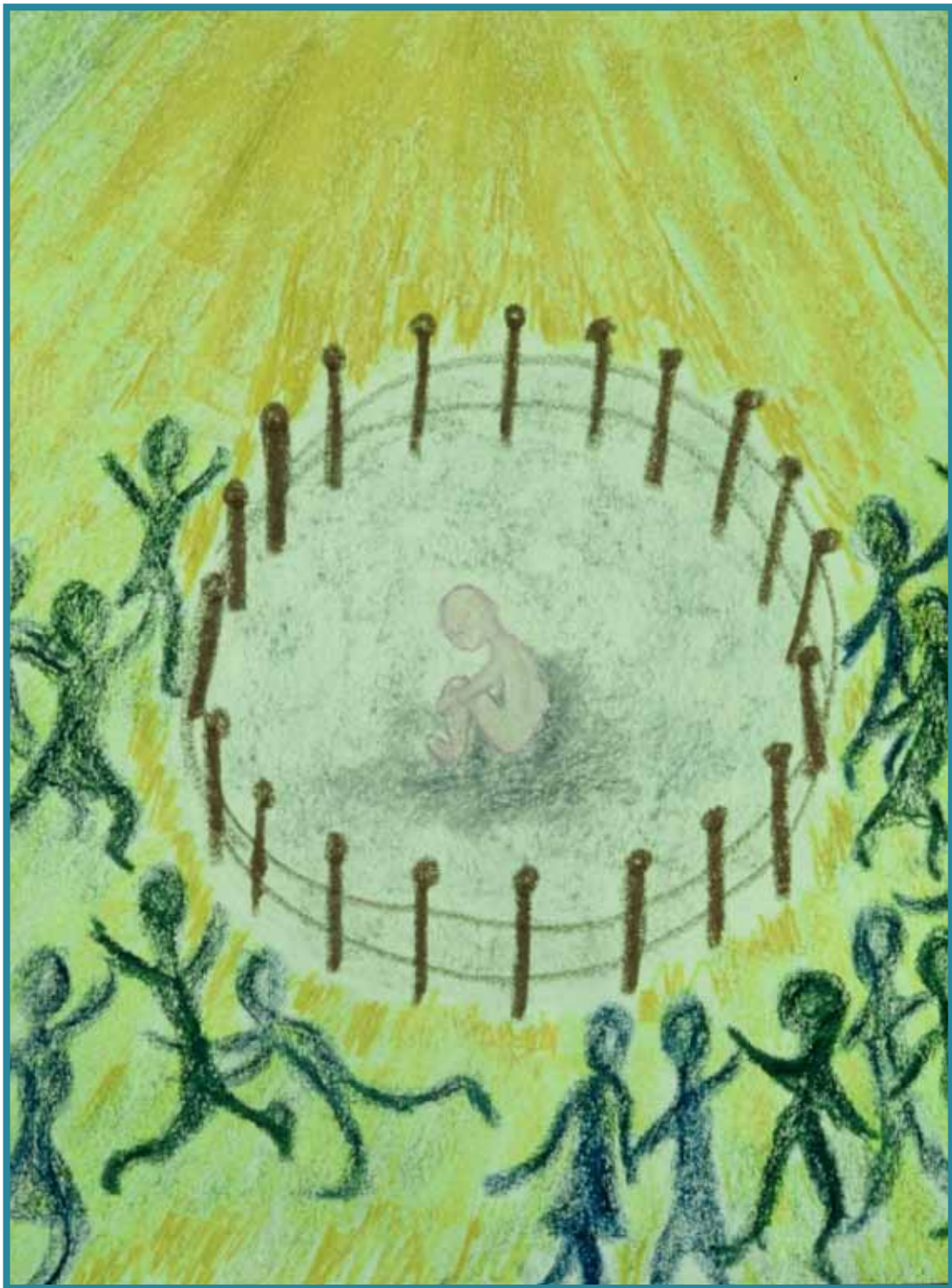
This is a far cry from a child who knows that he or she is divine.

## 9. SCARED CHILD



We are already separated from our true nature, existing in a state of divine alienation. If we are abused, if we are systematically shamed or violated or betrayed, our sense of isolation is deepened and cemented into place. Not only do we experience the separation from our deeper Self, which is a natural component of our humanity.

## 10. LONELINESS



But we also feel isolated from our parents, from other people, and from the world at large.

## 11. ABUSIVE WORLD



Spiritual practices say “You are God. Find God within.” But a shame-based person says, “I LOOK INSIDE AND I FIND FEAR, SHAME ANGER, ALIENATION, etc.” Church confessional says “We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy feet, oh Lord...There is no health in us.”

The most frequent theme that I have heard from people in recovery from addictions of all kinds is, „ I always felt different.“ „I have always been on the outside looking in.“ „I have never felt at home, as though I belong.“ „I feel less than other people.“ I heard one person say, „For years, I thought I was adopted because I never felt that I fit in my family.“ How do we survive? We might split off,

## 12. DISSOCIATION



and escape the pain around us by retreating into our own safe world of fantasy or illusion. We might develop intuitive radar that will help us to anticipate, outguess, and outmaneuver those who threaten us.

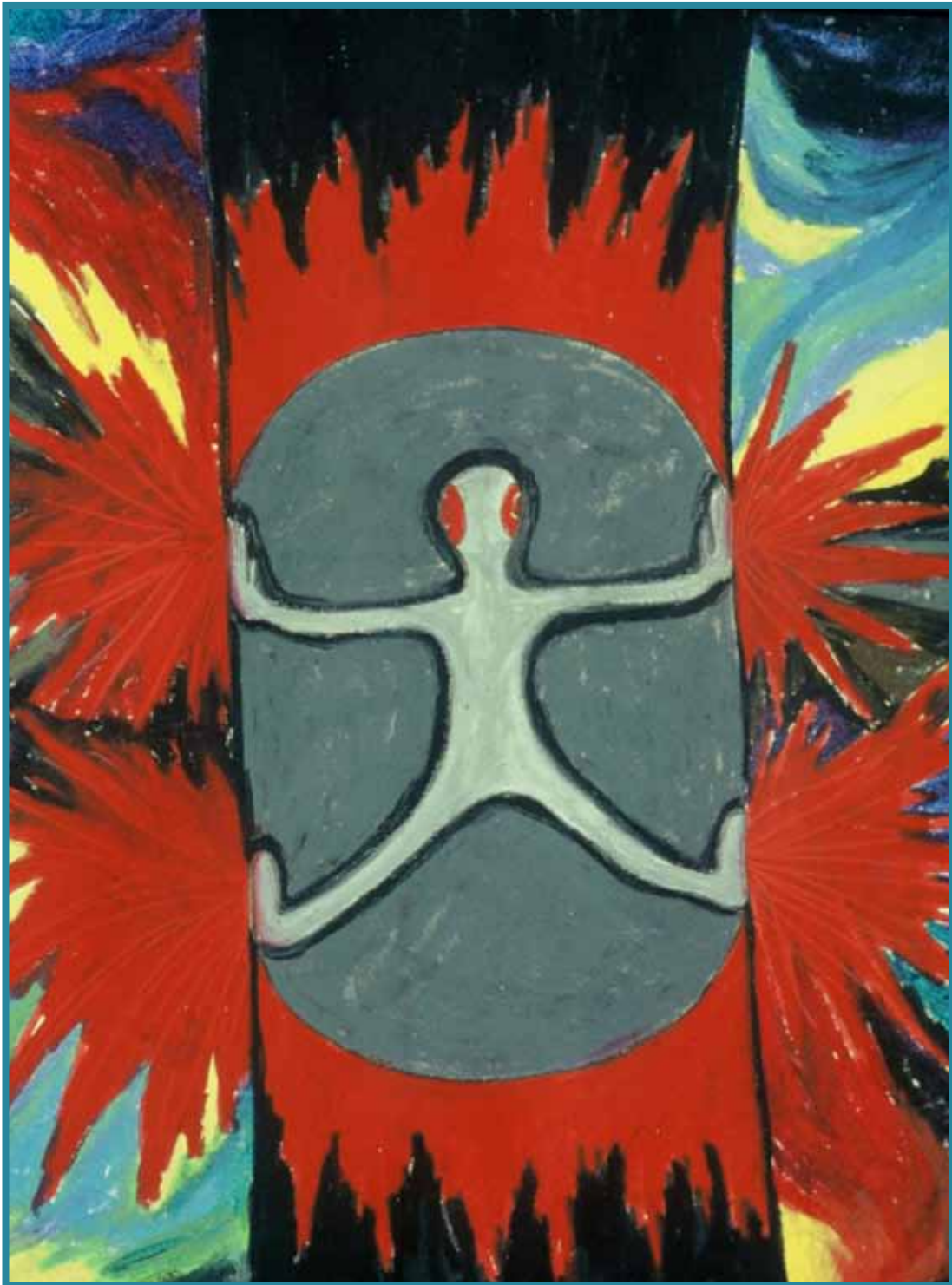
## 13. ARMOR



We may build many protective layers of behavior and defensive masks that shield us from the world so that we can survive

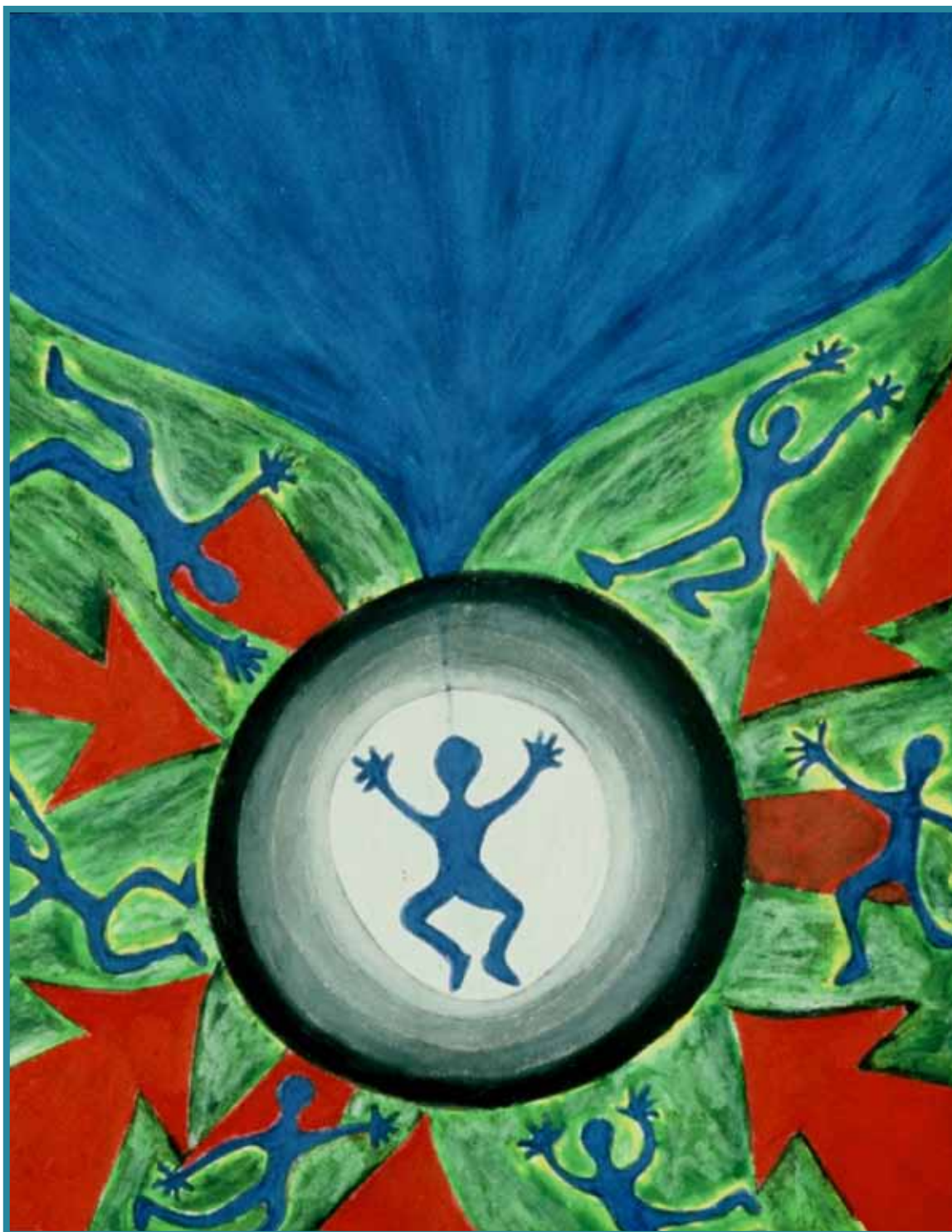


## 14. ISOLATION



but eventually isolate us even further from our true selves.

## 15. CUT OFF COMPLETELY



With each new mask, we increasingly create a false self, and as our false self grows, our divine Self, our source of inspiration of love, of wholeness, becomes less and less available.

## 16. MASK



And yet, we feel that intense spiritual stirring from deep within. For some of us, it feels even stronger than our sexual drive or our hunger for food. Not only do we long to be touched and loved by the people in our lives, but we also feel an insistent ache in our souls. We feel monumentally nostalgic or homesick for something that we cannot begin to identify. We feel restless, incomplete, empty, dissatisfied. What do we do with this impulse?

