

## A Report on Maraton 2012

Decided to take another day off from work. Needed all of yesterday to rest. Still wonderfully sore in mysterious places. Want to share my experience while still relatively fresh. Here goes:

Woke up at 3:45am Sat. Then a half hour walk through the new snow to catch a 5:00am train to NYC. Arrive at Grand Central a bit after 6. More walking in fresh snow. Cold and beautiful and stimulating. Nearly empty streets. (A foreshadowing of the renewal to occur later?) Make my way to the 520 address. Have vague expectations. The amazing coincidence of meeting Dzieci at Stony Lodge\* is not lost on me. Been avidly absorbing a lot of information on the mystery schools for the past two years or so. Am tremendously excited for some direct participation (I even quit cigarettes for the occasion. Did not want any distractions) and fully ready to embrace whatever was to occur. Enter the room with the group of perfect strangers and then...

The command to not talk is brilliant. Instantly we are forced to abandon our civilized shields. Liking this already. I should add at this point that this type of experience is completely alien to me. Had the feeling that others in the group had been through similar types of non-verbal exercises before. (There was a lot of evidence of vocal/performance training in the air :) So I just went with it. Dzieci does a splendid job of creating a warm, safe, inviting atmosphere. I never felt uncomfortable. Except when I needed to (more on that later).

I found the pacing and building of the session particularly potent and well crafted. Each exercise/ritual slowly built on top of each other, subtly activating our chakras (love to have my third eye rubbed), introducing sounds and behaviors that were needed later, leading up to an initiation sequence where we all proceeded through a gauntlet to claim our symbolic rebirth. (The original ceremony probably used blades and the initiates were left truly bloody. The old ways had elements of real harm and potential death.) Beautiful how everything accumulated, the symbolic and physical blending, pushing me past my physical limits, leading to me to several profound, intense moments.

Moment 1. While in the drum/chant circle, I was confronted by the implied command to perform. Clearly uncomfortable and timid and struggling, I was astonished to suddenly find a set or sets of hands moving over me, straightening my poor posture, rubbing my chest, my face blasted with camphor or some liquid. I could feel the block of fear and shame loosening inside. It was physical and psychological release all at once. A shocking, gorgeous moment for me. Naturally, I observed others in the group having similar moments and how graceful and powerful Dzieci's responses were, swooping in to dispense healing touch and sounds, getting all shaman like a motherfucker.

Moment 2. After the third or fourth or fifth hour of the drum circle (I completely lost all and every sense of time), I found myself past exhaustion, my muscles utterly and completely spent, lying on the quilt I brought, and I then entered a deeply hallucinatory state. Concentrating through me third eye, I viewed a deep, penetrating blue lattice of light filling up and cutting into the ink black, spreading as far as I could

"see." I even saw some shreds of it when I opened my eyes. This was the pinnacle of my experience. I had been having many moments of intense visions throughout the process. Interesting to talk to Jesse afterwards when he shared that Dzieci incorporated elements of Peyote Ceremony to achieve an organic, drug-free ecstatic state. Well, it worked for me.

Please accept my deep gratitude. The experience was everything and more than I expected. THANK YOU.

Mike Fitzell

\*Dzieci has visited Stoney Lodge Hospital, a dual diagnosis institution for children and adolescents, annually for the past 15 years. We met Mike, a fairly new staff person there, last December.