

Born Remembering

By

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An Epiphany Press Publication
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Edited by Epiphany Press

Rainbow Light Foundation
www.epiphanypress.org

ISBN 978-1-61584-146-2

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This book is an honest attempt to record the events of almost sixty years; the childhood memories of other lives and the pre cognition which I did not understand but which somehow comforted me and led eventually to my life's purpose. I am eternally grateful for the realisation that our steps are guided at all times if we are willing to be led and the manner in which we are unsuspectingly guided towards the experiences which prepare us for the path we have chosen prior to birth. I wish to thank those who also remembered and shared the journey with me however briefly.

The mass spiritual awakening now taking place is our reassurance that despite the horrors unfolding on a global level, all is well. Well that is, for those who accept an authority greater than themselves; those who are eager to join the swelling ranks who acknowledge the divinity of consciousness as superior to the mind of man.

I believe the single most important revelation in the evolution of consciousness is the certainty that we have lived before and will live again for the seeds of personal responsibility are sown in this truth. We should look forward to the journey and take care of each other and the Earth, for we will meet again.....and again.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I did not intend to write this book. Born Remembering began as a collection of hand written case notes in 1991 and became a research archive in my attempt to record and validate the experiences of ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. My initial copious case notes, typed and returned to me by Sandra, inadvertently became chapters in the book as we realised that something important was occurring. I conceded defeat and acquired a computer and some basic skills.

I wish to thank everyone who shared the journey and assisted me in so many ways, often unaware of their contribution. From Susan my first helper, to Duncan who linked me to the guidance; the priest who gave generously of his time to listen and Joseph without whose courage and support this story could not have been told.

This has been a team effort by those I met along the way, who like me were determined that this story should be told even against seemingly insurmountable odds. As technical skills were needed the right people came along to volunteer their services; when we needed publishing skills we were led to those who could provide them.

To Michael who inspired and healed me through his music, Sandra who rediscovered a dream to become sub editor, Rebecca who provided much needed technical expertise and Jennifer who discovered a new career in publishing, I offer my heartfelt thanks.

To protect confidentiality certain names in the book have been changed with sequencing of timing and events to provide an over view.

For Jonathan

and those who remembered and believed

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BORN REMEMBERING

Part 1

Chapter 1

REMEMBERING

I was born remembering. It would be some years before I realised that others did not. As I gazed up at the twinkling stars in the black velvet night sky, they seemed to my childish eyes, to beckon and to call. Which one of them was my true home I wondered for I was sure that this was not? As I heard my mother's voice calling that it was bedtime I came back to the awareness of my body and the coldness of the stone step on which I was sitting, arms folded around my knees. I stared down at the scuffed shoes and wrinkled ankle socks, suddenly feeling very small once more. I was six years old.

In the early 1950's the harsh realities of daily life in a Lancashire mill town in the North of England left little room for dreams. The people around me were practical, hardworking and friendly with the dry humour for which Lancashire folk are renowned; qualities I came to value in later life. Children were expected to be 'seen and not heard' and a strict code of behaviour was the norm. Almost all the adults I knew, women as well as men, worked in the local cotton mills; the post war years had left a legacy of an emancipated female work force reluctant to return to their former financial dependency upon male breadwinners. Some mothers remained at home to care for children but many worked full time with childcare shared between close relatives and near neighbours. Equal opportunities and the 'new man' had not yet arrived; housework and childcare was almost exclusively the province of women with ultimate discipline generally vested in the fathers. Throughout my childhood I remember only one single parent family, the mother in question being a widow.

In the nineteenth century, traditional cottage industries of spinning and weaving had provided the cloth for which Lancashire and Yorkshire were to become world famous. By the twentieth century the Industrial Revolution had evolved, spawning the huge cotton mills of Lancashire and the woollen mills of Yorkshire. My own parents both worked in the same cotton mill, my mother returning to work when my baby sister was three months old. The management of the Lilac Mill had shown great foresight in their attempts to retain their skilled women workers; childcare was available to employees for children from six weeks to twelve years of age. Part time work was unknown; parents brought their children to the nursery at 7.30 a.m. and collected them at 5.00 p.m. Nursery nurses cared for the under fives while those of school age were escorted to and from the local infant and junior schools before being collected again by parents at the end of a long day for all concerned.



