

## **East of the Sun and West of the Moon**

### **A Norwegian Fairy Tale**

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Once upon a time there was a poor peasant who had so many children that he did not have enough of either food or clothing to give them. Pretty children they all were, but the prettiest was the youngest daughter, who was so lovely there was no end to her loveliness.

One day -- it was on a Thursday evening late in the fall -- the weather was wild and rough outside, and it was cruelly dark. The rain was falling and the wind blowing, until the walls of the cottage shook. They were all sitting around the fire busy with this thing and that. Then all at once something gave three taps on the window. The father went out to see what was the matter. Outside, what should he see but a great big white bear.

"Good evening to you," said the white bear.

"The same to you," said the man.

"Will you give me your youngest daughter? If you will, I'll make you as rich as you are now poor," said the bear.

Well, the man would not be at all sorry to be so rich; but still he thought he must have a bit of a talk with his daughter first; so he went in and told them how there was a great white bear waiting outside, who had given his word to make them so rich if he could only have the youngest daughter.

The girl said "No!" outright. Nothing could get her to say anything else; so the man went out and settled it with the white bear, that he should come again the next Thursday evening and get an answer. Meantime he talked to his daughter, and kept on telling her of all the riches they would get, and how well off she herself would be. At last she agreed to it, so she washed and mended her rags, and made herself as smart as she could. Soon she was ready for the trip, for she didn't have much to take

along.

The next Thursday evening came the white bear to fetch her. She got on his back with her bundle, and off they went. After they had gone a good way, the white bear said, "Are you afraid?"

No, she wasn't.

"Just hold tight to my shaggy coat, and there's nothing to be afraid of," said the bear.

She rode a long, long way, until they came to a large steep cliff. The white bear knocked on it. A door opened, and they came into a castle, where there were many rooms all lit up; rooms gleaming with silver and gold. Further, there was a table set there, and it was all as grand as grand could be. Then the white bear gave her a silver bell; and when she wanted anything, she only had to ring it, and she would get it at once.

Well, after she had eaten, and it became evening, she felt sleepy from her journey, and thought she would like to go to bed, so she rang the bell. She had barely rung it before she found herself in a room, where there was a bed made as fair and white as anyone would wish to sleep in, with silken pillows and curtains, and gold fringe. All that was in the room was gold or silver. After she had gone to bed, and put out the light, a man came and laid himself alongside her. It was the white bear, who cast off his pelt at night; but she never saw him, for he always came after she had put out the light. Before the day dawned he was up and off again. Things went on happily for a while, but at last she became quiet and sad. She was alone all day long, and she became very homesick to see her father and mother and brothers and sisters. So one day, when the white bear asked what was wrong with her, she said it was so lonely there, and how she longed to go home to see her father and mother and brothers and sisters, and that was why she was so sad, because she couldn't get to them.

"Well," said the bear, "that can happen all right, but you must promise me, not to talk alone with your mother, but only when the others are around to hear. She will want to take you by the hand and lead you into a room to talk alone with her. But you must not do that, or else you'll bring bad luck on both of us."

So one Sunday the white bear came and said they could now set off to see her father and mother. Off they went, she sitting on his back; and they went far and long. At last they came to a grand house. Her brothers and sisters were outside running about and playing. Everything was so pretty, it was a joy to see.

"This is where your father and mother live now," said the white bear. "Now don't forget what I told you, else you'll make us both unhappy."

No, heaven forbid, she'd not forget. When they reached the house, the white bear turned around and left her.

She went in to see her father and mother, and there was such joy, that there was no end to it. None of them could thank her enough for all she had done for them. They now had everything they could wish for, as good as good could be. Then they wanted to know how *she* was.

Well, she said, it was very good to live where she did; she had all she wished. I don't know what else she said, but I don't think she told any of them the whole story. That afternoon, after they had eaten dinner, everything happened as the white bear had said it would. Her mother wanted to talk with her alone in her bedroom; but she remembered what the white bear had said, and wouldn't go with her.

"What we have to talk about we can talk about any time," she said, and put her mother off. But somehow or other, her mother got to her at last, and she had to tell her the whole story. She told her, how every night, after she had gone to bed, a man came and lay down beside her as soon as she had put out the light, and how she never saw him, because he was always up and away before the morning dawned; and how she was terribly sad, for she wanted so much to see him, and how she was by herself all day long, and how dreary, and lonesome it was.