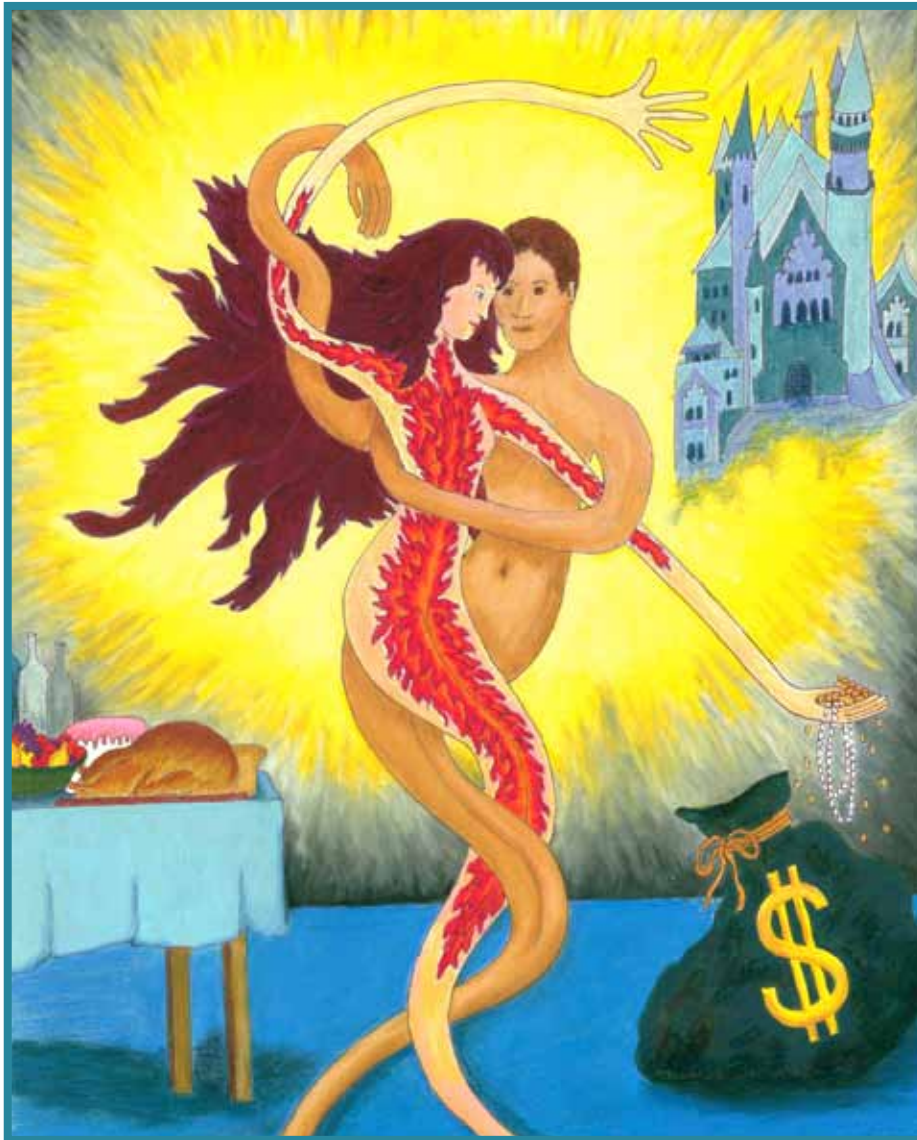
If we go to a traditional church or synagogue, we might feel a deep response to the ritual or the music or the beauty of the stained glass. But often there is a priest or rabbi talking about salvation by some vague external entity, some God that is removed and unavailable and grand compared to us as miserable human beings. We are once again told that we are worthless and to look somewhere outside ourselves for the answer.

## 17. TURN AWAY FROM GOD



And most everywhere else that we turn, we are given the same message:

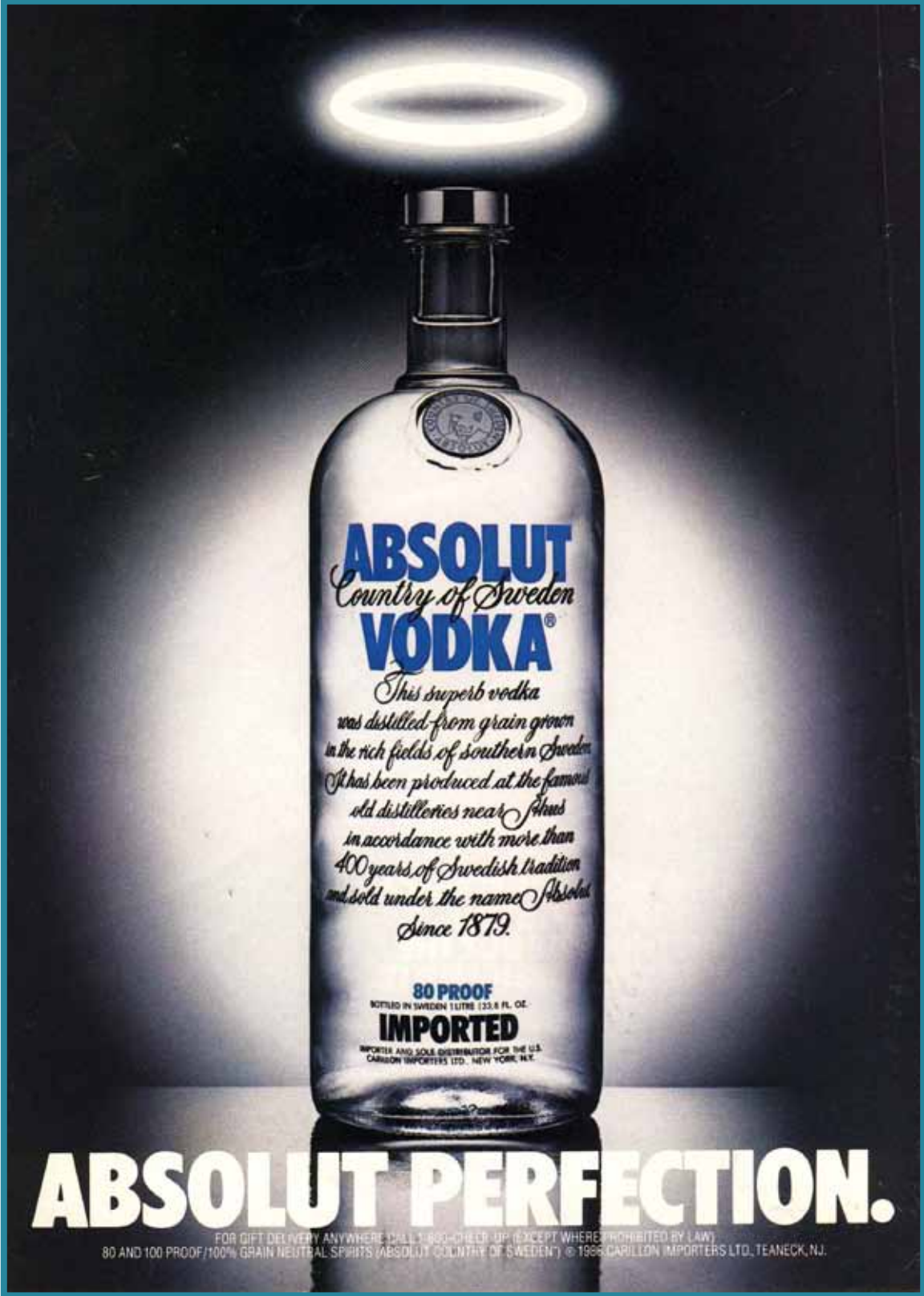
## 18. MAN AND WOMAN REACHING



You will be satisfied and happy if only you look a certain way, get a university degree, find the life partner of your dreams, have two children, buy a powerful or sexy car or two as well as a house in the suburbs, become a success in the world, make \$100,000, or \$200,000, or a million, or two million. And on and on and on it goes. Everything around us tells us that the only way of satisfying the driving thirst for wholeness, for God, for Home, is through various internal or external activities, material substances, or relationships.

And the advertising industry contributes to this problem. As we go through the next section of the talk, I will be showing you some advertisements that play in to our addictive tendencies. For the last few years, I have been looking for ads that have spiritual themes, thereby appealing directly to our spiritual thirst. You will see the themes of:

19. ABSOLUTE PERFECTION



20. ZIARI GLASESS WILL SEE A NEW WORLD

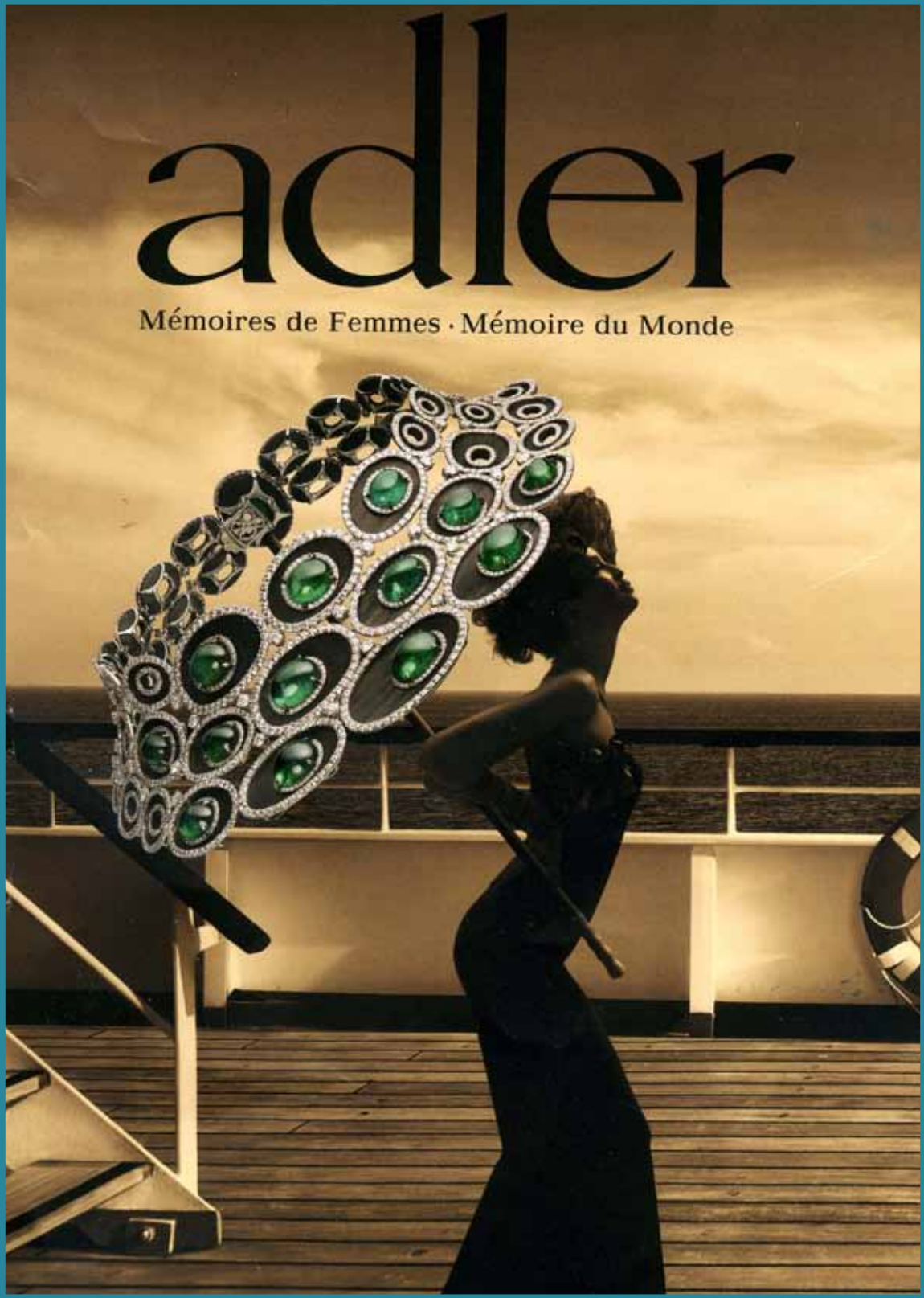


21. I ADORE DIOR PARFUM: I FEEL LIKE A GODDESS

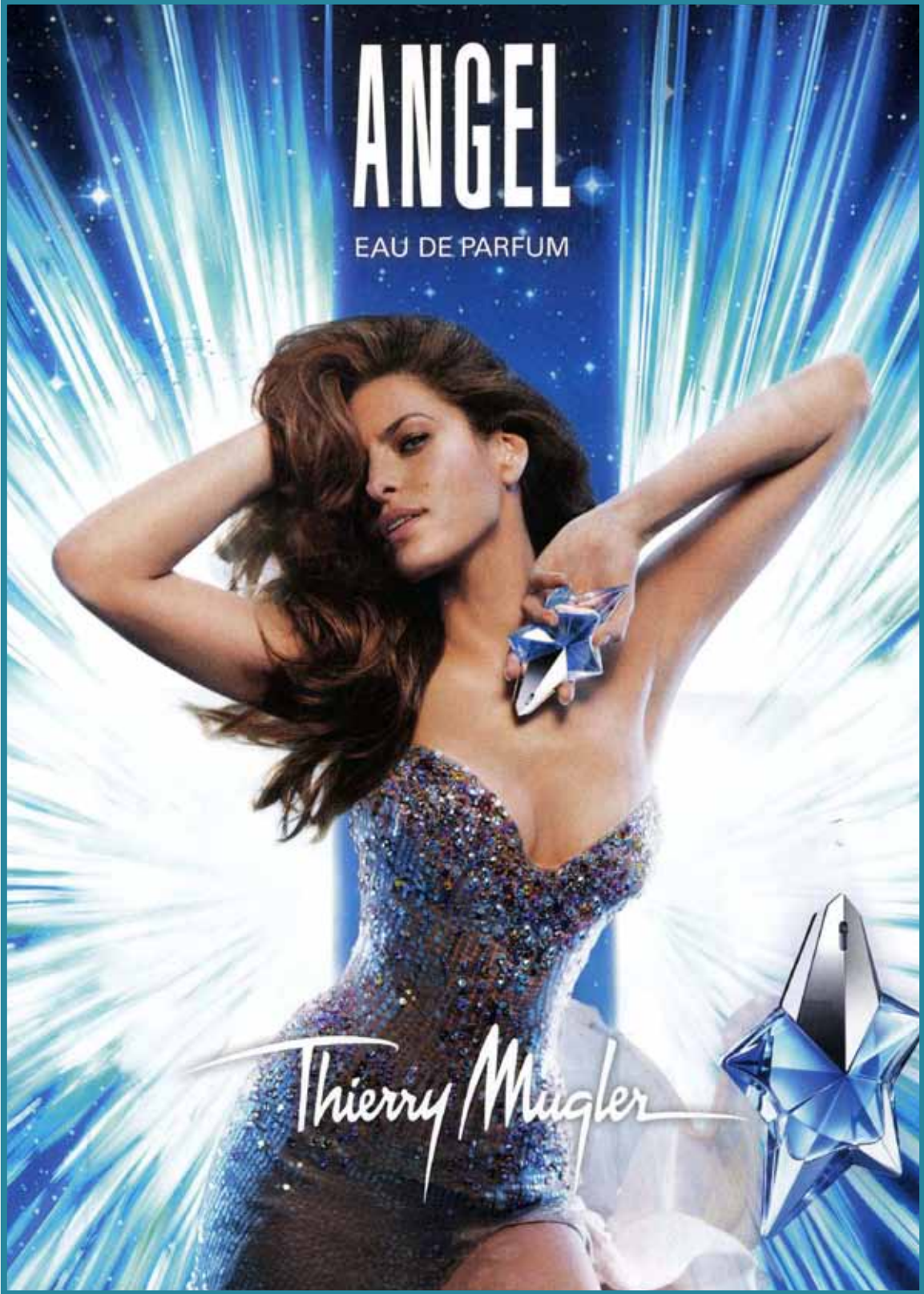




22. THE WOMEN WHO WEAR OUR CLOTHES  
FEEL THEY ARE SPIRITUAL BEINGS



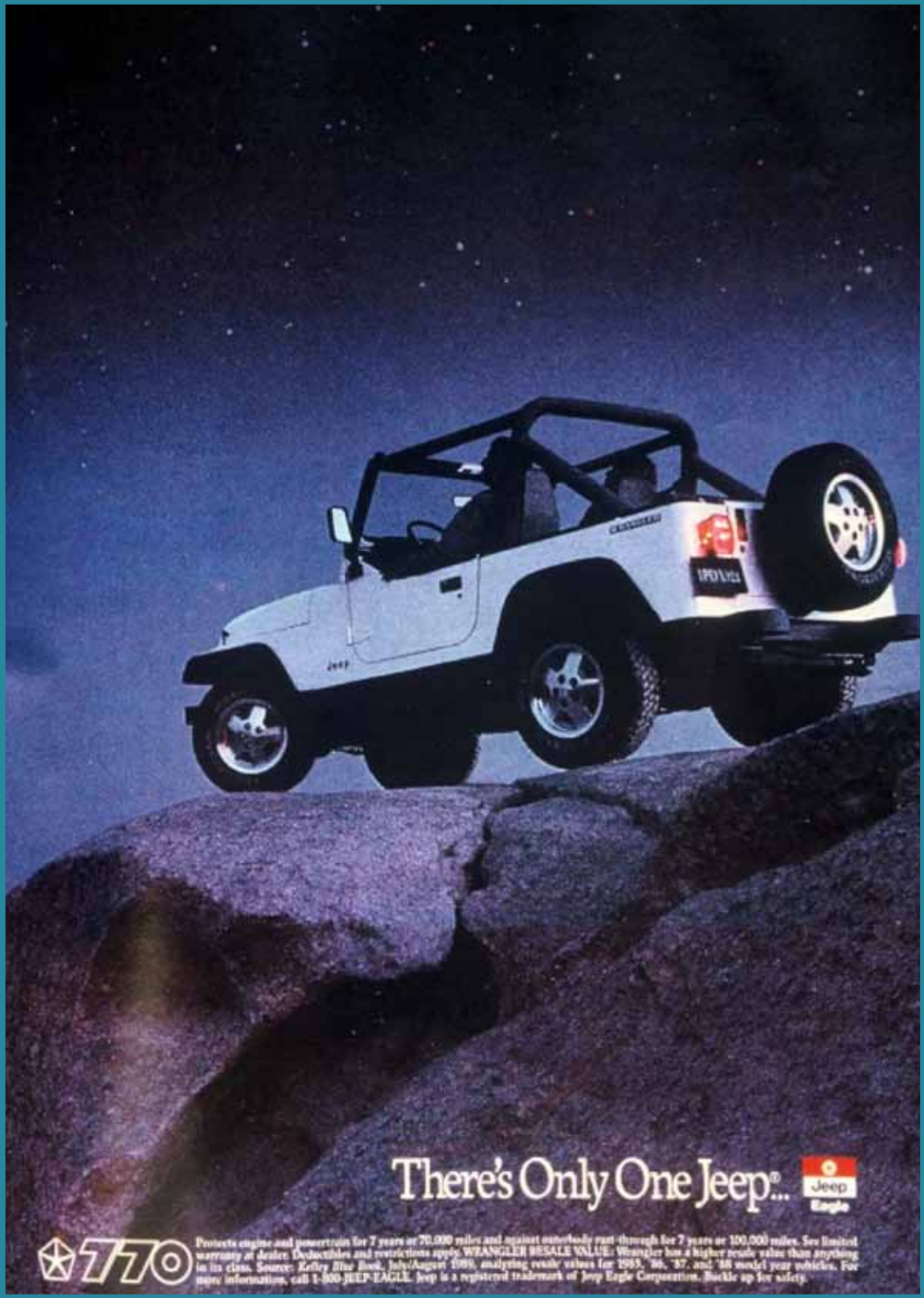
23. THIS PARFUM NAKES ME LIKE A DIVINE BEING





24. SMIRNOW VODKA IS A HEAVENLY DRINK



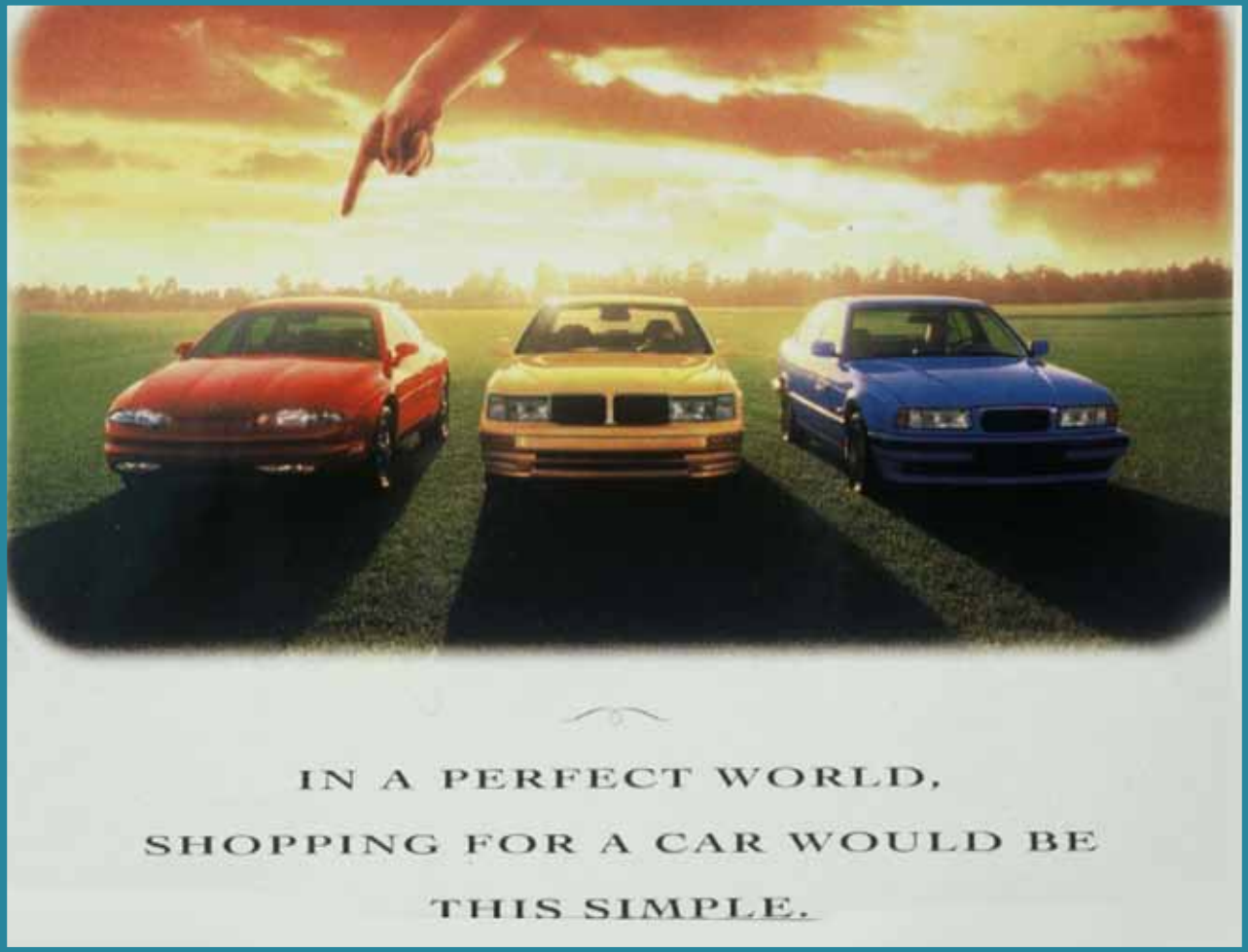
# 25. THERE IS ONLY ONE – JEEP



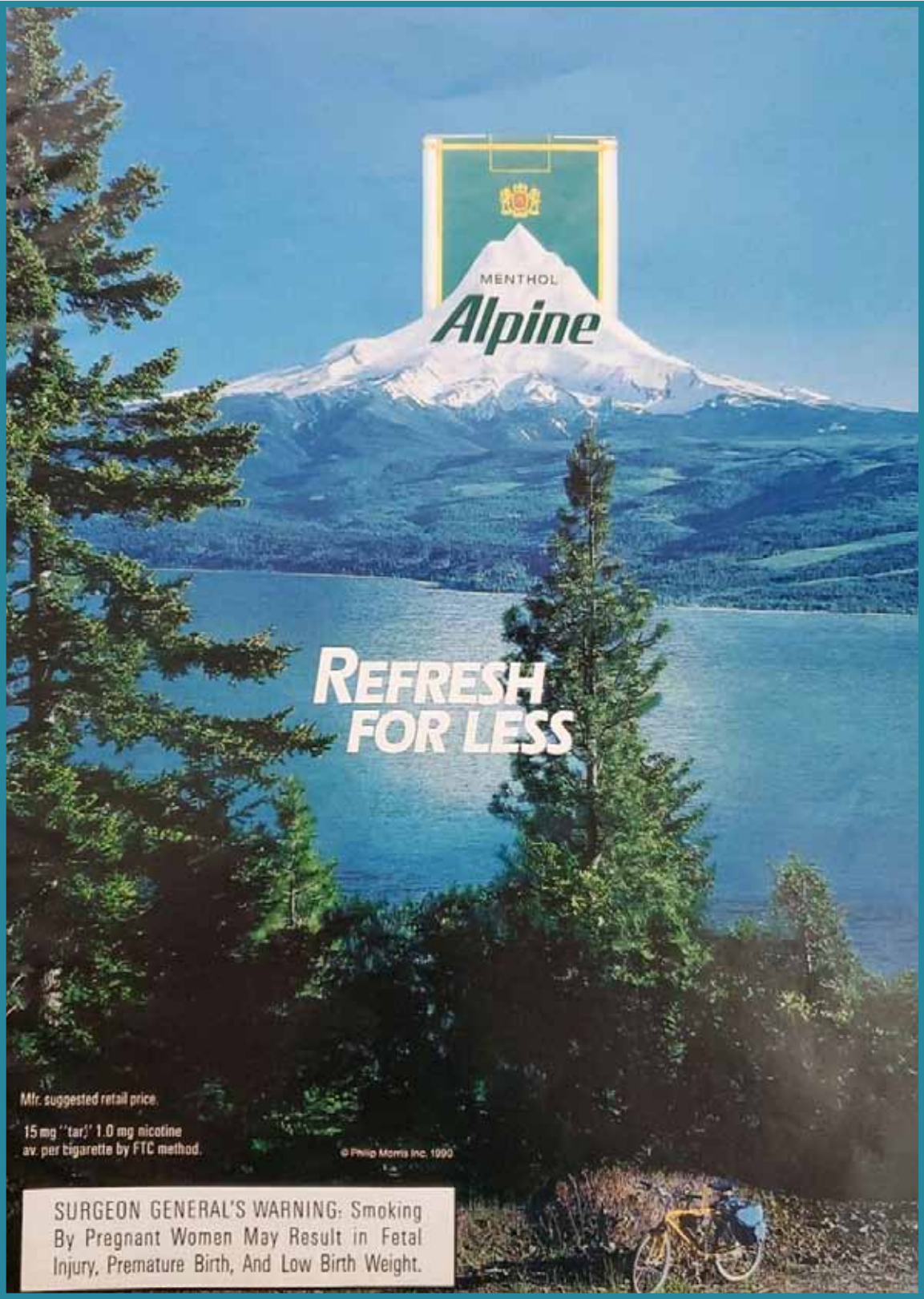
There's Only One Jeep® 

 Protects engine and powertrain for 7 years or 70,000 miles and against rust-through for 7 years or 100,000 miles. See limited warranty of dealer. Excludes and restrictions apply. **WRANGLER RESALE VALUE:** Wrangler has a higher resale value than anything in its class. Source: Kelley Blue Book, July/August 1999, analyzing resale values for 1995, '96, '97, and '98 model year vehicles. For more information, call 1-800-JEEP-EAGLE. Jeep is a registered trademark of Jeep Eagle Corporation. Buckle up for safety.

26. GOD WOULD CHOSE THIS CAR AMONG ALL THE OTHERS



# 27. FRESH AIR OF ALPINE CIGARETTE MAKES YOU FEEL REACHING THE HEAVEN



## 28. IT CAN TAKE SEVERAL LIFETIMES OR COUPLE OF WEEKS YO REACH NIRVANA ROYAL CARIBBEAN

IT CAN TAKE SEVERAL LIFETIMES TO REACH A STATE OF INNER PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY. OR, IT CAN TAKE A COUPLE OF WEEKS.