The author aged five

My day began when I was awakened by my mother at 6.15 a.m. My clearest memories are of winter mornings and the reluctance to move from the warmth of the bed. My first view of the day was seen through the beautiful leaf patterns traced by the heavy overnight frost, not on the outside but on the inside of my bedroom window. Central heating was unknown and there was no heating at all in bedrooms, I would hurry to the warmth of the kitchen in my nightgown to dress before the open fire in the clothes my mother had laid out the previous night.

The bus depot was situated opposite my parents' house; each morning mill workers congregated at the end of the street to queue for the convoy of buses which would take them the thirty minute journey to the mills in the next town. Men automatically gave up their seat to allow women to sit, often standing for the duration of the journey; it was unheard of for children to take a seat if an adult was standing. My earliest awareness of pregnancy was when I was no longer able to sit on my mother's knee at five years old because of 'the baby in her tummy'. 'Standing room only' meant I would spend the journey clinging to the chrome bar of the seat as the bus lurched and swayed, trying to ignore the waves of travel sickness to which I was prone. I would jump down from the bus with relief to walk the remaining quarter of a mile to the cobbled mill yard and the welcoming warmth as we entered the factory building.

The warmth of the nursery enveloped me as we entered and hung up our coats and scarves, leaving our Wellington boots by the door; the numbness of my fingers and toes thawing as I anticipated a breakfast of tea and toast. By the age of seven I was sometimes allowed to assist in the kitchen by carrying the trays of toast into the nursery. Mrs Ramsden the cook might have stepped straight out of a Dickens novel; middle aged, a round, ample bosomed figure, sandy brown hair swept up with wisps continually escaping from her cap. Always smiling she was a handsome woman yet somehow there was also a hint of sadness around her which I didn't understand. She would slice the bread and my job was to butter the huge slices as they popped up from the giant toaster. Bustling around the kitchen, setting the trays of drinks she would encourage me to, 'Put plenty on now, don't scrape it off again.' There was something very satisfying about buttering the mountains of toast to carry them through to the waiting children.

One morning as Mrs Ramsden toasted and I buttered we chatted away and I asked if she had any children; her eyes misted over as she replied that her little girl was now in heaven, gone to join her daddy. I asked why her daddy had gone to heaven and she explained that he had been ill and was very tired and so had gone to Jesus. Her daughter she explained had been so sad that she had died of a broken heart. As tears filled her eyes she said, 'One day I will see them both again, till then they're with the Lord.' I wasn't too sure who The Lord was and had stopped buttering the bread, wondering why she could not see the little girl who was dancing round the kitchen as she spoke for I somehow knew this was her daughter. She wiped the tears away saying, 'Come on now, lots of butter, we must get on.' This was one of my earliest experiences of 'the other world' and I instinctively knew not to ask any more questions or to volunteer the information.

The Junior school I attended was within walking distance of the mill and during school holidays I would sometimes spend my lunch time with my mother. As I stepped inside the factory to the section where my parents worked, I would pause to adjust to the noise and the heat. The clatter of the machinery was almost deafening and the air was filled with swirling cotton particles; a beautiful but deadly snowstorm. Before 'Health and Safety' measures were an issue, workers spent each day breathing in this deadly pollution, resulting in the disablement of thousands of workers through the chronic lung disease bysinosis. Rows and rows of machines or frames as they were known, processed the raw cotton into soft ropes which coiled endlessly into tall containers, I watched fascinated as my mother expertly managed the assembly line, the workers took great pride in ensuring unbroken production. In time I would see both parents forced to take early retirement on health grounds as they were diagnosed with bysinosis making me aware from an early age of the penalties of industrial pollution and the need for preventative health care.