"Oh dear," said her mother; "it may well be a troll you are sleeping with! But now I'll give you some good advice how to see him. I'll give you a candle stub, which you can carry home in your bosom; just light it while he is asleep, but be careful not to drop any tallow on him."

Yes, she took the candle, and hid it in her bosom, and that evening the white bear came and took her away.

But when they had gone a piece, the white bear asked if all hadn't happened as he had said.

She couldn't deny that it had.

"Take care," said he, "if you have listened to your mother's advice, you will bring bad

luck on us both, and it will be finished with the two of us."

No, by no means!

So when she reached home, and had gone to bed, it was the same as before. A man came and lay down beside her; but in the middle of the night, when she heard that he was fast asleep, she got up and lit the candle. She let the light shine on him, and saw that he was the most handsome prince one ever set eyes on. She fell so deeply in love with him, that she thought she couldn't live if she didn't give him a kiss at once. And so she did, but as she kissed him she let three drops of hot tallow drip onto his shirt, and he woke up.

"What have you done?" he cried; "now you have made us both unlucky, for had you held out only this one year, I would have been free! I have a stepmother who has bewitched me, so that I am a white bear by day, and a man by night. But now all ties are broken between us. Now I must leave you for her. She lives in a castle east of the sun and west of the moon, and there, too, is a princess, one with a nose three yards long, and now I will have to marry her."

She cried and grieved, but there was no help for it; he had to go.

Then she asked if she could go with him.

No, she could not.

"Tell me the way, then" she said, "so I can look for you; surely I may do that."

Yes, she could do that, but there was no way leading to the place. It lay east of the sun and west of the moon, and she'd never find her way there.

The next morning, when she woke up, both the prince and the castle were gone, and she was lying on a little green patch, in the midst of the thick, dark forest, and by her side lay the same bundle of rags she had brought with her from her old home.

When she had rubbed the sleep out of her eyes, and cried until she was tired, she set out on her way, and walked many, many days, until she came to a high cliff. An old woman sat under it, and played with a golden apple which she tossed about. The girl asked her if she knew the way to the prince, who lived with his stepmother in the castle east of the sun and west of the moon, and who was to marry the princess with

a nose three yards long.

"How did you come to know about him?" asked the old woman. "Maybe you are the girl who should have had him?"

Yes, she was.

"So, so; it's you, is it?" said the old woman. "Well, all I know about him is, that he lives in the castle east of the sun and west of the moon, and that you'll get there too late or never; but still you may borrow my horse, and you can ride him to my next neighbor. Maybe she'll be able to tell you; and when you get there just give the horse a switch under the left ear, and beg him to be off home. And you can take this golden apple along with you."

So she got on the horse, and rode a long, long time, until she came to another cliff, under which sat another old woman, with a golden carding comb. The girl asked her if she knew the way to the castle that lay east of the sun and west of the moon, and she answered, like the first old woman, that she knew nothing about it, except that it was east of the sun and west of the moon.

"And you'll get there too late or never; but you can borrow my horse to my next neighbor; maybe she'll tell you all about it; and when you get there, just switch the horse under the left ear, and beg him to be off for home."

This old woman gave her the golden carding comb; she might find some use for it, she said. So the girl got up on the horse, and again rode a long, long way. At last she came to another great cliff, under which sat another old woman, spinning with a golden spinning wheel. She asked her, as well, if she knew the way to the prince, and where the castle was that lay east of the sun and west of the moon. But it was the same thing over again.

"Perhaps you are the one who should have had the prince?" said the old woman.

Yes, that she was.

But she didn't know the way any better than the other two. She knew it was east of the sun and west of the moon, but that was all.

"And you'll get there too late or never; but I'll lend you my horse, and then I think

you'd best ride to the east wind and ask him; maybe he knows his way around those parts, and can blow you there. When you get to him, just give the horse a switch under the left ear, and he'll trot home by himself."

She too gave her her golden spinning wheel. "Maybe you'll find a use for it," said the old woman.

