

Esteban's Ascension: *A True Story of After Death Communication*

Carolyn E. Cobelo

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"Esteban's Ascension is an engrossing first-rate spiritual adventure that I could not put down. It is made even more compelling by the fact that it's all true."

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Also by Carolyn Cobelo

Books:

The Spring of Hope: Messages from Mary (1999)

The Power of Sacred Space: Exploring Ancient Ceremonial Sites (2000)

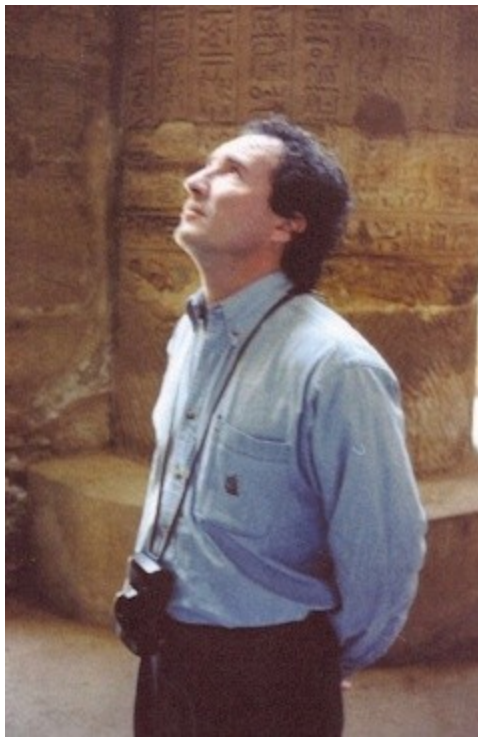
Soul Evolution with Zarathustra: Wisdom for 2012 (Coming in summer 2010)

CD Audiobook & Mp3 Titles:

Crossing Over: A Journey to the Light

Creating The Life You Want: Wisdom for 2012

Angels: Connecting With Your Guides in Spirit



"Don't cry Daddy. I see Esteban in the sky. He is with Tata."

These words of comfort came from Nicholas Cobelo, age 6, soon after his father, Eduardo, received the news of his older brother's death.

Nicholas is Esteban's godson. Esteban was my husband. He died in a car accident March

3,1998.

Nicholas's birth was the reason Esteban visited San Martin de los Andes in southern Argentina in January 1992, where he met me. He was living in Spain at the time, and visiting Argentina for Christmas. I was visiting San Martin for two weeks to look for land to build a spiritual retreat center. In a beautiful moment I will never forget, we shook hands one morning, and fell in love.

Tata, Esteban's and Eduardo's father, died ten years previously, in 1988. Since Nicholas was only six, he only knew his grandfather from photos.

This book is about Esteban's ascension to the Light and the communication that I have had with him after his physical death. I believe that one purpose of his death was for me to heal my fear of separation and to teach me that we do not die at death. Nothing could motivate me more in this learning than my desire to maintain my connection with him.

Valencia: Search for the Holy Grail

Esteban and I were driving on the highway from Valencia on our way to Cordoba, where we were going to stay in a restored monastery next to the Mesquite. The Mesquite is the most beautiful mosque in Spain, and a place that is strongly associated with the Holy Grail. We were both excited to be returning to such an intriguing and powerful place in search of spiritual learning and adventure.

We had been following the path of the Holy Grail in Spain, visiting sacred sites connected to the Christian Grail. The Christian Grail is a golden chalice, which is now in a chapel in the Valencia Cathedral. The myth is that this is the actual cup that Christ used at the Last Supper. Although we do not know the actual validity of this claim, there is no question that the chapel has strong healing energy.

Esteban did not feel comfortable in the Cathedral of Valencia. He strongly disliked the control and spiritual dominance of the Roman Catholic Church, and he found this especially offensive in this chapel. There were also tour guides, speaking loudly in many languages, who led their groups very close to where we were trying to meditate. They seemed to intentionally disregard the fact that this was a place of worship that held one of the most sacred Christian objects in our world today.