Carol's parents in the Cotton Mill, 1954

My childhood was outwardly uneventful but inwardly a mass of contradictions. A shy child, always uncomfortable socially I sought refuge in books, preferring my own company to that of others. I never felt I fitted in, it seemed to me that I had been dropped on this planet by mistake; years later I would hear this view repeated many times over by others who had felt exactly the same sense of alienation. I didn't understand the world in which I found myself and although popular at school I felt unable to share the interests or aspirations of my school friends. The five year age gap between me and my sister meant it would be some years before we became true companions and the long working hours my parents endured left little time for closeness.

My grandparents who lived close by filled a niche to some degree. My grandmother, Ada, was a formidable woman, her attitudes no doubt shaped by the harsh experiences of her early life. Grandma had worked full time in the cotton mill to well beyond retirement age, even seeking part time work at the age of eighty because she was unable to adjust to 'doing nothing.' A product of a bygone age, grandma had been orphaned at the age of nine. In the days when poverty and hardship were the norm her remaining relatives were unable to care for the children of the family. Along with her brother and sister, grandma was taken by an aunt to the Workhouse, on the way they were stopped by a neighbour who protested and offered a home to the boy if she would agree to bring up the two girls.

At such significant times our lives change direction and so my grandmother was brought up by her aunt. She would later say that perhaps her early life might have been less harsh had the neighbour not intervened for her aunt proved to be a strict disciplinarian who showed her no affection. Ada started part time work in the mill at the age of eleven and was employed full time at thirteen. Married and already widowed in her twenties when her soldier

husband was killed in the First World War, she was left with six children to raise. I never tired of listening to her stories which I am sure did much to shape my own response to adversity in later years.

Grandad was diabetic and frequently admitted to hospital for insulin assessment and at such times I would stay over for weekends to keep grandma company. The small rituals which create childhood memories are indelibly impressed upon my mind. In the evenings we would sit in the firelight, and I would be allowed to hold the toasting fork to toast bread on the hot coals. No margarine at grandma's house! The bread, crisp from the flames was liberally buttered and tasted like no other. I would listen as she regaled me with the stories which wove the fabric of family life; then I was packed off to the only bedroom to climb into the double bed we shared. Grandma's bed was a revelation to me; so high that I needed a footstool to climb into it only to sink into piles of pillows, blankets and quilts. As I sank beneath the weight of the covers placing my feet on the stone hot water bottle, I would hear her turn the key in the front door lock and climb the stairs. She then wound the clock before beginning the nightly disrobing ritual which fascinated me. Each time I wondered if this time all might be revealed for I had never seen a woman naked.

First, off came a 'pinny' or short apron which covered the overall which crossed over at the front. Then the day clothes were removed, beneath these were the fearsome corsets. The metal fasteners were undone one by one with a resounding click and the garment discarded to reveal a second smaller corset which laced down the front. Grandma seemed to become smaller and smaller as each layer of clothing was laid aside. I would peer out from the bedclothes as the laces of the remaining corset were unleashed and this too was removed revealing a full length slip beneath. At this point with a stern look in my direction grandma gave the order for me to turn away. Peeping with one eye, the last glimpse I had was of my grandmother resplendent in vest and knee length bloomers. At which point my courage would fail me and with eyes tight shut I dare not open them again until she was robed in the full length winceyette nightgown.

As she climbed into bed beside me I would hear the click as she deposited her dentures in the glass on the bedside table and the fizzing sound as she stirred Andrews Liver Salts into a glass of water. If she was in a pleasant mood we might talk together for a little while longer as she sipped the salts; it seemed that always the conversation would turn to the importance of 'having a cot of your own' warning me always to 'keep a roof over your head'. 'Cot' was an abbreviation of cottage; her warnings reflected her own early experiences of homelessness and abandonment. Even at such an early age I was keenly aware that the years of displacement had profoundly scarred her. Finally reaching for the light switch which hung over the bed, with a 'Good night,

God bless' she turned over, leaving me to lie awake listening to the ticking clock before I too drifted to sleep.