She rode many weary days, before she got to the east wind's house, but at last she did reach it, and she asked the east wind if he could tell her the way to the prince who lived east of the sun and west of the moon. Yes, the east wind had often heard tell of it, the prince and the castle, but he didn't know the way there, for he had never blown so far.

"But, if you want, I'll go with you to my brother the west wind. Maybe he knows, for he's much stronger. If you will just get on my back I'll carry you there."

Yes, she got on his back, and off they went in a rush.

When they arrived at the west wind's house, the east wind said the girl he had brought was the one who was supposed to have had the prince who lived in the castle east of the sun and west of the moon. She had set out to find him, and he had brought her here, and would be glad to know if the west wind knew how to get to the castle.

"No," said the west wind, "I've never blown so far; but if you want, I'll go with you to our brother the south wind, for he's much stronger than either of us, and he has flown far and wide. Maybe he'll tell you. Get on my back, and I'll carry you to him."

Yes, she got on his back, and so they traveled to the south wind, and I think it didn't take long at all.

When they got there, the west wind asked him if he could tell her the way to the castle that lay east of the sun and west of the moon, for she was the one who was supposed to have had the prince who lived there.

"Is that so?" said the south wind. "Is she the one? Well, I have visited a lot of places in my time, but I have not yet blown there. If you want, I'll take you to my brother the north wind; he is the oldest and strongest of us all, and if he doesn't know where it is, you'll never find anyone in the world to tell you. Get on my back, and I'll carry

you there."

Yes, she got on his back, and away he left his house at a good clip. They were not long underway. When they reached the north wind's house he was so wild and cross, that he blew cold gusts at them from a long way off. "Blast you both, what do you want?" he roared at them from afar, so that it struck them with an icy shiver.

"Well," said the south wind, "you don't need to bluster so, for here I am, your brother, the south wind, and here is the girl who was supposed to have had the prince who lives in the castle that lies east of the sun and west of the moon, and now she wants to ask you if you ever were there, and can show her the way, for she wants so much to find him again."

"Yes, I know where it is," said the north wind; "a single time I blew an aspen leaf there, but afterward I was so tired that I couldn't blow a puff for many days. But if you really wish to go there, and aren't afraid to come along with me, I'll take you on my back and see if I can blow you there."

Yes, with all her heart; she wanted to and had to get there if it were at all possible; and she wouldn't be afraid, however madly he went.

"Very well, then," said the north wind, "but you must sleep here tonight, for we must have the whole day before us, if we're to get there at all."

Early next morning the north wind woke her, and puffed himself up, and blew himself out, and made himself so stout and big, that he was gruesome to look at. Off they went high up through the air, as if they would not stop until they reached the end of the world.

Here on earth there was a terrible storm; acres of forest and many houses were blown down, and when it swept over the sea, ships wrecked by the hundred.

They tore on and on -- no one can believe how far they went -- and all the while they still went over the sea, and the north wind got more and more weary, and so out of breath he could barely bring out a puff, and his wings drooped and drooped, until at last he sunk so low that the tops of the waves splashed over his heels.

"Are you afraid?" said the north wind.

No, she wasn't.

They weren't very far from land by now, and the north wind had enough strength left that he managed to throw her up on the shore under the windows of the castle which lay east of the sun and west of the moon. But then he was so weak and worn out, that he had to stay there and rest many days before he could go home again.

The next morning the girl sat down under the castle window, and began to play with the golden apple. The first person she saw was the long-nosed princess who was to have the prince.

"What do you want for your golden apple, you girl?" said the long-nosed one, as she opened the window.

"It's not for sale, for gold or money," said the girl.

"If it's not for sale for gold or money, what is it that you will sell it for? You may name your own price," said the princess.

"Well, you can have it, if I may get to the prince, who lives here, and be with him tonight," said the girl whom the north wind had brought.

Yes, that could be done. So the princess took the golden apple; but when the girl came up to the prince's bedroom that night, he was fast asleep. She called him and shook him, and cried and grieved, but she could not wake him up. The next morning, as soon as day broke, the princess with the long nose came and drove her out.