*Concentrate deeply. Think about a 14-day ocean journey to Singapore, or Bali, Thailand or China. Days when your every whim is anticipated. Instantly met. Sights, smells, lights, sensual feasts imagination can't do justice.*

*Now, a flash of insight: Royal Caribbean will take you to the Far East.*

*Our Sun Viking has just begun a year-round presence there with five itineraries sailing to over twenty-five of the world's most mystical, exotic cities. Along the way? The same lavish attention you already expect from Royal Caribbean in the rest of the world.*

*It's a vacation that until now, simply did not exist. But you can believe. Call 1-800-659-RCCL ext. 611 for a free brochure. Or simply ask your travel agent how to reach nirvana.*

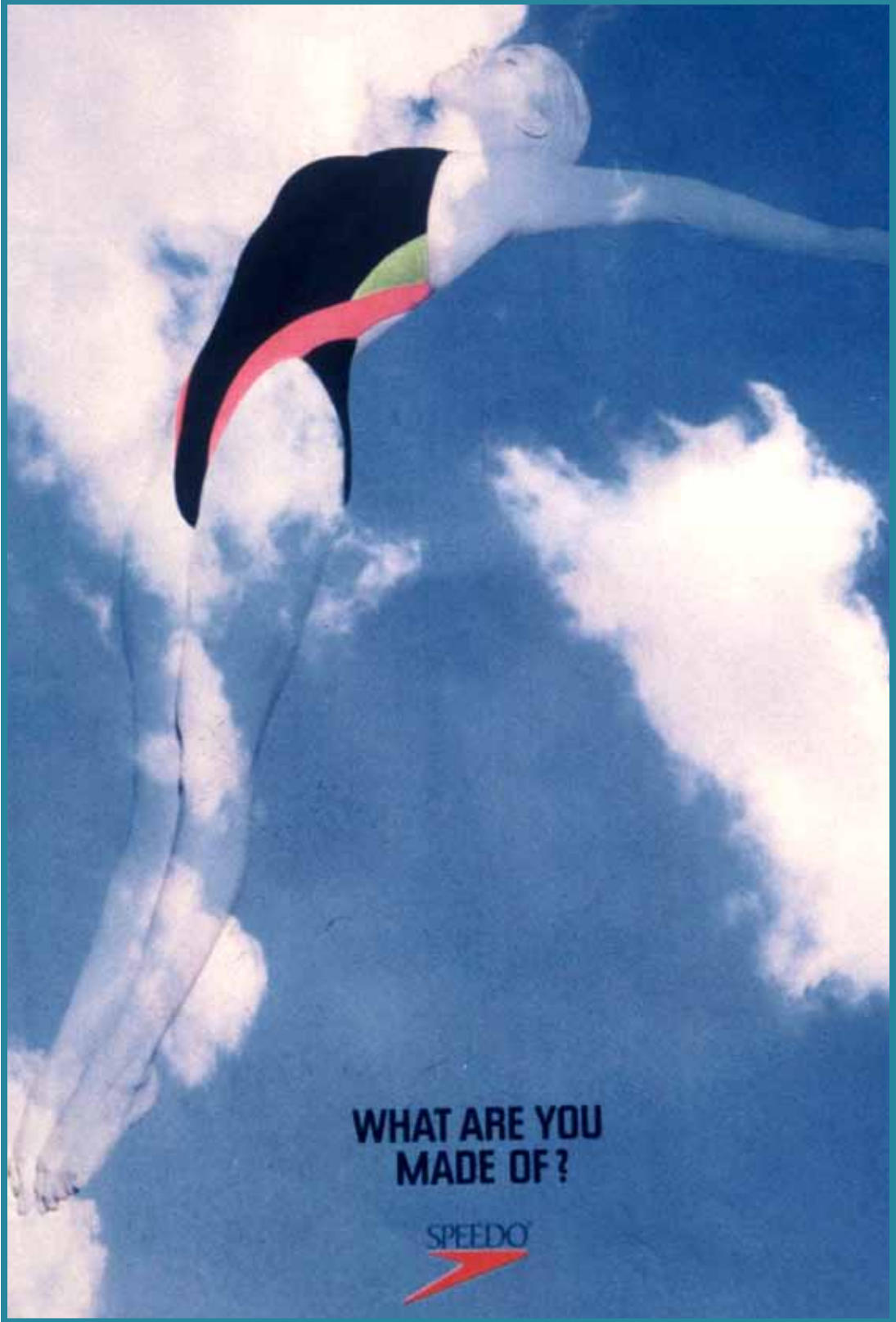
*Don't put it off another lifetime.*

You've Got Some  ROYAL CARIBBEAN Coming

*Alaska · Bahamas · Bermuda · Caribbean · The Far East · Hawaii · Mediterranean · Mexico · Panama Canal · Russia · Scandinavia*

Internet access: <http://www.royalcaribbean.com> ©1996 RCCL. Ships of Norwegian, Liberian and Bahamian Registry.

29. A SUIT FOR A HEAVENLY SWIM





# 30. WITH EXEDRINE YOU CAN START RELIEVING YOUR MIGRAINE IN 30 MINUTES



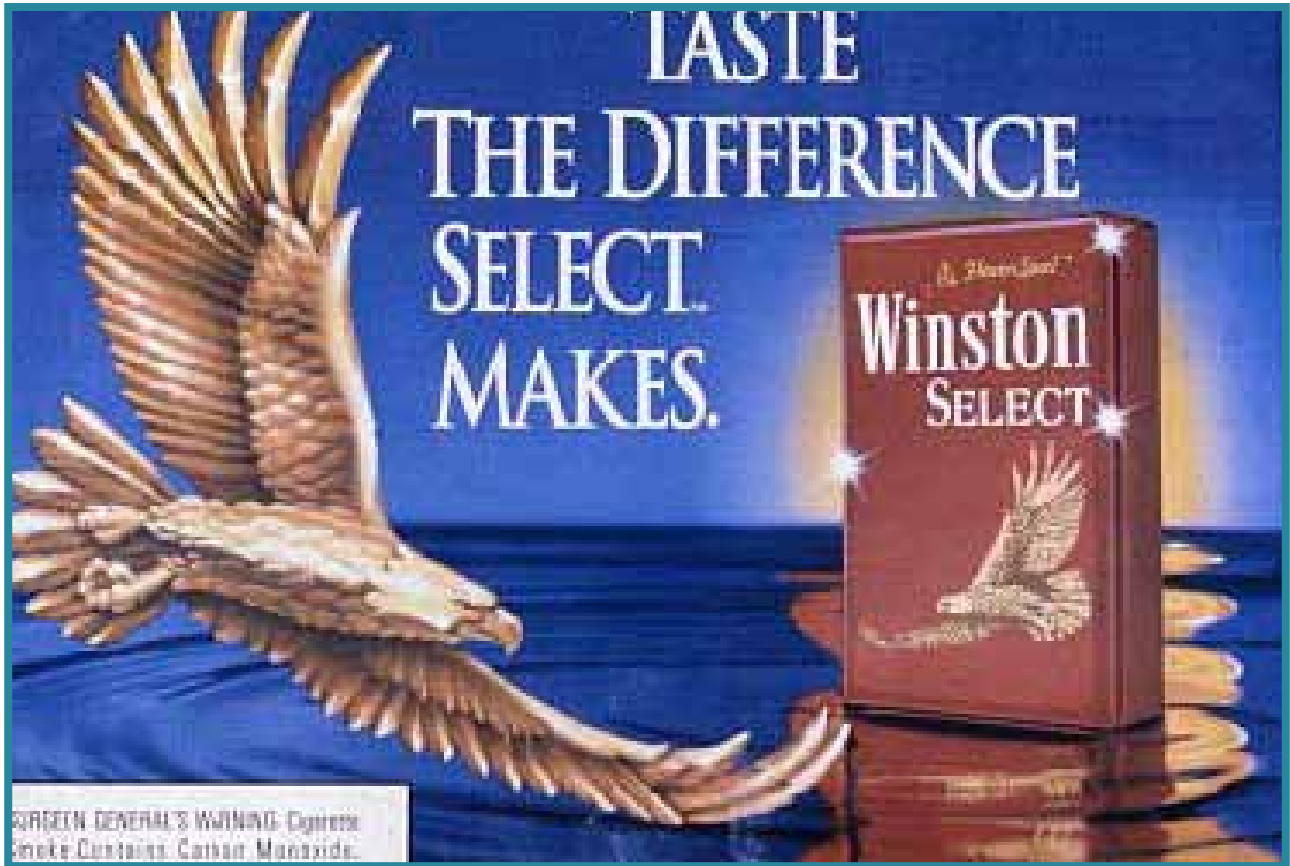
EXEDRIN.COM

STARTS RELIEVING MIGRAINE PAIN IN 30 MINUTES  
SO YOU CAN BEGIN TO FEEL LIKE NEW AGAIN.

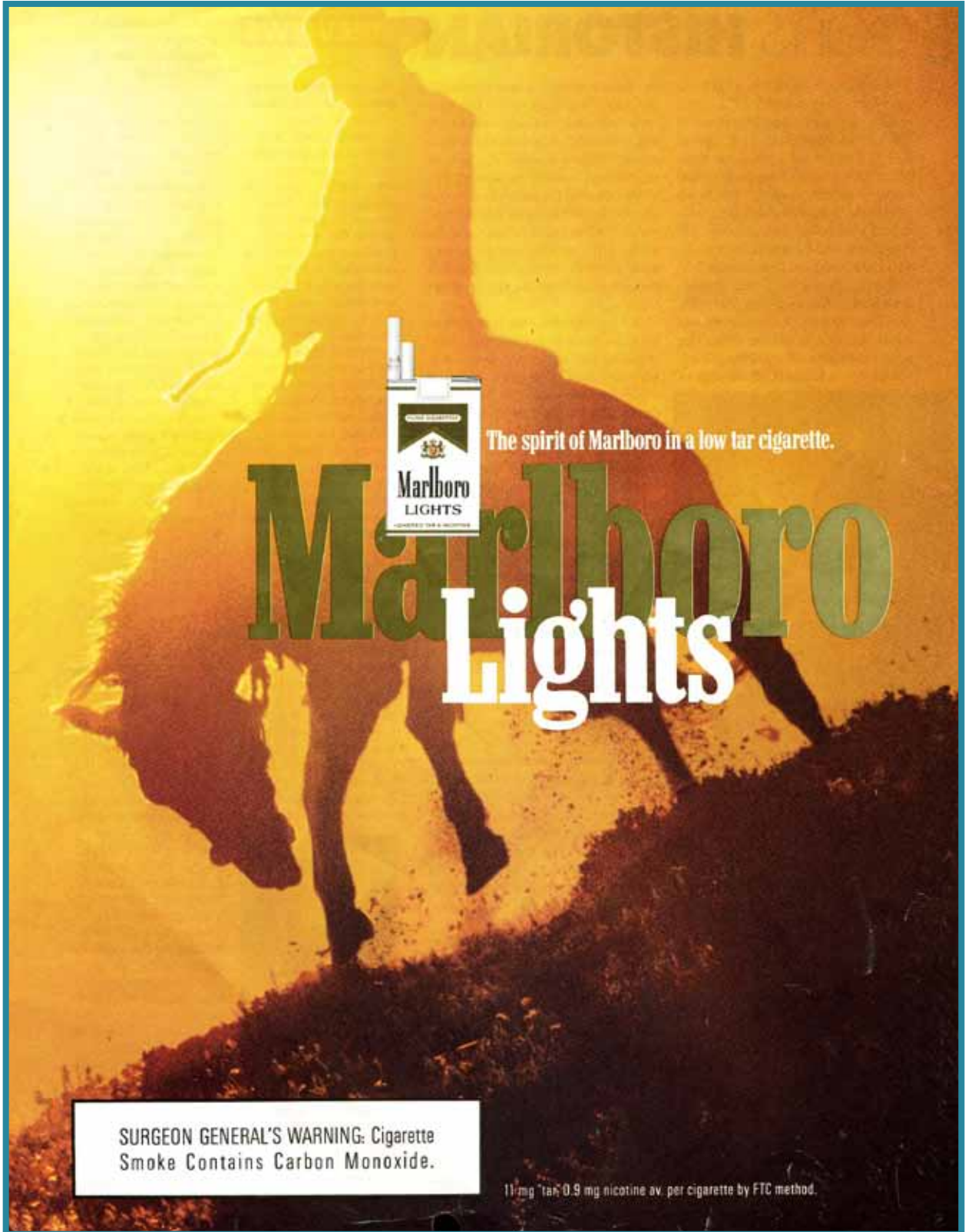


Go

31. WINSTON SELECT CIGARETTE YOU WILL  
TASTE THE DIFFERENCE  
(golden eagle symbolizes Native American heaven)



32. IN THESE CIGARETTES IS THE MARLBORO SPIRIT; SMOKING COWBOY SURROUNDS IT BY GOLDEN LIGHT



The spirit of Marlboro in a low tar cigarette.

**Marlboro**  
**Lights**


**SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette  
Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.**

11 mg "tar," 0.9 mg nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

### 33. SMOKING THESE CIGARETTES YOU WILL BE SURROUNDED BY DIVINE LIGHTS



## 34. SMOKING DUNHILL CIGARETTES ENVELOPS YOU A WAVE OF GOLDEN LIGHT



**Dunhill**  
LONDON · PARIS · NEW YORK

*let in the light*  
THE FINEST QUALITY LIGHT CIGARETTE

**DUNHILL**  
*Lights*

FILTER 10 LIGHT

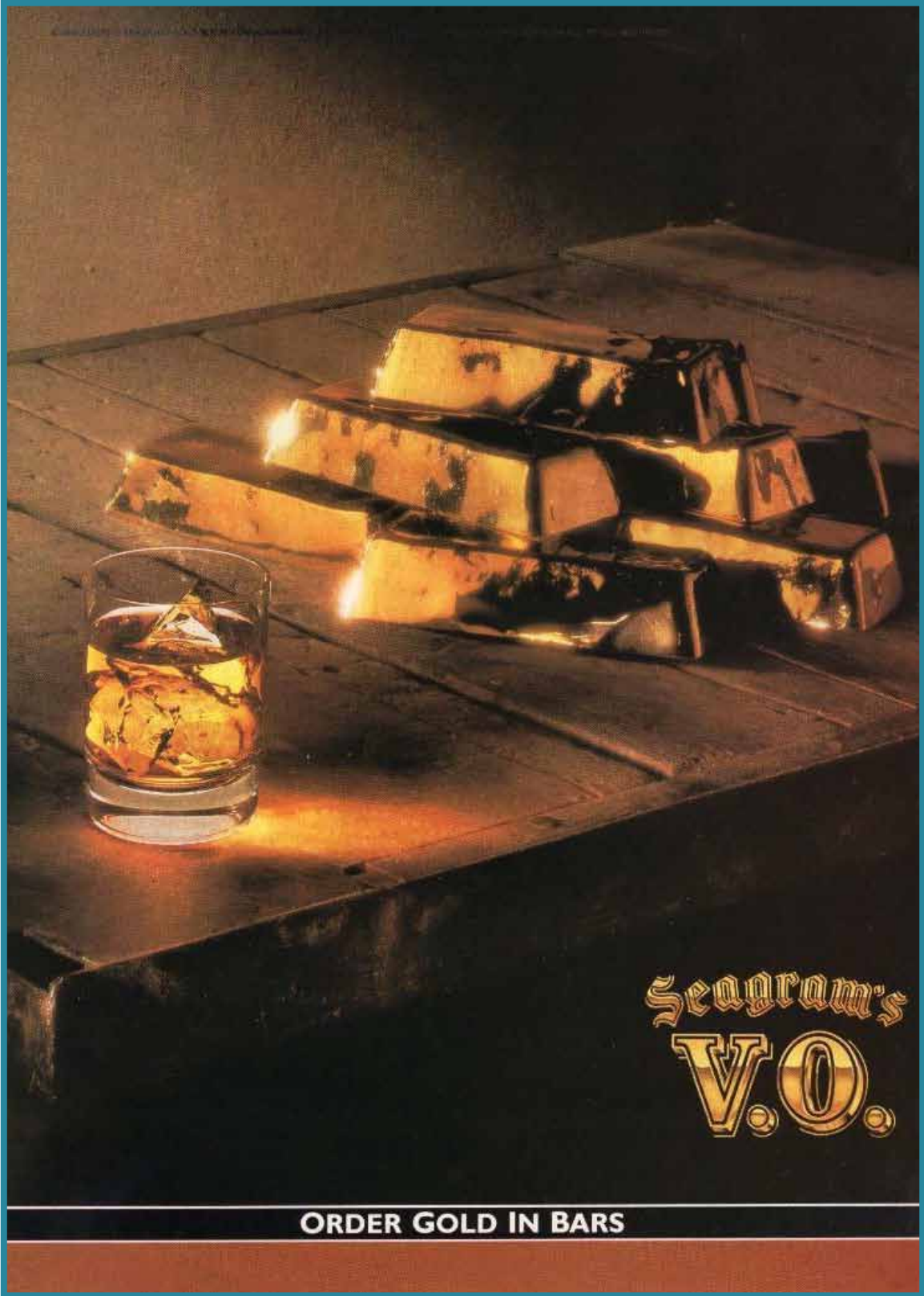
SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette  
Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.