Ada - Carol's grandmother

In those early years I was somewhat confused as to why I had two grandads and unable to place them in context with my grandmother. Whenever I queried this, the atmosphere changed noticeably and I knew better than to enquire further. One grandad I saw regularly, at least when he was not in the hospital; my fondest memories are of standing behind his chair combing his silver hair. I met my other grandad, perhaps only on three occasions yet it would be this second one who would have a profound effect upon my early life. I came to know that grandma had formed a new relationship following the death of her first husband. Martin Kearns was a native of Galway, Ireland and the relationship produced a daughter, my mother; sadly this partnership failed when my grandmother subsequently left him and her to set up home with the grandfather who was more familiar to me.

My mother often spoke fondly of her own father, I was to meet him only rarely when he would arrive on our doorstep unannounced bringing with him liquorice allsorts as a treat for me. I well remember his tweed overcoat, his flat cap and the walking stick he carried; now in his eighties he walked slowly and painfully. We had no more than a passing acquaintance yet he made a lasting impression on me. My mother was deeply affected when he passed

away and we attended the funeral together, the only mourners on a bitterly cold winters day. This was my first acquaintance with death at the age of five.

One night shortly after the funeral I was lying in bed and settling down to sleep when I became aware of a weight on the bed to the side of my legs. I looked up to see my grandad sitting on the edge of the bed; he was wearing his usual tweed overcoat and cap and looking down at the paper bag of sweets in his hand. As he opened it I anticipated the liquorice allsorts I always associated with him and sure enough he turned to me, smiled and offered the bag. As I reached out to take a sweet he disappeared before my eyes; not in an instant but rather dissolving from view. Childlike I was more disappointed that the sweet had not materialised than that he had disappeared.



Grandad Kearns

This first experience of what is often termed 'spirit contact', affirmed for me that grandad was still very much 'alive'. I felt no fear or even a need to question, it seemed to me a perfectly natural and normal event yet somehow I knew also not to discuss it with others. Over forty years later Martin Kearns would return to give me the confirmation of his continued existence, a message concerning my future work and a gift I treasure to this day.

My grandfather was my only link to Ireland and a tenuous one at that and yet throughout my childhood and indeed throughout my life I felt a deep affinity with all things Irish to the extent that in those early years I was half

convinced that I was Irish. Whenever I heard the song 'I'll take you home again Kathleen' I would feel a deep well of emotion rise within me. At the age of thirteen when most girls my age were spending their pocket money on rock and roll records, the first record I ever bought was John McCormack singing Irish ballads; a strange choice for a girl in her early teens to make. I always felt that I would one day discover my Irish family connections, this I did, but not in any way I could have imagined. For the time being I held the connections within my heart where no one could intrude on them.

I settled into infant school well enough, able to hide my natural shyness with my peers but I did not enjoy school, it was simply something I endured. Considered by my teachers to be bright, I was always obedient towards those in authority, this attitude rested not only in a natural respect for adults but rather in a reluctance to become the focus of attention. I therefore became adept at being compliant and invisible.

Certain incidents stand out in those first years; one was my tendency to faint on occasion in morning assembly. As soon as the hymns were sung I would become aware of the sensation of dizziness and the room would begin to spin. I would dig my finger nails into my palms in an effort to stop myself from passing out; on occasion this worked, at other times nausea would overwhelm me and the next thing I knew I was stretched out on the floor with concerned faces peering over me. One particularly unpleasant teacher accused me of attention seeking making the whole experience mortifying, since this was both unfair and untrue.