That day she sat down under the castle windows and began to card with her golden carding comb, and the same thing happened. The princess asked what she wanted for it. She said it wasn't for sale for gold or money, but if she could have permission to go to the prince and be with him that night, the princess could have it. But when she went to his room she found him fast asleep again, and however much she called, and shook, and cried, and prayed, she couldn't get life into him. As soon as the first gray peep of day came, the princess with the long nose came, and chased her out again.

That day the girl sat down outside under the castle window and began to spin with her golden spinning wheel, and the princess with the long nose wanted to have it as well. She opened the window and asked what she wanted for it. The girl said, as she



had said twice before, that it wasn't for sale for gold or money, but if she could go to the prince who was there, and be alone with him that night she could have it.

Yes, she would be welcome to do that. But now you must know that there were some Christians who had been taken there, and while they were sitting in their room, which was next to the prince's, they had heard how a woman had been in there, crying, praying, and calling to him for two nights in a row, and they told this to the prince.

That evening, when the princess came with a sleeping potion, the prince pretended to drink it, but threw it over his shoulder, for he could guess it was a sleeping potion. So, when the girl came in, she found the prince wide awake, and then she told him the whole story of how she had come there.

"Ah," said the prince, "you've come in the very nick of time, for tomorrow is to be our wedding day. But now I won't have the long-nose, and you are the only woman in the world who can set me free. I'll say that I want to see what my wife is fit for, and beg her to wash the shirt which has the three spots of tallow on it. She'll agree, for she doesn't know that you are the one who put them there. Only Christians, and not such a pack of trolls, can wash them out again. I'll say that I will marry only the woman who can wash them out, and ask you to try it."

So there was great joy and love between them all the night. But next day, when the wedding was planned, the prince said, "First of all, I'd like to see what my bride is fit for."

"Yes!" said the stepmother, with all her heart.

"Well," said the prince, "I've got a fine shirt which I'd like for my wedding shirt, but somehow or other it got three spots of tallow on it, which I must have washed out. I have sworn to marry only the woman who is able to do that. If she can't, then she's not worth having."

Well, that was no big thing they said, so they agreed, and the one with the long nose began to wash away as hard as she could, but the more she rubbed and scrubbed, the bigger the spots grew.

"Ah!" said the old troll woman, her mother, "you can't wash. Let me try."

But she had hardly touched the shirt, before it got far worse than before, and with all her rubbing, and wringing, and scrubbing, the spots grew bigger and blacker, and the shirt got ever darker and uglier.

Then all the other trolls began to wash, but the longer it lasted, the blacker and uglier the shirt grew, until at last it was as black all over as if it been up the chimney.

"Ah!" said the prince, "none of you is worth a straw; you can't wash. Why there, outside, sits a beggar girl, I'll bet she knows how to wash better than the whole lot of you. Come in, girl!" he shouted.

She came in.

"Can you wash this shirt clean, girl, you?" he said.

"I don't know," she said, "but I think I can."

And almost before she had taken it and dipped it into the water, it was as white as driven snow, and whiter still.

"Yes, you are the girl for me," said the prince.

At that the old troll woman flew into such a rage, she exploded on the spot, and the princess with the long nose after her, and the whole pack of trolls after her -- at least I've never heard a word about them since.

As for the prince and princess, they set free all the poor Christians who had been captured and shut up there; and they took with them all the silver and gold, and flew away as far as they could from the castle that lay east of the sun and west of the moon.

**EAST OF THE SUN AND WEST OF THE MOON:  
An Interpretation of a Fairy Tale**

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In an essay in 1926, *Spirit and Life*, C. G. Jung made the following observation:

*Anyone who is conscious of his guiding principle knows with what indisputable authority it rules his life. But general consciousness is too preoccupied with the attainment of some beckoning goal to consider the nature of the spirit that determines its course.*

Little has changed these many years later. Our awareness is forcibly dominated by every manner of so-called conscious diversions, from making the most efficient use of our leisure time to consciously programming when and how we will be creative. By and large we are all struggling still to break through to what Jung alluded to, this *guiding spirit*, that he believed was not to be found out there, but discovered within. In his mind, there was no *right or correct* spirit. Rather it is our individually discerned thread of meaning that makes our personal lives rich and dynamic, giving them depth and drama. Whatever your discerned thread of meaning may be, if it is heartfelt and compelling, than it is your spiritual way. And what generates this

heartfelt and compelling quality is the interactive relationship between our conscious self and the mystery we call the inner world. This is our guiding thread as we explore this beautiful fairy tale, *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*.