I had been working with and channeling the energy of my beloved spiritual guide, Mother Mary, for many years. Mary is both the mother of Jesus and the Divine Mother who takes different forms, such as Quan Yin, depending on the culture. That journey is described fully in my book, *The Spring of Hope: Messages from Mary*. In my meditation, Mary said to me, "Your journey is complete. You have been undergoing initiation and now you have reached your goal." A twinge of fear clutched my throat. We had been following the path of the Holy Grail for almost a year, and I thought, "If this journey is over, what will we do next?"

I remembered that the Holy Grail exists in many forms in different places in the world, so I was confused as to why this was the end. I soon forgot Mary's message, trusting that we would soon know our next step.

Mary spoke to me for a long time, in between the chatter of the tour guides, about the Holy Grail. She said, "The Grail is not an object. It is the experience of union with the Divine in the form of light. Over centuries, priests and priestesses imprinted objects with spiritual power, and these objects, such as the Holy Chalice, came to known as the Holy Grail." She repeated many times, "the Grail is light, golden light, Divine light, living inside of you." She added that the search for the Grail is actually the search for this Inner Light.

Mary warned that the power of the Grail objects is real, and that the reason that many die when they come close to them, is that they cannot match or resonate with the intensity of this power. She said, "This infusion of energy into objects is a distortion of the true meaning of the Grail."

She spoke of the Grail as love. "The Grail is love, pure love, and nothing but love. This love is the love of God and the knowledge that God lives in your heart as love. In your union with one another, you can reach the Grail. It is within you. Let it be, as it is so."

Esteban and I flew the next day to Majorca, where we spent five days of inner exploration and contemplation. We both fell in love with the west side of the island, and we planned to rent a house there for two weeks in June. We tried unsuccessfully to meet with a real estate agent, so we decided to wait to arrange this until we returned home.

While we were in Majorca, we had a beautiful time together. Esteban told me I was the only woman he had ever known that fulfilled him completely. I remember his words. "You are my wife, my lover, my mother, my daughter, my sister, my friend." We had a beautiful walk down a long winding stone path together to the beach, each one in peace and contentment. We meditated by the sea.

One evening we had a lengthy discussion about spirituality and the Roman Catholic Church, in which he explained the reasons for his distrust of the Church. The next evening he said emphatically that what he wanted most in life was to become enlightened, and he did not really care if he was professionally successful in the world. He said. "I am living the life I have always wanted to live. Now I want to concentrate on my spiritual life."

Esteban was very involved with a book entitled, *The Cup of Destiny* by Trevor Ravenscroft, which describes the search for the Holy Grail as a path of personal initiation. He was felt a strong affinity with the Knights Templar, and he was growing a beard, which he thought made him look wiser. Four nights before he died he shouted across the dinner table, "I know, you are Genevieve and I am Sir Lancelot!" I felt a surge of spiritual power pass through him to me when he said this.

During our last evening Esteban read a passage from the book to me: "Parzival, Gawain, and Feirfis represent the original entelechy of man: the thinking spirit, the feeling soul, and the

willing body. They are the human trinity-one in three and three in one. They exist separately on earth but they are secretly the manifestation of one organism - that is to say - they exist in the spiritual worlds as one indivisible unity" (page 120). He added softly with great respect, "You taught me this." His words touched the core of my heart. He acknowledged me as his spiritual teacher in a way he had never done before.

It seems that we are living out the true meaning of these words now. He is in the spirit world and I am in the human body, and yet we are bonded together. We are the yin and the yang, the Tao, the Sacred Marriage. Even after all these years, there is still much to unfold and much to learn about the significance of our trinity.

The Accident

On March 3, 1998, we flew from Palma, Majorca, to Valencia. When we arrived, we found that our rented car that we had left in the airport would not start. For some reason, the Avis agents did not try to jump-start this car. Instead, they gave us the only free car they had in the lot. It was a little turquoise station wagon, which was much lower quality than the one we originally rented.