On another occasion my friend and I, both aged six, had sneaked into the classroom during playtime, we wanted to feed ant eggs to the goldfish on the nature table. As I gingerly tipped the packet, the eggs poured out, covering the whole of the surface of the water. We were both horrified and rushed from the classroom to spend most of the remainder of the day anxiously waiting to be discovered as the culprits. The class teacher, Mrs Chadwick, eventually asked who was responsible. No one owned up. We were asked again. No answer. Then someone volunteered that I had been seen and I was marched out to the front of the class and accused. Terrified, I denied that I was responsible, the whole class were then informed that I was lying and a lecture delivered as to the perils of not telling the truth. My face burned with the humiliation, not from being blamed for I felt I deserved to be punished; the anguish lay in the public accusation. I made a conscious choice from that day to work harder to remain inconspicuous.

Another incident occurred around the age of nine and involved corporal punishment. While I could be quite spirited I normally respected school rules, it was therefore out of character when my friend and I were taken to task for running on the corridor. We were told to report to the headmaster's

study and wait outside the door. Unbelievable as it seems today in the early 1950's corporal punishment was accepted as a useful form of discipline in schools even for minor misdemeanours. This option was at the discretion of the individual teacher and so was often abused. Children could be hit with a cane or a leather strap on the palms of the hands; boys could be asked to 'bend over' and were hit over the buttocks. On this occasion I received one stroke of the strap on each hand and returned to my class, my hands throbbing. My palms were red but not as red as my face as I opened the classroom door to see every head turn to look at me. The burning pain in my hands lasted for some time afterwards making it difficult to write; however the pain which I remembered long after the burning had ceased was that of the public humiliation. These experiences seemed to resonate deep within me and coloured my life disproportionately, creating a mistrust of authority.

Almost forty years later I would begin to understand why as I traced the origins of recent and far memory through my work as a holistic therapist. This exploration began in an attempt to understand the unusual experiences occurring during my childhood as spontaneous memories of 'other lives' began to surface. This phenomenon is not particularly unusual but is frequently unrecognised and misunderstood; such memories can occur as a single or recurring experience and may be triggered in various ways. Far memory is imprinted subconsciously and can arise in response to a face, a place, an anniversary, trauma and many other subtle reminders of another time and place.

My first experience occurred at the age of seven on a day no different to many others. During school holidays I attended the child care centre full time, on Tuesday afternoons as a special treat we were all taken to the cinema matinee walking in a crocodile of pairs, queuing for our tickets at the booth and racing to our seats in the stalls. There we waited impatiently for the film to commence, it mattered little which film was shown and as the lights dimmed every child in the cinema began to cheer and stamp their feet. On the day in question we had walked to the cinema in the rain, too excited to be aware of my slightly damp gabardine raincoat I waited in great anticipation for the film to begin.

As the lights were lowered, I looked forward to the opening scene in anticipation but was distracted by a boy in the row behind rhythmically kicking the back of my seat; I tried to ignore him but he persisted. The film titles went up and the enigmatic music began; the feature was a long forgotten B movie which I believe was called Sadie. The opening scene was a vista of desert sands as a camel train slowly made its way across the dunes. I watched, totally engrossed as the camera closed in on a young girl swathed in the black robes of the Bedouin, she was seated on a camel as it walked slowly and rhythmically across the sands. The boy behind me was still kicking my seat; annoyed I was about to turn to tell him to stop when suddenly

everything around me disappeared and I was aware only of a rocking sensation. It was as if momentarily the visual rhythm of the camel's gait and the rhythmic rocking of my seat synchronised and I was transported out of time and space. My vision seemed restricted, I felt as if I was looking through a letter box, then a strange feeling as if my face was covered and I realised I was looking through a heavy veil with only the eyes uncovered. What today would be known as a burka. My damp gabardine raincoat had now disappeared and I could feel only heavy robes which I sensed were black.

No longer aware of the cinema seat, I felt myself to be seated high up on some kind of brightly coloured rug which I somehow knew to be tasselled and fringed. I became acutely aware of the rocking sensation and a pungent odour; looking down I saw the neck and head of a camel. This was not imagination or a dreamy state but rather full sensory awareness; I could feel the weight and texture of the robes and was aware of the jangling of some kind of jewellery like coins around my forehead, wrists and ankles. I could also see, feel and smell the camel yet this was no ordinary camel. The only camels I had ever seen had been in the zoo; dirty, smelly, unkempt creatures yet this camel was creamy beige and seemed to be almost groomed. Around the head was a brightly coloured, tasselled halter, the reins held by a young man also dressed in black whose face I could see clearly; he was smiling up at me and I felt I was smiling back. I felt very happy but somehow mischievous and a little naughty.