Like an insoluble koan, *East of the Sun and West of the Moon* is not to be found in a landscape of rationality. Rather it is embedded in the substance of life itself, animating and drawing us forward towards inner exploration akin to the Gnostic tale in which the sparks of the divine substance, having fallen into the physical world, await discovery and redemption, but are hindered by a glow so soft and gentle that the harsh light of human reason obscures it. Fairy tales often start off with a paradox, a bewitched figure animal or domain in order to put a stop to our figuring and force us to come to terms immediately with another way of knowing. And like so many other fairy tales that are in truth symbolic healing stories, this one promises redemption from our own blindness.

At the story's beginning, we come upon an afflicted husbandman, rich in children but poor in the resources of the earth, a sad mirror of the complaint brought by so many when they start their own inner work: "oh there are so many possibilities but no time, my depression is too deep or I simply don't feel alive, there's just no juice." The husbandman is our essential being when cut off from our own earth, cut off from our own goodwife who is the natural wisdom of how to cultivate what we have, as well as to recognize the potential before us and live in accord with our greater selves. When we are the husbandman, we live without relatedness to that essential being and our inner family, stuck in the fantasy of outer material value, rendered psychologically barren.

Although painful, such moments are incredibly portentous. Like the prettiest daughter, there is always something within us that, if heeded, or even, as in this case, betrayed, can lead us out of the darkness. Sure, it feels awful to sell out to the bear, to sacrifice one's own flesh. But sometimes sacrifice is the only way, whether it is made in terms of cash, physical well-being or our precious fantasies about how we think we should be, to get us to risk and trust the unknown. His beautiful daughter is our incipient trust in the unknown, that scarcely formed aspect of the psyche whose innocence can still discern and follow the thread of spirit when our rational knowing is bankrupt and constipated. But let's face it, she doesn't want to go either - no one likes to grow up.

Just to make certain that the point is driven home, what comes out of the windswept night is no cakewalk. Huge and white, the bear is an image of nature's power, the untapped aliveness of the dark world of the unseen that swirls all about our little island of consciousness. The bear is the mother's animal, a night creature whose white fur suggests the possibility of reflection in the darkness. The bear in us awakens to feed on our secret fears, sent by nature when we are out of balance, forcing us, with three sharp taps at the window, to face reality. Tap, tap, tap, he invokes past, present and future, much in the way a heaven sent neurotic symptom forces us to take stock of how we got this way, how pained we are, and where we need to go. The bear wrenches the entire family out of the stupor of impoverishment and allows transformation to occur. In an odd sort of way, to be a good mother we must be a bad one and break the incestuous bond of comfortable misery.

The daughter really has no choice and agrees to go. As Jung was so fond of saying, "he who does not go willingly, the fates will drag." Inner development happens whether we like it or not. Resisting it, staying in familiar misery, only mutates the transformation; it does not stop it.

Before departing, the daughter washes her rags, purifying herself for this rite of passage, for this entry into an unknown reality. She cleanses herself of history and opens her heart to the experience. Like her, in our necessary innocence towards our own lives, when we turn towards the chaos, towards the inevitable impulsion to grow beyond our known boundaries, it is better, safer, to be without preconceptions and freely open to our fate. Pain, as we know, feeds on constriction and tightening, thus we are counseled to let ourselves go into the pain, steady of breath and trusting the body. Nestled on the bear's back, aboard his vitality and rough life, she rides into her night, giving herself over to him, trusting, and unfeared. She is beauty and he the beast. Gripping his fur tightly, she feels the fundamental energy of her own soul, the energy required for overcoming the ego anxieties that would rather stay safe and poor. At this moment in the tale, the bear becomes her man, replacing her desolate father, with a divine epiphany. In consort with him she at last feels the reality of psychological movement. Jung said that in our dissociated world, the gods and goddesses have become our diseases. Riding the back of the bear is welcoming the disease with the intuitive knowledge that it will lead us to our goal.