9 mg. "tar," 7 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

35. THIS DRINK IS LIQUID GOLD



36. ORDER GOLD IN BARS

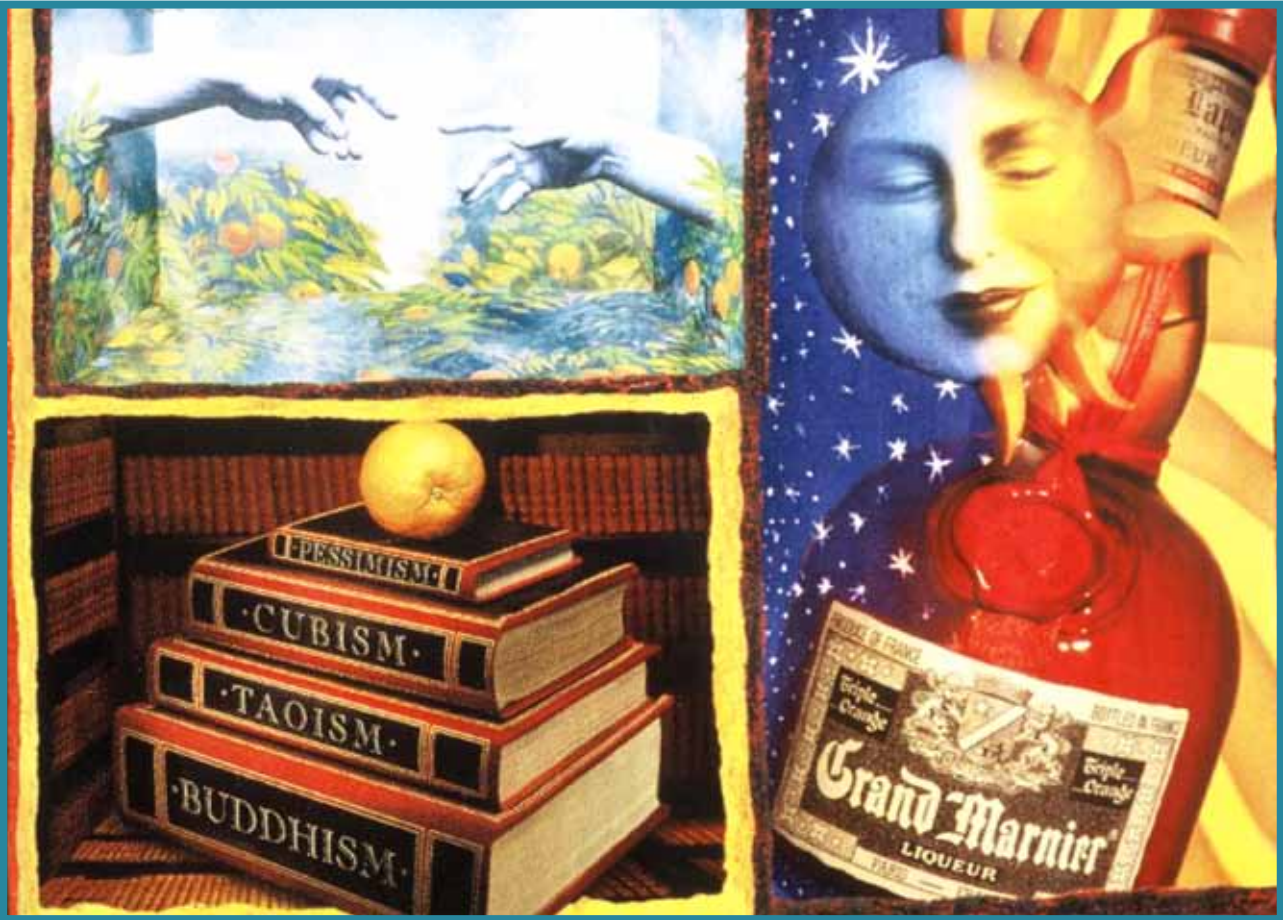


# 37. STOLICHNAYA VODKA IN CRYSTALS





38. GRAND MARNIER LIQUER AS A SPIRITUAL DRINK SURROUNDED BY ARCHETYPAL SYMBOLS: SUN AND THE MOON, STAR SPECKLED SKY AND SPIRITUAL BOOKS



39. GRAND MARNIER LIQUEUR WITH TAIL OF THE PEACOCK - ALCHEMY, LAMAISTIC DEITIES, GREAT MOTHER GODDESSES



## 40. A PEACOCK MANDALA FROM A HOLOTROPIC BREATHWORK



But our state of pseudo-freedom inevitably fades, and we end up with the same incessant craving asking to be satisfied. I have heard many addicts say: „when I took my first drink or drug, it was my first spiritual experience. And then, I spent the next ten, twenty, thirty, forty years trying to recreate it.“ So we go back for more, and more, and more.

After some time, we find ourselves in a terrible dilemma. We have become enshrouded by alcohol.

## 41. DEPRESSION



We might have developed an eating disorder: bulimia or

## 42. ANOREXIA



Our original, creative survival strategies may have turned against us; our mechanisms for managing our lives have turned into a desperate need to control ourselves, other people, our environment.

## 43. CONTROL



Behind our facades our bodies and our spirits are often sick.

# 44. SUPERWIFE



We can feel fragmented, encased in the trap of our illusions and denials.

## 45. STEEL TRAP



We are hopelessly attached or addicted to an activity, a person, or a material substance that is not giving us the satisfaction that we long for. We think about the object of our obsession incessantly, plan for it, habitually participate in it. Many of us are anorexic to life: we are so constricted that we are unable to take in the bounty of our existence.



## 46. ANOREXIC TO LIFE



We are completely alienated from our Divine source.

## 47. IMOBILIZED HORSE



The root of all suffering is attachment or clinging.

**(Explain attachment: Being a mother or father)**

Alcoholics, those who are addicted to chemicals, and other addicts are simply the most obvious, exaggerated examples of each of us as we follow our cravings, caricatures of our own struggle with attachments. And the suffering is enormous. We become like the Hungry Ghosts in the Tibetan Buddhist hell, beings with insatiable appetites, huge bellies the size of mountains, and a mouth the size of a pinhole. We are never satisfied.

## 48. ADDICTION



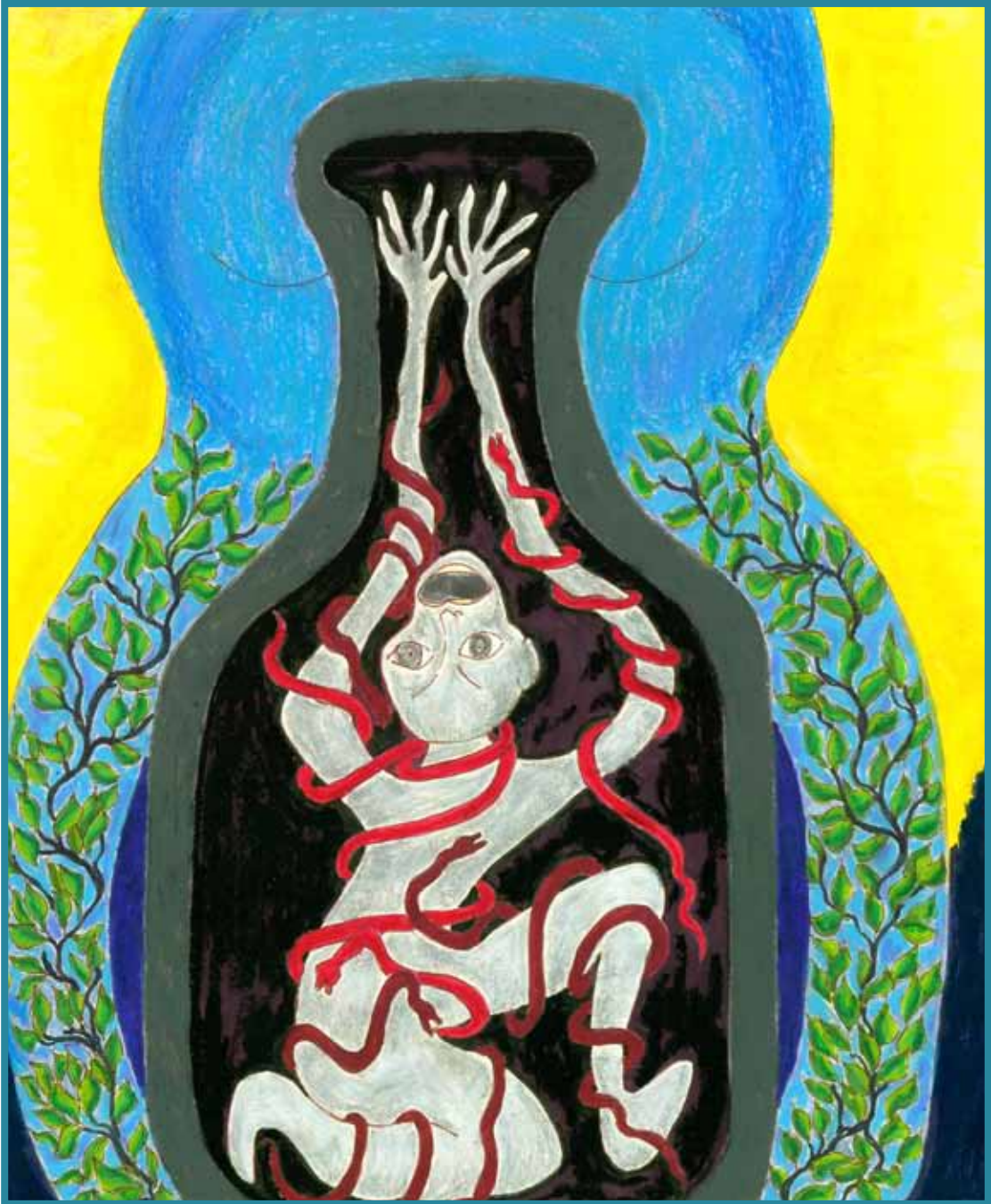
And then one morning or in the middle of some night, we get to the point where we cannot stand it any longer and we say:  
„ENOUGH! I CAN'T DO THIS ANYMORE! SOMETHING HAS GOT TO CHANGE!“ Maybe we have just finished our third unhappy marriage or walked out of the thousandth strange bedroom. Maybe we are miserable on Christmas Day as we sit in our luxurious homes, surrounded by material bounty and feeling empty. Maybe there is a hole in our noses and anxiety in our guts from the endless lines of cocaine or we have looked down one to many toilet bowls.

## 49. ANXIETY OVER ABYSS



After a night of heavy drinking, we get to the top of the ladder and find that it is against the wrong wall. Or we sit in yet another exotic place, in a hotel room that is not all that different than the others we have visited, and we feel tired of running. And somewhere from within, a small voice repeats, „Enough!“ and adds, in desperation, „please help me.... I'll do anything.“

# 50. TRAPPED IN BOTTLE



Every recovering addict knows that moment. And, at that moment, we surrender.