The experience ended as suddenly as it had begun and I was once again aware of the cinema seat, my damp gabardine raincoat and the weight of my school shoes. What had happened? The cinema was now the same as before. The film continued but I have never remembered the story, my mind struggled to come to terms with my first and most complete experience of an altered state of consciousness or 'other life memory'. I knew that in some strange way I had been transported to some other time and place, the girl I could see felt to be a part of me in a way that I did not understand. I also knew this had been somehow triggered by the image on the screen; one more experience I felt unable to share with anyone, who could I ask for how could they be expected to believe such a tale? I filed it away with the other secrets. I had no way of knowing that the foundation stone had now been laid which would in time lead me to my life's work.

Another significant event occurred soon after this. Lying in bed one night I experienced not a dream but a vision. I saw a map of the continent of Africa clearly outlined with its various countries clearly defined. My limited geographical knowledge did not allow me to identify them but my attention was drawn to the upper left hand side of the map which today I would recognise as Morocco, Algeria and Libya. As I watched, the map began to

smoulder and then to burn, beginning in these areas; it was as if someone had put a light to the map as the fire spread quickly down the right hand side and across to central Africa before engulfing the whole of the continent. I had no idea what this meant but felt that I was being given a message for a future time.

Between the age of seven and eleven I was troubled by a recurring dream in which I was walking down stone steps, water was lapping around my feet and I was examining a mark upon a wall. I knew this was some kind of gauge and that the water was rising indicating flooding. At this point I would wake up with a sense of panic and impending doom. Much later I came to understand that I was reliving the Fall of Atlantis and that this is in fact a collective soul memory shared by many. These experiences had a profound effect upon me for I felt they were in some way linked to something I had to do. It seemed to me even at such an early age that they were some kind of warning about past and future events. I desperately wanted to tell someone about them but my fear of ridicule prevented me from speaking.

By the age of twelve these early psychic experiences had receded but were never forgotten as I began to engage more fully with the physical world in which I found myself. Like all girls of my age I was beginning to look forward to the time when I could enjoy a greater degree of independence; school remained something to be endured rather than enjoyed. One hot summer's day I stared out of the window of the classroom, the teacher's voice droned on in the background. A bee buzzing around the window pane struggled desperately to escape, I sympathised with its predicament.

The droning of the teacher's voice and the buzzing of the insect seemed to synchronise as I allowed my mind to drift beyond the confines of the classroom. A warm feeling pervaded my body and I felt a slight sense of tiredness similar to that before drifting off to sleep. Suddenly I became aware of soft, white light; the classroom had momentarily disappeared and I was aware only of a vague outline, the head and shoulders of a woman which became increasingly distinct. I was no longer aware of my surroundings; the teacher's voice had receded into the distance.

Now the full length figure of a young woman aged around thirty became remarkably clear; the hair was shoulder length, straight and very black, the eyes blue with a very direct gaze. She wore a simple white robe, a deep necklace of turquoise with dark blue stones rested at her throat; the words 'lapis lazuli' drifted through my mind, I wondered what they meant. She was standing motionless, looking at me with a penetrating gaze; I felt unable to look away. She seemed to be saying something to me but not in words, the message was conveyed telepathically, it felt as if she was appealing to me, reminding me of something. The words were imprinted on my mind 'Do not forget.' In the next instant she had gone and the teacher's voice resounded in

the classroom, 'Carol Lamb, what did I just ask?' I was suddenly jolted back to the present, aware once more of the buzzing of the bumble bee and my sniggering classmates.