She is taken to his secret castle in the hill where she will be reborn in this cave of the initiate. This world of lush, elegant fantasy, sexuality and treasure is a

way station, the first experience of the numinosity of the unknown. But it is unredeemed, static and dependent upon darkness and secrecy, as much a gilded cage for the bear as for her. Their relationship here is another kind of symbiosis, one that is fascinating and as yet without defined meaning. It is the opposite of her life at home; where that was barren, here one only has to wish; where home was dead, here everything has a life of its own. She is awash in excess as she has made the break for her own life. Similar experience follows real life change. Think of times when you have broken out of a killing situation and felt overwhelming freedom, how life seems animated again. Think of the excess and the delight and the passion, all of which eventually gave way to another, deeper awareness of the lopsidedness of the excess as well, something that is to come later for the heroine. If only it were so easy, to fall into the unknown and be all that we have ever wanted to be. But too much of a good thing constellates trouble by bringing another sort of unconsciousness. It is not enough to cling to a mantra, or to chant, or to promise to believe in this or that. Such treasures will turn sour because what is missing is an ability to know, to be aware, to come as a full person to the authentic experience of self. Life in the castle is pre-spiritual, yet closer than ever before to individual selfhood. Through the bear, she comes to herself as woman and in her openness to him; he comes closer to his humanness, prerequisites for the trial to follow.

As it is with so many of these "beauty and the beast" tales, paradise never lasts. Primeval ecstasy requires illumination and unconscious relatedness needs conscious knowing. Like Psyche in Aepulaius' famous rendition of the Greek story of *Amor and Psyche*, our heroine wants to, better to say, must, see her family. Conceding reluctantly, the bear takes her on his back and sets the stage for the next transformation when he insists that she avoid speaking to her mother alone. Here is

the first appearance of mother in the role, as the bear well knows, of psychopomp, the one who makes possible conscious experience of and connection to the inner world. Even though she insinuates the element of danger into her daughter's bliss (here she is the daughter again), as the embodiment of the maternal principle she knows that this wish fulfillment cannot last. Her task is to awaken and help her daughter see what is there and who she is even if it means loss. How true this is in life as well when we remember that transformation proceeds in spite of our needs. The mother-given candle is a most appropriate gift, and pressing the light source to her breast, the daughter prefigures the illumination of the heart that is to follow her *Felix culpa*, her fortunate sin of betrayal.

In the dead of night, at the height of unknowing, she lights the candle, she looks, and she loves. Passion penetrates and fills her. But as she looks, three drops of tallow spill onto his shirt, signaling the painful betrayal. First through sacrifice, then through betrayal, she comes to know what she has just lost. Like Parsifal, the Grail Knight who had to lose the grail before he could truly earn it, she is required to actively, creatively find her love; not a captive, instinctive, symbiotic love, but one guided by the human value of relatedness. Not surprisingly then, even though she betrayed him, he left her as man and not bear, beginning for him, the process of redemption as well. But in repayment, so to speak, she learns that an evil sorceress, who lives “east of the sun and west of the moon, has bewitched the prince, her lover. Here again she is confronted with the riddle of her own creativity and of ours, of our ability to actively search inwards in order to discern and humanize our own relationship to an embodied, felt, passionate world of the spirit and to release ourselves from compulsive, unconscious acting out of what others tell us to do or be. If we are not free to seek our own aliveness to the spirit, to love it, than it will



remain trapped in animal-like suffering, in our symptoms, chronic like the lost souls in Hades, to forever roll the stone or turn upon the wheel of *avidya*.

The tide has turned for our lover. Although bereft in her loss she is nonetheless closer to her true awakening. As if springing from her tears of loss and awareness the night before, her bed becomes a little patch of green, the color of growth and possibility. She may take heart in her desolation for she has finally recognized, finally come to know for what she truly searches. Emboldened by her love, she begins her quest and goes as high as her own incompleteness can take her until she meets nature again, this time in the form of three hags, with their wisdom. Much changed from the little girl who asked no questions but who unconsciously followed instinct, with these three crones, who are equivalent to the tripartite goddess of fate so well known in the world's mythologies, the lover is active and questioning. In reward, they bestow upon her important objects that are in fact symbolic qualities that must be inwardly integrated for her quest to continue. The golden apples are the knowledge of wholeness and the immortality of the spirit; the golden carding comb is psyche's intrinsic desire to order life's priorities and differentiate the truly important from the merely fascinating; and the golden spinning wheel is the capacity to join disparate threads of existence into a unified and useful whole. These three gifts are by nature more feminine than masculine and so they should be in this case because it is the mystery of our feminine selves, the intuitive, the irrational, the sense of interiority that brings redemption. To support her more masculine, goal-directed sense of the journey, to embody her as it were, they give her horses and third, another and the most important gift of all, the wisdom of the wind.