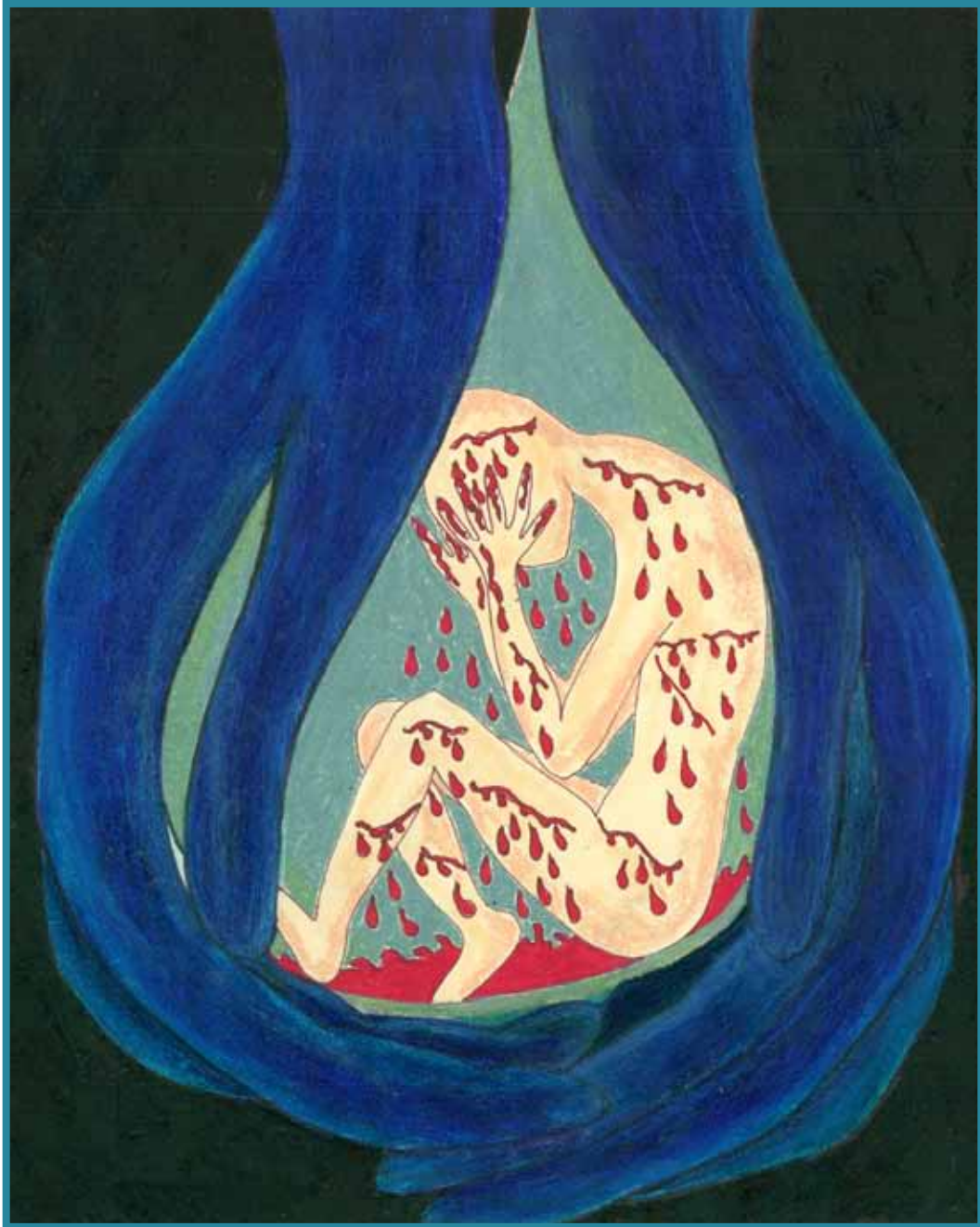
## 51. SURRENDER



**We surrender** or we are surrendered by a process much larger than we are. We let go of who we thought we were and something shifts inside of us. Often, our old selves die and we are born into a new life.

And we begin to want to do things differently. We might find ourselves peeking at some new possibilities inside of ourselves, maybe even getting a glimpse of our divine center.

## 52. WOUNDED CHILD IN DIVINE HANDS



We begin to want to develop certain qualities that will take us toward what I like to call spiritual maturity or what Alcoholics Anonymous calls spiritual fitness.

## 53. WOMAN PEEKING



- a. What are some of the qualities of spiritual maturity?  
The first one that we might begin to develop is the capacity to love or feel compassion.
- b. The second quality is the ability to live in the present moment, to be here, rather than somewhere else.
- c. The third quality of spiritual maturity is our ability to let go and start anew. Letting go of unnecessary or bothersome emotions and experiences, or of our attachments is the focus of many spiritual practices.
- d. Another quality is serenity and a sense of personal freedom as we learn to accept life on life's terms, to flow with its ups and downs without resistance or denial.
- e. The fifth quality is a basic connection with the earth and with daily life, an earthiness. The life of a spiritually mature person is not about leaving the world, but instead, his or her every action is itself an expression of the Divine.
- f. The sixth quality is a mystical world view, a cosmic perspective which comes from direct spiritual experiences, rather than just reading or hearing about God.



## 54. CROSSROADS



g. And the final qualities on my list, (and there are many others) are humor and play. This is the ability to laugh at ourselves, at our lives. This is the ability to recognize life's drama as not only extremely serious, but also as exquisitely funny.

So we get a taste of our potential, and then, we discover some tools to help us realize these possibilities.

We might go to Alcoholics Anonymous, start meditating or doing some other spiritual practice, go to a therapist who knows that we are our own healers, work with our dreams, become involved in creative expression, or start spending regular time in nature.

And as we actively work on ourselves, our lives become about removing the veils, the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual barriers, between us as individuals and who we really are. Veils are in large part the result of the events in our history and the destructive and self-destructive behaviors that we have developed in response to them. Slowly, our thirst for wholeness begins to be quenched.

# 55. MOUNTAIN OF RECOVERY



In our addiction recovery program, our therapy, or other forms of self-exploration, we begin to honestly confront the memories, emotions, and responses that have kept us constricted and unhappy.

# 56. PINPOINT GENESIS



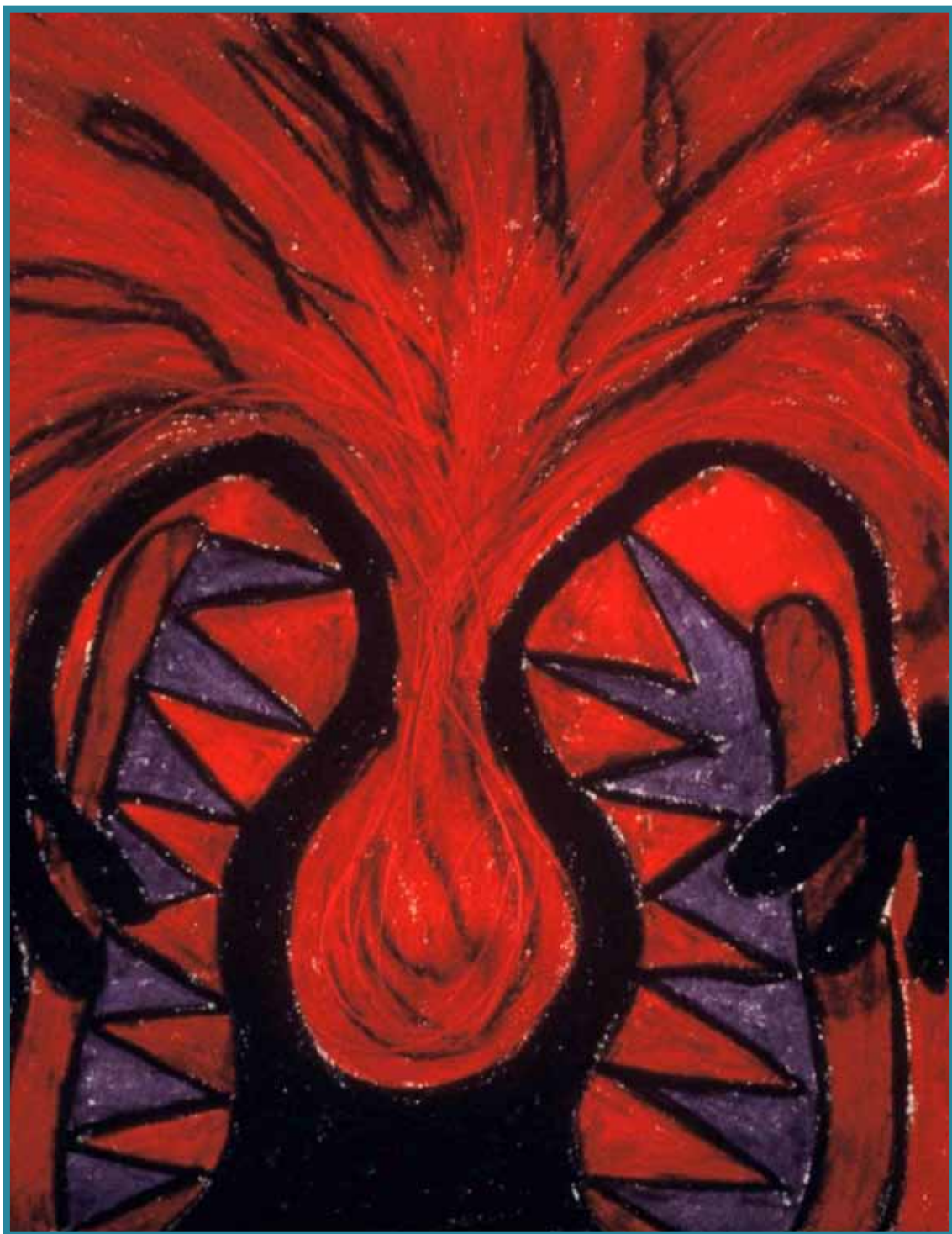
We gradually release the protective layers of denial about ourselves and our histories. We break the silence and reveal carefully guarded secrets with the support of a caring community.

57. SPEAK IN GROUP



We express our grief and our fury, our shame and our fear.

## 58. FURY



We work at discarding the layers of the false self.

59. TEARING MASK



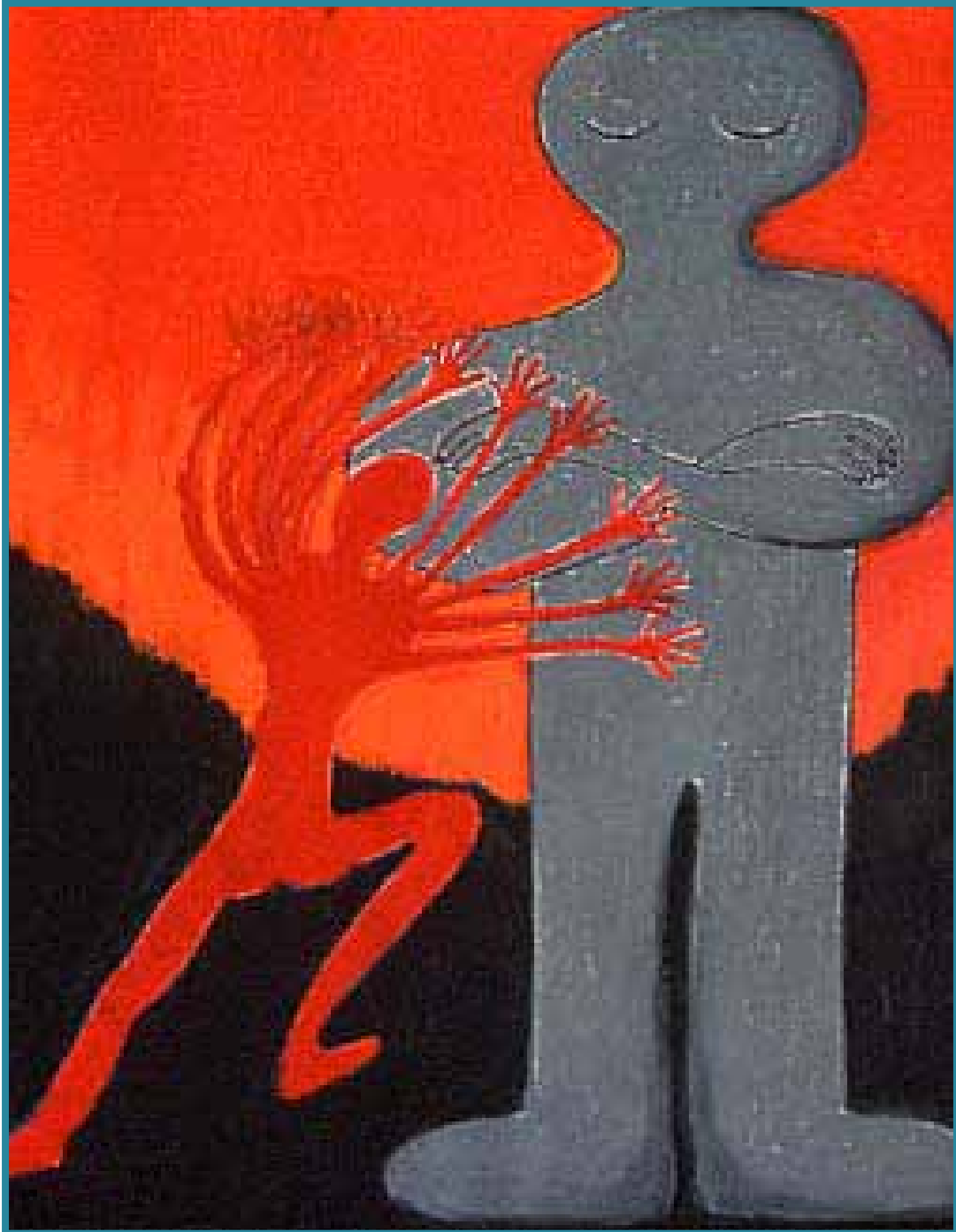
We begin to heal our damages relationships.

## 60. DEPRESSED RELATIONSHIPS



We may have to confront the fact that we are demanding and needy.