I felt perplexed, certain I had received a message but what did it mean and who was the woman? What was she asking me to remember? Whatever it was it felt important. I puzzled over this latest phenomenon; again there was no one I could ask; who would believe me? The image surfaced again and again in quiet moments, usually when my mind was distracted or I was about to fall asleep at night. In the same way that I had been certain that the Bedouin girl and myself were one and the same, I felt equally sure that this was also true of the woman who was now stepping from the shadows of my mind.

Intrigued rather than afraid I wanted to understand. I began to have dreams of ancient Egypt, I would remember only fragments on waking until one night I had a clear dream which would recur over several years. It was always the same. I was walking alone through a dimly lit tunnel which opened out into a large chamber; the light from burning torches flickered on stone walls which were decorated with strange images, symbols and hieroglyphics. A strange echoing silence pervaded everything; I somehow knew I was inside a pyramid. My heart was pounding with apprehension, a strange mixture of excitement and danger; I felt that I was meeting someone but knew for certain that I should not be there.

I was dressed in a white robe, straight black hair touched my shoulders; I could feel the weight of a heavy ornate necklace at my throat. I knew I was a temple priestess and inexplicably felt keenly aware of my age, I was thirty three. Suddenly a man stepped out from a niche in the stone wall, he was Egyptian; his eyes were deep blue and twinkling with humour, for some reason he appeared to be very amused. A muscular figure, dark skinned with jet black hair he was naked to the waist, dressed in a knee length skirt over bare legs and wore sandals upon his feet. I had a sense of his rank or status; my lasting impression was of his incredibly blue eyes which I felt I would recognise anywhere.

I awoke with a start and sat bolt upright in my bed. I knew I had been shown connection to the woman who was asking me to remember yet I still had no idea what it was that I had forgotten. I felt a sense of something having gone wrong, that something had been lost forever. The impressions of the priestess and the Egyptian gradually faded from my every day reality but I never forgot the experience. In later years with greater understanding I would be able to associate the feelings which had seemed incomprehensible to my childish mind, with the consequence of compromise.

Another image arose in a similar manner, surfacing unbidden to intrude upon my waking consciousness. In my mind's eye I became aware of the figure of a Japanese girl, clad in traditional kimono; the upswept black hair pinned with ivory combs and decorated with flowers. I was never able to see her face as she stood slightly sideways on but I was able to catch sight of the mask like white face of what I would later come to realise was a geisha. This was not imagination; I could literally sense the weight and texture of the silk kimono and feel the emotion of the girl who was standing perfectly still, looking out on to a garden. In the far distance I could see a lake and a snow capped mountain. Deep sadness always accompanied the scene, I knew she was waiting for someone or something, I did not know what. This image recurred repeatedly over several months and then seemed to fade though I could recall every detail.

Life continued, I was growing up. A very physical interruption to my daily life occurred, for the second time in my short life I was diagnosed with rheumatic fever and this time prolonged bed rest was ordered. This was a potentially dangerous condition which often results in permanent damage to the heart; at that time the only treatment was rest with a high dosage of aspirin to relieve the inflamed joints which were wrapped in lint and bandages to promote warmth. This had the effect of severely limiting mobility, already unable to leave my bed my movements were restricted, I was for example unable to bend my arms easily to hold a book or a pen. The hours ticked away endlessly teaching me patience and acceptance as I fought to overcome the feelings of restriction.

Dr McDwyer called weekly to assess my progress; each week we held our breath in case he decided to admit me to hospital and each week I was relieved with his firm warning that I could only remain at home on condition that I co-operated and stayed in bed. The thought of being admitted to hospital was a far greater incentive to me than the risk of later heart disease. I complied. I looked forward to his visits, he was always cheerful, never in a hurry. Although his days were long he would take the time to reassure my mother and to remind me how fortunate I was to be in her care. He was perhaps the last of a dying breed; the family doctor in those days was truly a friend of the family. I will always be grateful for his care and attention and his willingness to allow my parents an element of choice between recuperation at home or in hospital.