In the figures of the winds, she meets, for the first time, the awesome spirit of life. Wind is the manifestation of the spirit in most mythic traditions and in life it is symbolic of the enthusiasm that carries us towards that which is meaningful and deep, carrying us to where we need to go. It is, in a way, the wisdom of our subtle body. Again she must ride, but this time, not the earthy lust of the bear, but the breathtaking inspiration of the wind. Unlike the girl who was lead away by nature, the one who rides the wind is our innocence transcended, the one who trusts the wind is the one who knows what she seeks. In truth, the wind is our spiritual imagination and she our ability to ride it no matter how frightening. She has met her guiding principle, love for the other, and not even the fierce North Wind can turn her away.

Arriving at great expense at the hitherto unreachable center, she shows her true colors and is prepared to meet her fate. There in this far off place, she meets her adversary, the Ell-Nosed Princess, a false bride whose 45-inch nose is emblematic of deceit and insensitivity. Before she can go any further, the lover must battle with the other shadowy side of herself to cleanse herself again, but this time in a trial by fire. It is one thing to be righteously filled and helped by the spirit, but quite another to know through experience that even in that there is danger. In ritual combat they haggle, so to speak, over the apple, comb and spinning wheel until the lover is almost beaten, unable to wake the prince out of his sleepy bewitchment. Perhaps her final failure is necessary to truly differentiate herself from the egocentricity of the Ell-Nosed Princess, that is, from the greediness for power, authority and uniqueness that haunt and ambush spiritual growth. I am forced to

think about the downfall of so many inspired individuals who, at this point in their inner quest, when so close to true relationship to their own spirit, opt for ego control and domination. It is only through her failure that help can be constellated; it is only through the tolerant appreciation of the spiritual uniqueness and equality of all individuals that we can create a truly "catholic" world. Thus the Christian folk are so important for they represent our capacity not to be swayed by the temptation of power and our ability to retain faith and humility in the guidance of the spirit. No wonder they aid the prince in the nick of time. With their help, the lovers communicate as individuals for the first time, fully humanized and psychologically awake. He has become a working part of her inner world, advising her, leading her closer to herself, to the moment where she can finally wash away the last vestiges of darkness, the tallow, from his shirt. It would do well to remember at this point that she started her journey by washing, but how things have changed.

The shirt is the object of the curse and source of redemption. Removing the tallow from it symbolizes removing the last particle of unredeemed animal nature from her relationship with her own guiding spirit. To do so is to enter fully into relationship with it, a relationship that is reciprocal and loving, for if we love the spirit that guides us, it grows in strength and beauty through activation and incarnation in our lives and we blossom with its counsel. For, as the alchemists said of the divine, it needs human consciousness to complete the work of creation. To accomplish this is to finally defeat the trolls within us, those pockets of primitive emotionality that becloud relatedness and blacken the soul. By successfully cleansing the prince's shirt, she makes way for their souls to unite in love; a love that leads beyond desire and greed to the generosity of life well lived.

Perhaps, in the end, this is the spiritual meaning of the tale. As Jung concluded in the same essay quoted above:

*There are many spirits, both light and dark. We should therefore be prepared to accept the view that spirit is not absolute but something relative that needs completion and perfection through life ... The fullness of life requires more than just ego; it needs spirit ... for it seems that this alone is capable of giving vital expression to those psychic potentialities that lie beyond the reach of ego-consciousness.*

This completion and perfection comes through a love that permits risks and bathes us in the felt sense that we matter and that our quest matters, regardless of what form our spirit takes. To give wholeheartedly to this adventure is nothing less than the meaning of life.