It was about 8 pm. We had not planned to be on the road at night, but we had missed our plane that morning from Majorca, so we had a later flight. We had just stopped for a cup of coffee, because we knew we had a long way to go to reach Cordoba. The moon was an auspicious silver color, and I commented to Esteban about this. As we drove through the moonlit night, I remember that he looked over at me with much love. He said, "You look very nice in your new leather jacket. It's just the right kind of jacket for you." I smiled and said, "Thank you. I love it when you say those things to me." That was the last full conversation we had.

We were quiet as we drove through the mountains of Andalucia. Suddenly I looked up and to my horror, I realized we were heading straight into the left guardrail. I remember the bright white lines on the side of the road, glowing in the moonlight. I screamed. Esteban turned the car sharply to the right. We crossed the road and crashed through the right guardrail, down a small hill into a tall metal fence.

I do not know if he went to sleep or misjudged the road. He tried to control the car but we were going too fast. I will never forget the look on his face as he turned the steering wheel, terrified, focused, incredibly strong. His face is the last thing I remember, until I woke up, and saw flames coming out of the front of the car. I looked over at Esteban. He was slumped over the steering wheel.

His head was bleeding, but he was conscious. I lifted the roof and the metal of the window frame off myself and climbed out of the window. Then I pushed the roof and doorframe off him. Although at first he said he could not get out, I insisted, and he let me pull him out of the window. He could not walk, so I lifted him up and he leaned on me. I helped him crawl under the hole in the metal fence, which, fortunately, the impact of the car created.

When I felt we were far enough to be safe from the fire, I left him on the ground and climbed over the fence and up the hill to the road. I was so glad that I had on pointed boots that could fit into the holes in the fence. I used his white t-shirt to flag down a truck. Very soon more cars stopped, as the fire in the car became more visible.

While we waited for the ambulance, the moon shone brightly on us. I told him we were safe and that the ambulance was coming. He was moaning. I put my hands on his head and chest to try to heal him, as I had done with countless clients in my role as a professional healer. I felt the lump on his head go down. I was confident everything was going to be all right. I looked over at our car, which was now consumed in flames. It seemed as if we were in a movie. I thought how little I cared about all our possessions that were burning up in the car. The only thing that was important was that we were safe.

As he lay on the ground, he lifted his hands to put them on mine, as I was healing him. Once he opened his eyes and reached up with both hands to touch my face. He asked with deep love and concern, "Are you all right?"

I smiled down at him and said, "Yes, I'm all right." He smiled and fell back into his semi-conscious state. I did not realize then that that was good-bye.

I told the seven or eight men who stood around us that he was cold. They all took off their jackets and laid them on him. There was a sense of helpless concern as we waited for the ambulance.

The Hospital

The ambulance was a small panel truck with a bed and a plastic chair in the back. There was no medical equipment or emergency medical personnel. When I saw the size and condition of the hospital my heart sank, but I realized there was nothing I could do. I discovered later that the hospital was a small public hospital in Baza, which is near Granada.

The doctors quickly wheeled Esteban into the operating room, but they would not let me go in with him. I waited in a small room, where there were people of varying ages in beds with IV's. It was an informal atmosphere with people walking in and out of the room.

The nurses indicated they wanted to x-ray my face, which had a big bruise under my eye. I resisted, because I did not want to be far from Esteban, but they insisted. They put my head against a green wooden board with little white squares. There was no lead apron, and the machine was an antique monster.

When I came back from the x-ray room, the doctor told me that Esteban was "muy malo" (very bad). I could not believe his announcement, because other than blood on his face and missing two teeth, he had looked fine to me. I asked where he was hurt. The doctor said he had multiple

fractures in his thorax. I could not remember what the thorax was, so he drew me a picture. Then he went back into the operating room.

I heard Esteban scream. A few minutes later the doctor came out and said that he had died. I shouted, "No, it is not possible," and ran into the operating room.