I would remain on bed rest, for thirteen weeks. During this time I felt weak, ill and powerless; a prisoner. I have no doubt that this in some measure contributed to the experiences which followed. I had another soul encounter. As I lay for hours fragmented images began to filter into my waking consciousness; green hills, a traditional white washed cottage, a beach; fiddle music playing in the distant regions of my mind. I somehow knew that this

was Ireland. The indistinct face of a young girl in her teens surfaced and disappeared. I was left with a sense of a mop of curly red hair and someone who seemed very, very angry. Once again I had no idea why. I was now thirteen years old and like most girls my age my most prized possession was a cheap record player. I saved my pocket money and bought my first records, I remember my father's comments on the strange choice for a girl my age. Predictably I had bought the latest Elvis Presley record but also an E.P. of an Irish tenor singing 'I'll take you home again Kathleen'. Each time I played the record the images returned and I wept.

As I approached fourteen years of age one more memory surfaced but in a very different and fragmented way. Blurred and disconnected imagery was received as sporadic flashes rather than as a prolonged scene. Always it began with the sea. I seemed to be staring out across the ocean from the deck of a ship, the vast seas rolling before me. The indistinct image of a young woman in her early twenties faded in and out of view. She was dressed in a long jacket and ankle length skirt with boots; the high necked collar of a white blouse rose from beneath the jacket; her fair hair was piled high upon her head. The feeling was of loss, confusion and disillusionment; I had no desire to enquire further and gradually these transient images also ceased.

After three months recuperation I recovered from my illness and I returned to school and a semblance of normality, although the other life images ceased, paranormal experiences continued. I had somehow always known that the kaleidoscope of images related to the past but also in some strange way to the present. Now for the first time I experienced pre cognition. Lying in bed one night I felt the old familiar sense of drifting while remaining fully conscious; the room became misty and I realised I seemed to be peering into a different room.

This was an ordinary lounge or living room, a conversation was taking place between a fair haired man and a woman; they were both laughing good naturedly. I observed the woman handing something to the man, some kind of small package like a large brown envelope which he for some reason seemed reluctant to take. The feeling was of bantering conversation as he looked somewhat bemused. He took the envelope and placed it on the sideboard behind him. The scene faded and I was left with the abiding image that the man was wearing a priest's collar.

The impact of this scene was greater than all of the others. I felt sure that this was in some way connected to secrets and was very important. I had no idea what the scene might relate to but was impressed by the fact that it differed from all the rest in that it related to the future and not to the past. It was the package which felt to be important. I wondered what it contained; as before,

the image intruded intermittently, gradually faded but again was never forgotten.

All of these visual images involved sensory perception; they were distinct and different, each with a different emotional impact. Although they caused me to wonder, they did not intrude upon my every day life. I was somehow able to accept them as separate from myself yet also in some indefinable way, a part of me. They arose in sequence, each one replacing the last, leaving me to ponder their meaning. On occasion I would remember them and allow myself to consider their possible significance before filing them away once more. I never spoke about them to anyone and by the age of fourteen they ceased although I could recall them clearly and more importantly the emotional impact which had accompanied them. I would be forty four years old before I discussed these events and they would prove to be the spiritual catalyst not only for my own life but the lives of many.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carol Lamb was born in the North of England where she lives and works today. A lifelong interest in metaphysical healing and the esoteric traditions of East and West grew out of her childhood experiences of retained soul memory, the ability to access memory of other lives and higher streams of consciousness. These spontaneous soul memories initiated a quest for greater understanding and led to significant meetings which would bring her to the purpose of her life's work: to teach the continuity of the soul.

Carol's career in nursing, social work and adult education spanned twenty five years, evolving into a holistic therapy practice with the emphasis on providing spiritual answers to the problems of physical life and living. A thirteen year programme of teaching and lecturing resulted in the foundation of a network of holistic colleges and clinics.

A writer and researcher Carol offers a Workshop training programme to advance awareness of the continuity of consciousness.

Other Books by this Author

Doctors of the Soul

Sequel to Born Remembering

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