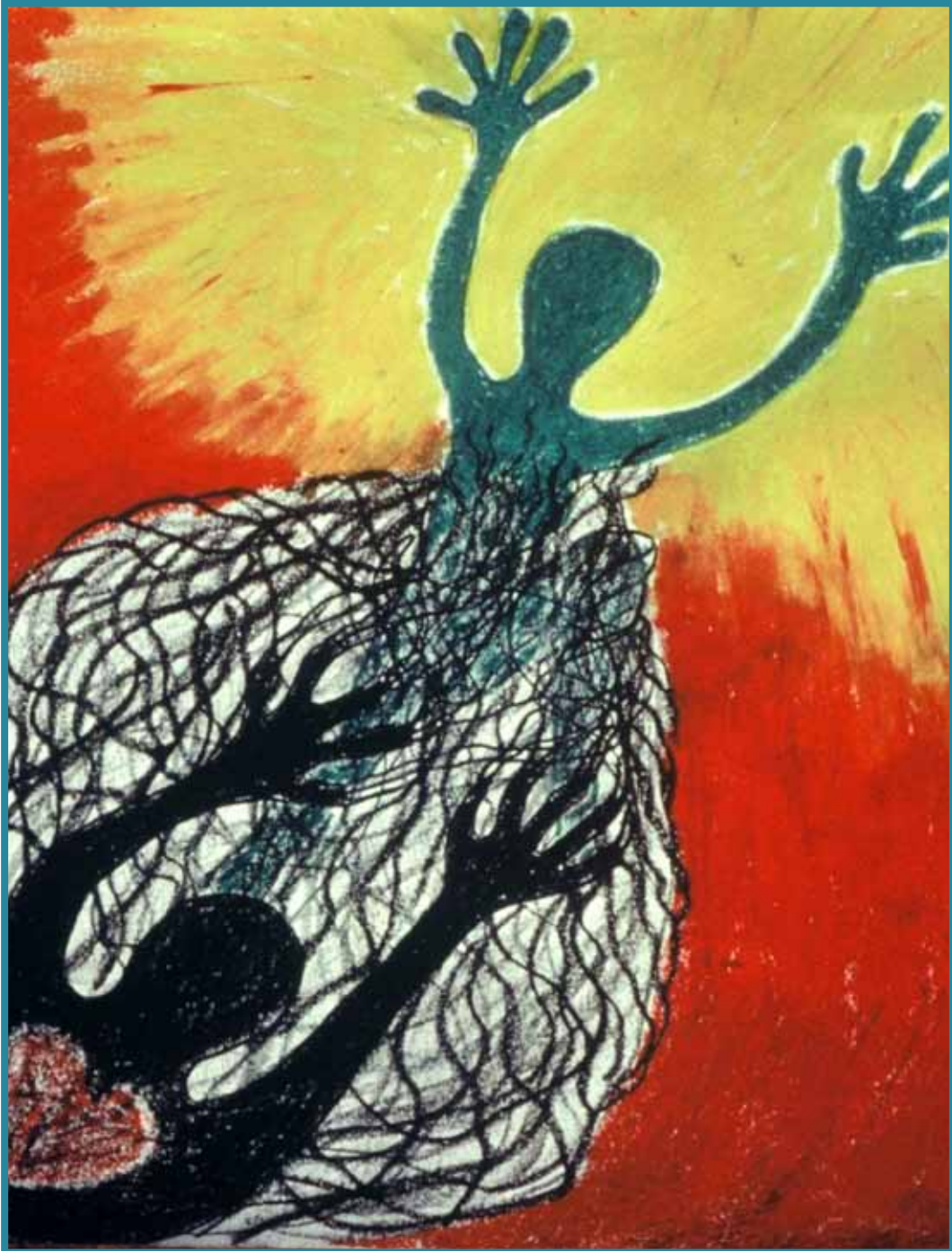
## 61. NEEDINESS



We might easily feel trapped.



## 62. ENTRAPMENT



You might be also overwhelmed and lost.

# 63. OVERWHELMED



We can keep those we love at a distance or behind a wall.

## 64. WALL



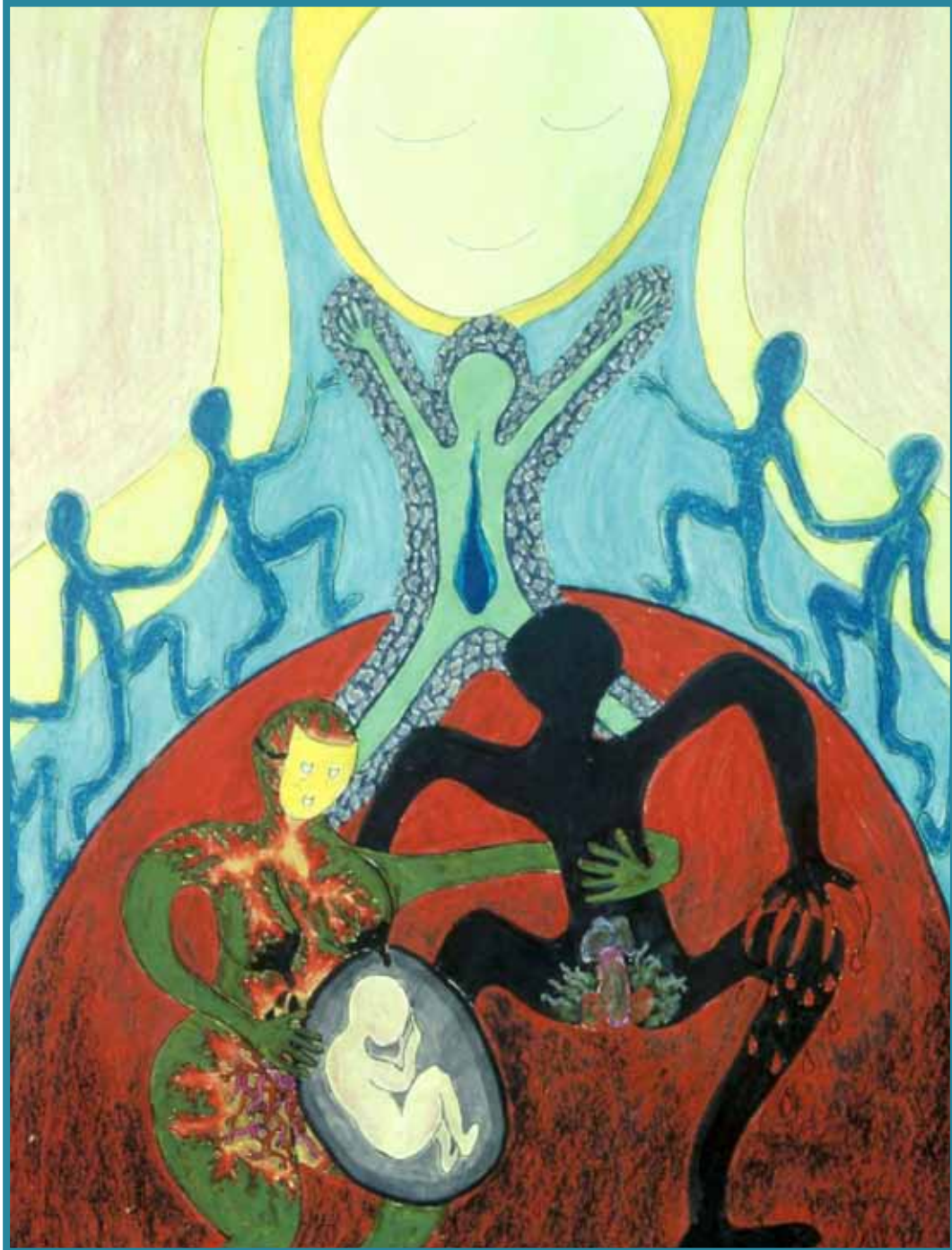
Our anger, judgments, or criticism, or we put them on a pedestal and sacrifice ourselves in the process.

## 65. PEDESTAL



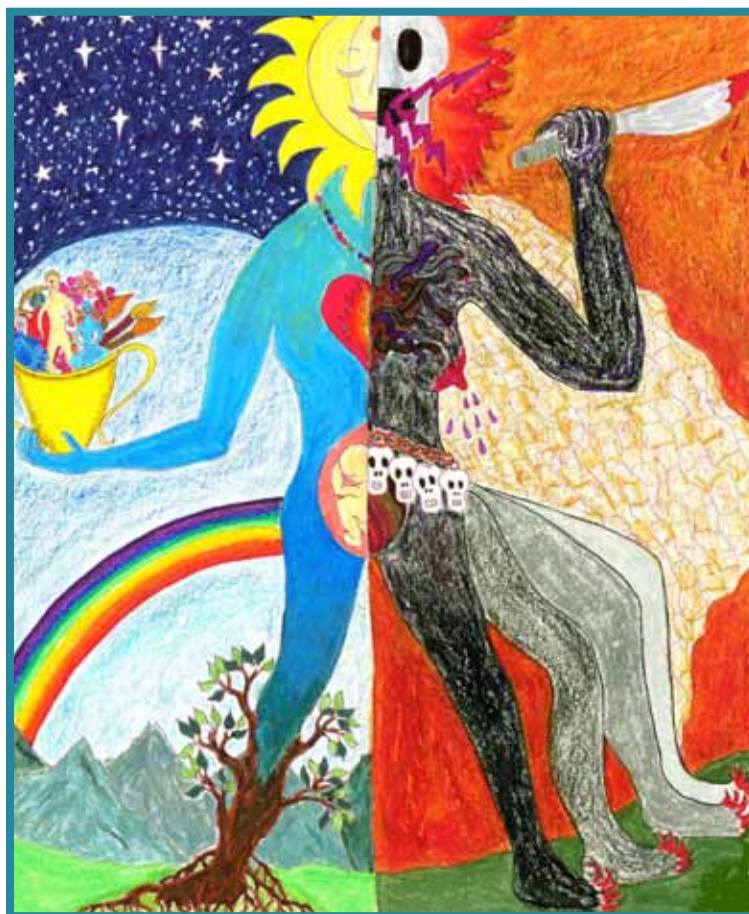
As we do our work, we start to change; gradually opening up to love, trust and intimacy in relation to other people.

## 66. DIVINE MOTHER



In the process of pulling aside the veils between us and our deeper Self, we cleanse and we heal ourselves. And we begin to tap into our potential, our gifts.

## 67. LIGHT / DARKNESS

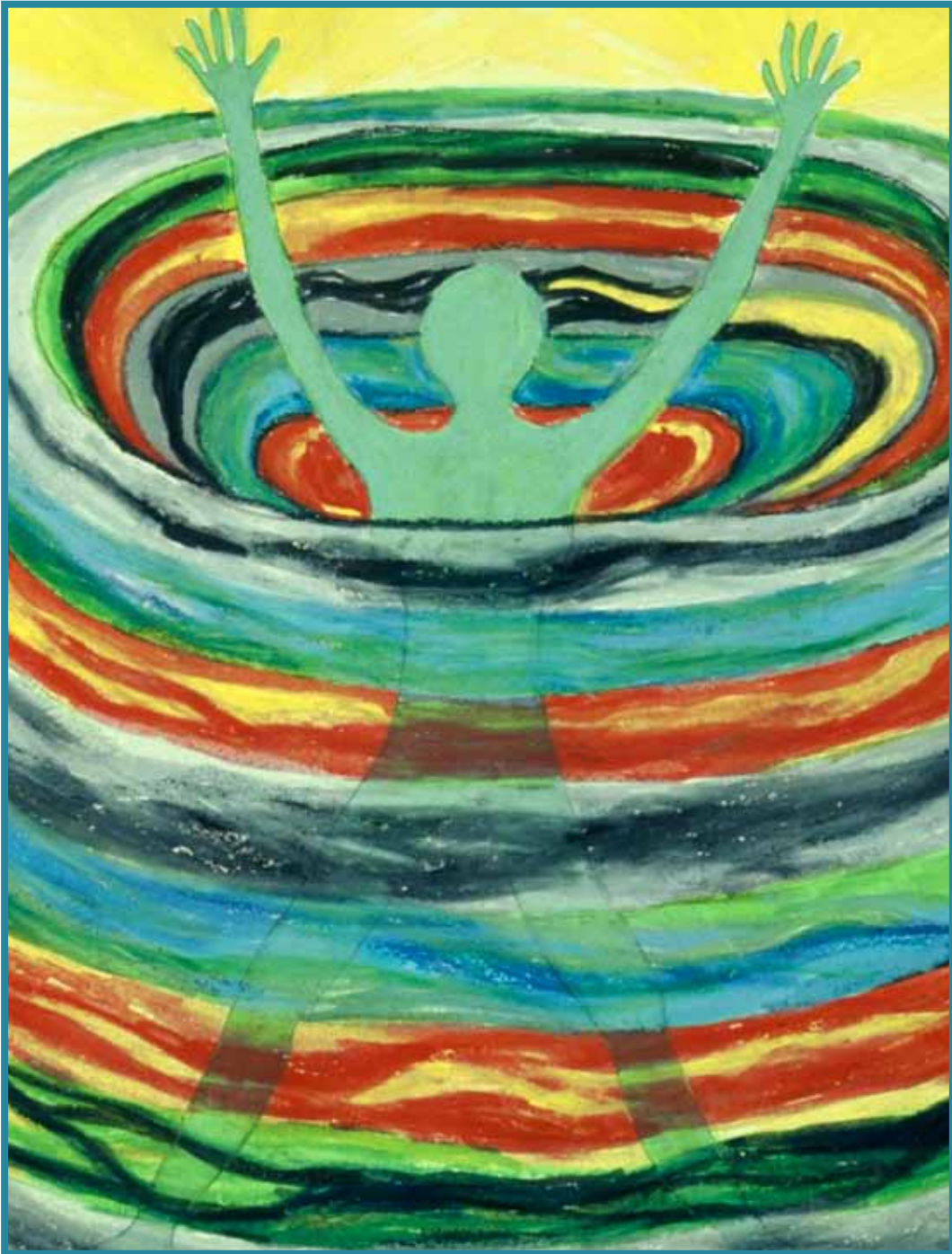


We begin to satisfy our intense inner craving for wholeness, our own divinity, our life journey becomes exciting and rewarding. It is the journey home. Just in case you think that I am talking about the journey inward as a movement away from the material world, I am not. This is often the point on the spiritual path where those of us who have been trying to escape the pain of existence all of our lives stop, and take a look around, and begin to realize the beauty of the world and of our participation in it.

We might have the insight that Jesus' teachings were right, that the kingdom of God is on earth. Or we might realize the truth of native cultures who perceive every part of creation as conscious and filled with a divine essence.

With this perspective, each aspect of life, with its ups and downs, its joys and sorrows, takes on meaning, and it becomes important to walk the mystical path with feet firmly on the ground. It is possible to see that every step until this point has been part of our spiritual journey that even our years of unconscious and clumsy participation in life were important ingredients in our process of development. How can we wake up without having been asleep? Those years in which we forgot who we really were are an absolutely necessary part of the plot, a background against which the miracle of spiritual discovery is even more potent.

## 68. FLOW OF LIFE



We have a sense of the goal and are exploring ways of getting there.

## 69. RAISED FROM MORASS



But we discover that just because we are on „**The Path**“, life is not suddenly sweet and blissful.