I saw with complete shock that the life force had left Esteban's body. The nurses tried to pull me away, and I pushed them off me. I said that I was a healer and I wanted to try to bring him back to life. The doctor said quietly. "No es posible." I asked him if I could try. He looked at me with confusion, but he walked out of the room, followed by the nurses, and closed the door. I was so grateful he let me do this.

I put my hands on Esteban's head and chest, and asked many times with all my heart, "please come back to me." I put every ounce of healing power I could find into my hands, and prayed to Mother Mary to bring him back. His heart chakra became very warm, but he did not start breathing. The warmth of his heart chakra gave me hope.

I did not believe he could be dead. It happened so fast. I said to him in my mind, that if he chose to come back, I would be very happy, but I would understand if he decided to go on. Gradually I realized that he was gone. I could sense how happy he was to be free of his body. I knew that the pain must have been excruciating, because I had heard his agonizing scream. I also felt that he knew how much I really loved him.

His body lay completely still. I surrendered to the reality that he was dead. I was so sad. I hugged his head and chest and said, "I miss you so much already." To my surprise, I felt a warm cloud of energy envelop me, just as if he was holding me in his arms, as we lay in bed, very warm and very close. A brief flash of happiness passed through me. I whispered, "I will miss you so much. I do not know what to do without you. I will always keep you close to me."

Suddenly, the top of my head opened like a door, and a warm stream of energy flowed into my entire being. This delightful spiritual energy continued for several minutes, comforting and reassuring me.

The First Night

The energy cloud dissipated. I stood up and walked to the door. When I opened the door, the group of doctors and nurses walked into the room with the ambulance driver and several other people. One was a woman in a business suit, who seemed out of place there. They began to speak to me about something I did not understand. No one spoke English. I had managed with my imperfect Spanish until now, but my brain was in shock and I could not think. They went out of the room and came back with a man in a white uniform that spoke a little English. He explained that the forensic doctor needed to examine Esteban's body. They asked me to leave the room for the examination. The woman in the business suit, who I think was a forensic lawyer, and the police asked me questions about the accident and about Esteban. I drew a

picture of the accident, since my brain could not manage Spanish at that time. Finally, they let me go back to Esteban.

A few minutes later the man in the white suit came in, and explained to me that they must take Esteban's body to a cold room in the basement. In a determined voice, I said no. I remembered that Esteban told me that he had visited his father's body in the morgue in Buenos Aires, and he felt that his father was lonely there. As a healer who had worked with terminally ill and dying patients, I also knew how important the hours are just after death in making the transition from the Earth life to the afterlife.

I begged them to let me stay with him. They huddled together and eventually agreed to this. They told me that they were required by law to keep his body cold, but they could put us in an air-conditioned room and give me some blankets. I was so grateful for the informality of the hospital, which had previously frightened me, because it enabled me to stay close to Esteban. This would not have been possible in a more modern hospital.

I sat all night with Esteban with my head resting on the metal coffin, which held his body. I knew from past experience how to help someone cross over to the Other Side, and I was so happy I could help Esteban to do this. I talked to him with mental telepathy, sending my thoughts directly to him and I was soon comforted to learn that I could hear his voice in reply.

At first I felt him spinning, confused, frightened. I reached out to contact him. I said over and over again, "Esteban, this is Carolyn. I am with you now." Within a few seconds, I could feel that he recognized me. I felt his warm radiant smile envelop me, a smile as big as the room. He was so happy to be free of his body. He was floating, moving around, playing with his arms, like a baby who is free of the constrictions of the womb. Just as I was comforted by connecting with his energy, he too was also very happy to find me there with him.

This energetic communication continued for hours on end. When I cried very hard, I could feel him become sad and heavy. I was so sad. I just could not believe that he was not alive. It happened so suddenly and so unexpectedly. Then I thought, "He is free now, and this is what he really wants." As I thought this, he smiled again, warm and loving, free of the weight of my sadness.

I saw him in transparency with my Third Eye. He was still very much himself. I was so grateful to have the ability to connect with him in this form. I thought, "All my experience has brought me to this moment."