## 70. PATH

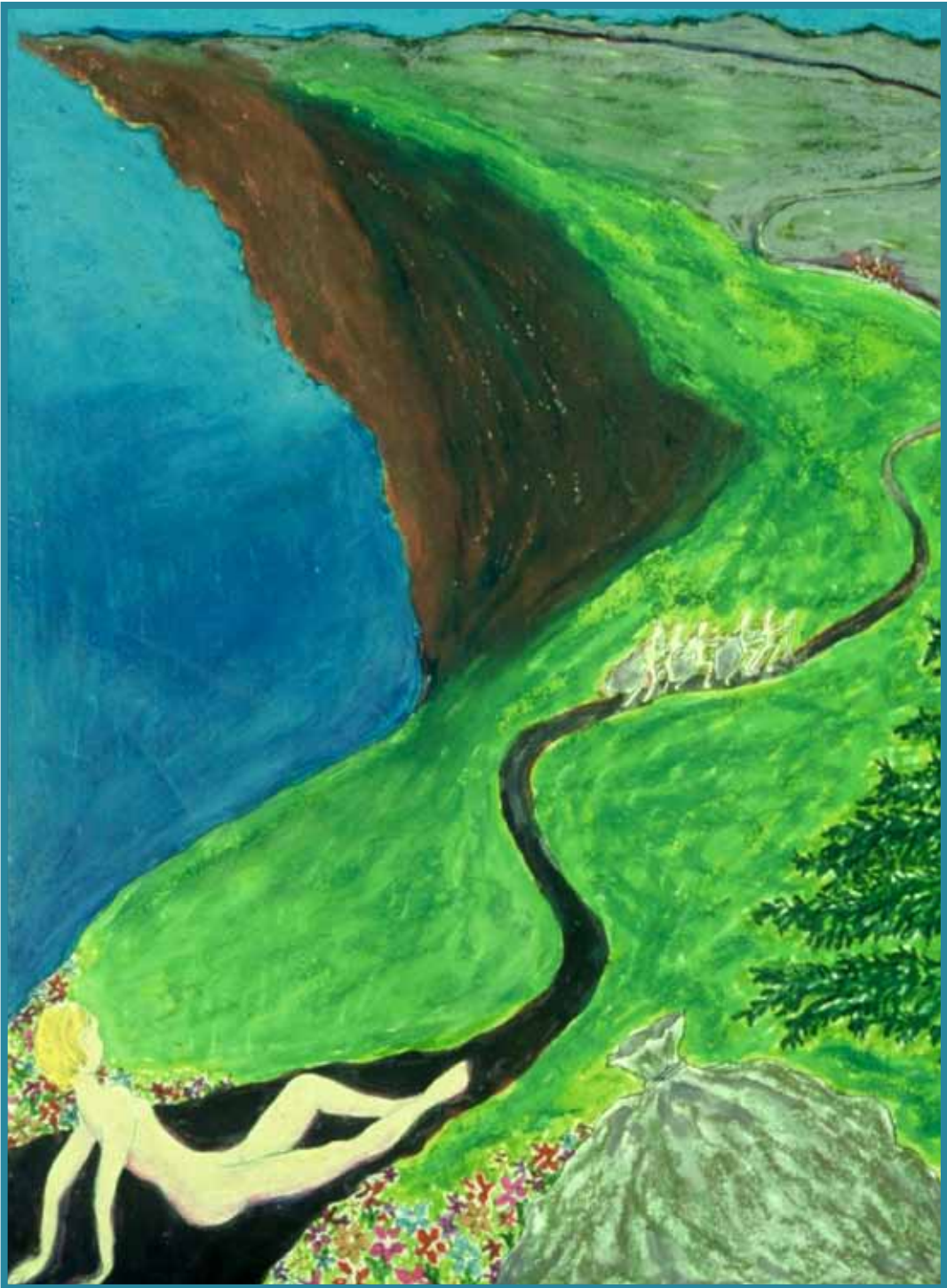


For one thing, we are more naked than ever before, stripped of some of our masks, our props, and escapes, and we are having to face the reality the everyday feelings and events in a new way. Our egos are still alive and well and are very cunning as they struggle for survival. Life still has its ups and downs and tremendous pain as well as joy. And the path itself has its own challenges and pitfalls which are natal detours and developmental stages.

What do we do to avoid or move past these obstacles and detours? Here are some suggestions that people have given to me:

1. It helps to stay in conscious contact with our **Higher Power** through regular spiritual practice which includes the element of surrender or letting-go. Some spiritual teachers say that spiritual life is not about getting anywhere or accumulating anything, but about letting go. And this requires courage and commitment.

71. OPENING TO LIFE



The world is full of life and colors.

# 72. BEAUTY OF THE WORLD



Engage in some regular earthbound activities that will help us to develop a sense of connection with the world and work to bring our spiritual insights into daily life.

## 73. HANALEI HORSE



Work with a spiritual guide, teacher, or sponsor, someone who has done a lot of his or her own healing and understands that our answers are within each of us. Learn to trust our inner voice and to distinguish it from mental chatter that only serves to confuse things. Listen to our intuition rather than our minds.

## 74. INNER CHILD



Learn to recognize when we need some help and be humble enough to ask for and accept it. There is such power in the support and wisdom that others have to offer.

## 75. GREEN LOVE



Practice regular service to others. We do not have to save the world or do anything grand. Perhaps service is as simple as selflessly paying attention to the needs of those in our family or at work or in our community. Augment our spiritual practice with therapy or other forms of self-exploration. This will help us to remove the veils more consistently.

## 76. UNFOLD



Develop our sense of humor and learn to play. Angeles Arrien says where there is no sense of humor, we will most likely find attachments. We can take our paths seriously without becoming attached to them.

# 77. LAUGHTER



Keep it simple. Stop complicating our lives unnecessarily. As you know, simple and easy are not always synonymous.



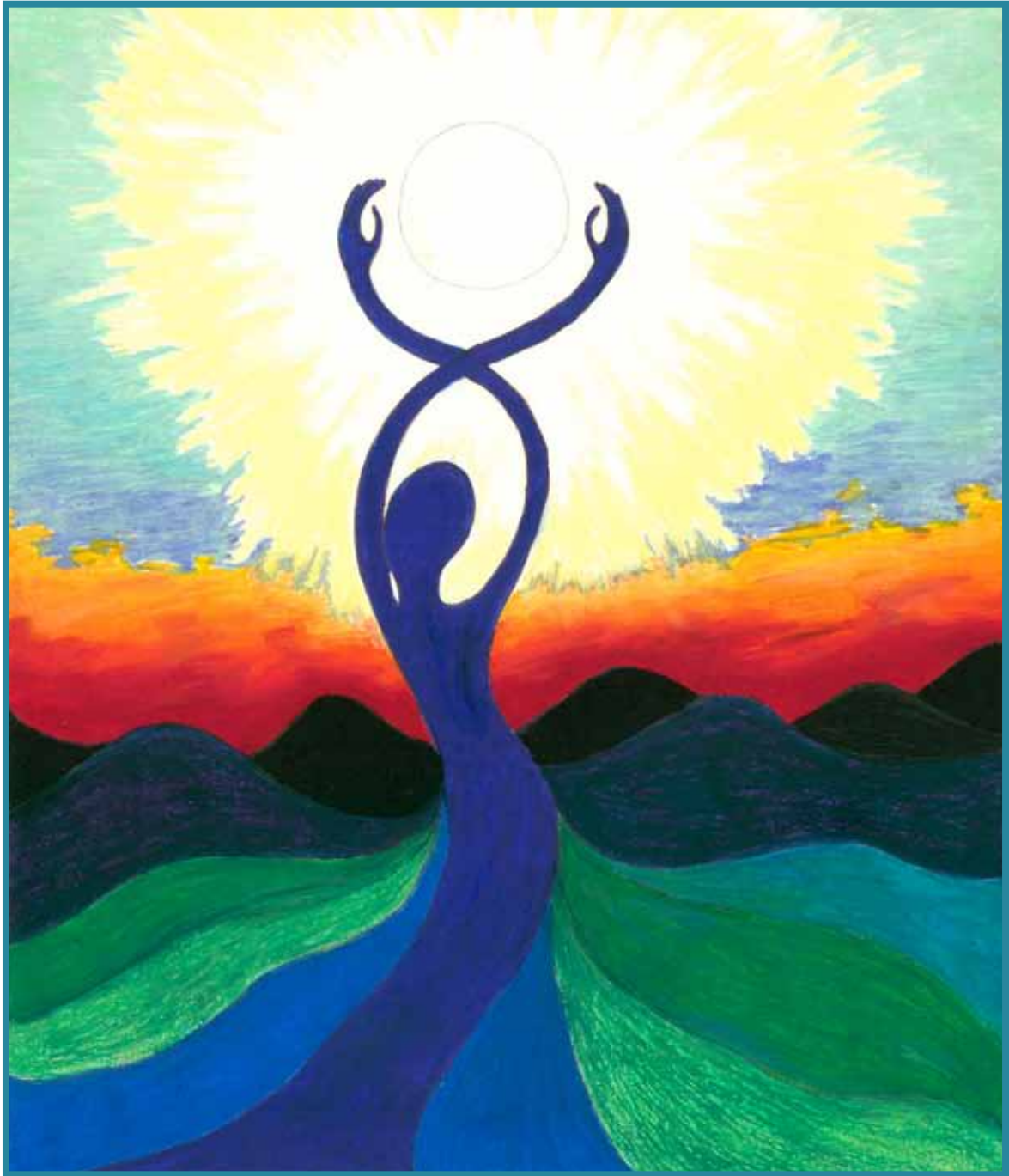
## 78. MOON WOMAN



And finally, open our hearts wide and love. Love the miracle of ourselves, our partners, our families, our children, our friends, our animals. Practice loving those around us, people whom we know and those we do not know, especially those who need our help. Love the world around us, the joy as well as the suffering, love the intricate creativity in the spectacular spectrum of Nature, and nurture the earth as we nurture ourselves. And love the deeper source, Self, the Creator, or God – whatever name we call it – that we have thirsted for, hungered for so desperately.

With the help of some new tools, we continue on our homeward journey, taking increasingly confident steps that are supported by a community of fellow travelers. We start to feel waves of serenity, acceptance and joy as we relax into the flow of our lives.

## 79. REACHING FOR THE LIGHT



And as we increasingly discover our inner resources, we realize that the futile, agonizing and destructive outward search for meaning has been the wrong strategy. We discover that the object of our search has been right here all along.

## 80. AUMAUKUA



Kabir writes:

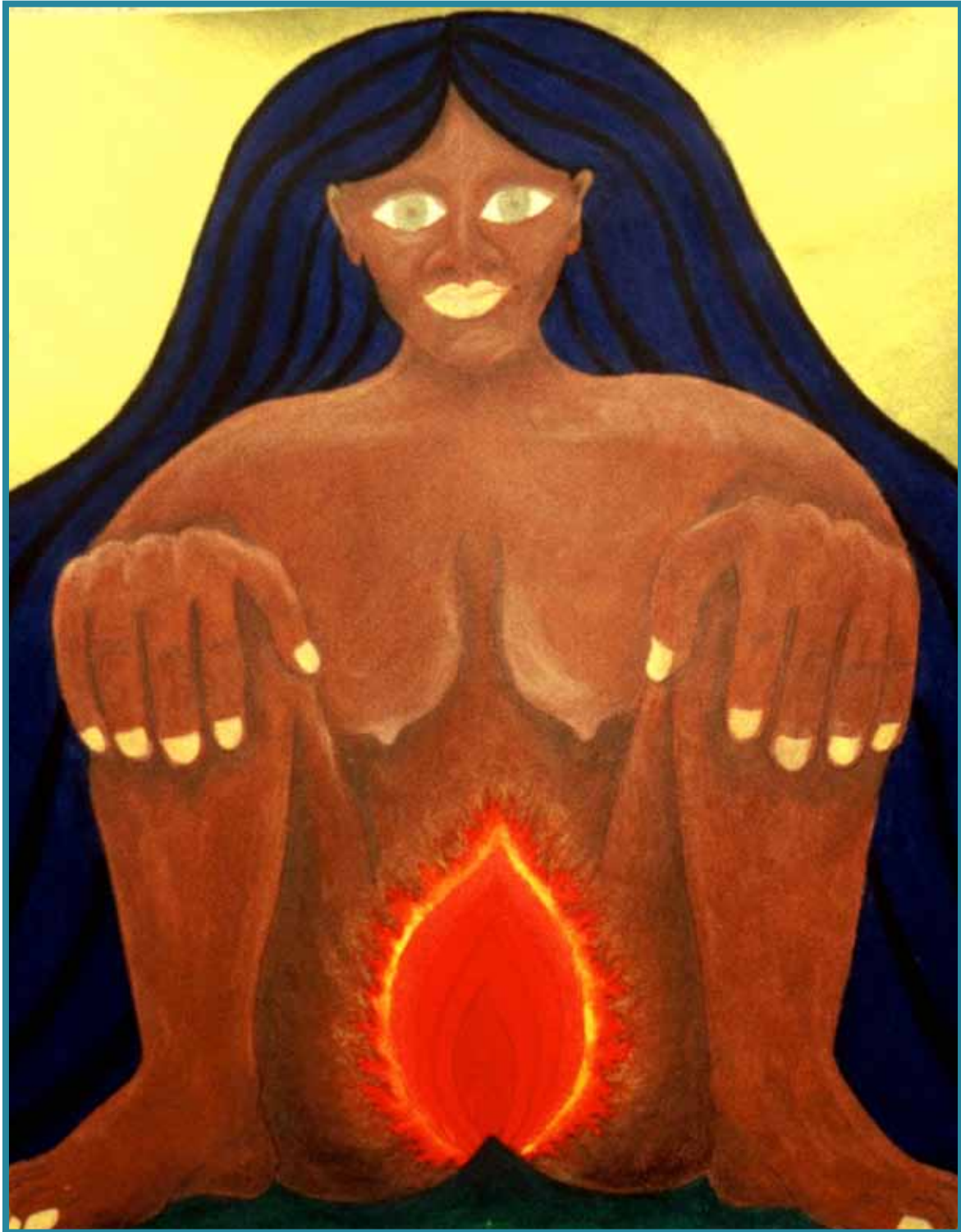
**Are you looking for me? I am in the next seat.  
My Shoulder is against yours.  
You will not find me in stupas, not in Indian shrine  
rooms, not in synagogues, nor in cathedrals:  
not in masses, not in kirtans, not in legs winding  
around your own neck, nor in eating nothing but vegetables.**

**When You really look for me, you will see me instantly -  
you will find me in the tiniest house of time.  
Kabir says: Student, tell me, what is God.  
God is the breath inside the breath.**

We have come the end of our story. Our journey through life toward home is a heroic journey. And at the end of our journey, we may very well arrive where we began. As T.S. Eliot writes in the „Four Quartets“:

**We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.**

## 81. BEING OF LIGHT



Christina has often in her dreams, holotropic sessions and spontaneous experiences an archetypal Hawaiian Mother Goddess.

## 82. ANGEL



Christina was invited to a group of in well-known people from a cultural and political life. Each of them were asked to paint his or her image or vision of an Angel.