I asked Esteban if he wanted to go with me to see my spirit guide, Mary. He hesitated, because he was not sure he believed in this. I said, "We can go together." In my vision I took his hand and we went slowly toward Mary. We saw her owl-like face and her big long mullet-colored skirt. She was very tall, like a giant. We stood before her, looking up at her face.

Going Into The Light

As we gazed together into Mary's face, I remembered what Esteban's words from a few nights ago, "What I want most is to be enlightened." I said to him, "Now you can have your wish, now you can become enlightened." We were standing in a big field of light looking up at Mary. I felt her love supporting and empowering both of us.

When I first said this to him, he was doubtful and confused. I realized that he did not believe that he was worthy of enlightenment. I knew, however, beyond a doubt, that he was worthy of enlightenment.

My thoughts spoke to him with passion and conviction, "You are all the man I ever needed and wanted. You are the perfect man for me. You are the most beautiful man I have ever known. You are my complete and total soul love. You are my knight, my soul love, my one and only true love." I repeated these words over and over again. I said, "I will always be your wife and your soul love. I hope that you will be there when I get there." I told him that I loved him beyond words, and I truly believed that he had the power to reach enlightenment. I told him, "Now you can become enlightened and be my teacher." I felt him laugh at this.

I was so sad and so happy at the same time. I could feel him come down to me in my sadness. I could not stop crying. In a few moments he realized that what I said about my love for him was the truth. He became light and happy. I felt his big smile all around me again. It was like being in the middle of a great warm sun that filled the room.

In my inner vision, I saw two spheres of brilliant gold-white light hovering gently above us. I said to him with my mind, "The one to the right is a place where the greatest spiritual masters go. This light will probably be difficult for you to reach, but you can go to the one next to it." I added, "Remember your experience on acid, when you knew the true nature of the Universe." Slowly, he understood my message. He began to let go, and I watched his transparent body float backwards up to the golden light, facing me. I cried, "Good-bye" again and again. I said I would miss him so much, but that I was so happy he was going to the Light. I watched his face, looking at me, moving in and out of the swirling clouds of golden light. He was gold like an angel. Then he dissolved into the golden light and I could not see him any more. A shadow, like the gigantic energy of a slow-moving eclipse, moved across the clouds. I think this was his release of fear and negative thought forms, as he went into the purity of the Light.

I began writing soon after Esteban entered the Light in a form of automatic writing. The nurses gave me some hospital stationary. This is what I wrote:

"Esteban, I love you beyond words. I am and will be totally with you. How can I go on without you? Please don't forget me. I don't know how to be without you. You are me and I am you. We are one. You can be my teacher now and teach me about enlightenment. I feel like I lost half of my life. I won't have you to keep me warm and comfort me and hold me close. I miss you so much, but I am happy that you are becoming enlightened, as you wanted. I do not want to go on without you now. I do not know how.

What I want most is to be united with you. I told you this that night when you told me that what you wanted most was to be enlightened. Now you have what you wanted, but I am down here

without you. I know I must trust in Mary and in God, but I do not know how to do that now. Maybe you can teach me."

At that moment I felt the top of my head open and my consciousness was lifted up to him in the golden light. Streams of golden light flowed between us. The top of my head felt like an open pool of warm golden energy with a forceful pressure lifting me to him.

"You are so warm and gentle, so honest, so deep in your feeling, so strong in your desires," I told him. "We were flowing together, one and one, and not you are here. I accept that you died, but I long for you to be with me.

It is daylight now and you are not here. How can that be? You cannot have left me. It is a bad dream. You are coming back. I want that so much. I feel all the joy of my life is gone. There is nothing to look forward to, no arms to hold me, no heart to beat with mine. We saw with four eyes, not two, we thought with one mind, not two; we walked with four feet, not two. How can I be without you? Only God and Mary know this now.

You are so big, big with love for all of us, your children, your mother, your sisters, your brother, your father, my children, my parents, and our friends. Everyone fit into your heart. How can we live without you?"

The American Embassy

This telepathic conversation with Esteban took place between many telephone calls with the American Embassy and my family and Esteban's family during the during long night. Small miracles occurred to enable all of us to be together in Argentina within three days of Esteban's death. One miracle involved the American Embassy.

It was exceptionally difficult for me to telephone out of the hospital, because the telephone system was programmed to only make calls within Spain. The night hospital operator finally figured out how to make calls out of Spain through another operator. We tried many times to get through to the USA before we were successful. When I finally reached my parents and told them about the accident, my father asked what I was going to do now that I did not have any money or passport. The doctor had given me his wallet and his wedding ring, so that I had some of our identification cards, but nothing with my name.

I told my father that when I called the American Embassy in Madrid, they told me to call back at 9 a.m. He said he would try to get through to the Embassy in some other way. He called his friend, Tom Winship, who is the former editor of the Boston Globe. Tom called a friend of his in Washington. This friend called the State Department. It was about 11 p.m. in Washington DC, and Madeleine Albright, the Secretary of State, answered the telephone herself. She said that she was working late, and that she would "get right on it". Her help enabled me to pass through all the legalities of Esteban's death and ensured my passage to Argentina very quickly. As soon as she was involved, I received at least one call an hour from Jose at the American

Embassy in Spain. Thomas, the assistant Director of the Hospital, was also duly impressed with the involvement of the Embassy, and he put great effort into arranging the details of the next step in my journey. He even made a reservation for me at a hotel in Granada.

Cremation

Early the next morning the nurses asked me whether I wanted to cremate his body or transport it to Argentina. At first, I wanted to bring his body to Argentina, so that his family, especially his children, could say good-bye to him. Then I remembered that he told me several times that he wanted to be cremated, and for me to bring his ashes to San Martin de los Andes. He showed me twice the exact place where he wanted his ashes to go. The last time he mentioned this was during our trip to San Martin with my parents in four months ago. He said many times that he thought he would die before me.

After further discussions with the hospital staff and confirmation from his family, I decided on cremation.

About 2 p.m. the next day, Jose Maria, the ambulance driver, and several nurses opened the door to the room where Esteban and I had spent the night. My heart sank. It was time to go to the cemetery in Granada. I gathered my strength for the next step.

As we drove in the ambulance through the Sierra Nevada mountains, I noticed how beautiful the countryside was. I remembered how much Esteban loved Spain. I thought, "Perhaps Esteban chose this place to die because he loved it so much." I wondered if he had died here in another life during the Moor invasion, which took place on this land. He was fascinated with the Moors and his architectural design had an Arabic flavor to it. My heart ached, as I realized how much we had been looking forward to visiting the palace of Alhambra in Granada, and now I was going there with him in a casket. It did not seem real.

When we arrived at the cemetery, I picked out an urn for his ashes. I asked if I could see him one last time. They left me alone with him in a big hall adjacent to the cremation center. I unzipped the white plastic bag and there was his beautiful face with his graying beard. I thought, "Good-bye, my beautiful knight." I kissed his forehead several times and told him I loved him and to wait for me. Then I zipped tip the bag and signaled to the funeral people to come. As they wheeled him into the cremation center, I put my palms together at my forehead and bent my head in blessing and honor. Jose Maria took my arm and led me back to the ambulance.

Granada: Experiencing After Death Communication

My face had become entirely swollen now on the left side, where I must have hit the dashboard. As I walked down the streets of Granada, I felt people stare at me, probably

thinking my husband or boyfriend had beaten me. I did not care what they thought of me. I bought a few essentials like shampoo and a toothbrush. The only possessions I had were the few things the police had returned to me: Esteban's wallet, a small plastic case with disposable contact lenses, medicine for diarrhea, and four wooden salad plates I had bought in Majorca. I was so grateful to have Esteban's bankcards, so that I could get cash from the ATM.

Esteban and I had only slept apart two nights since we began living together many years earlier, and going to bed was a moment I had been dreading since I left the hospital. As I slipped under the sheets in the hotel bed, the first bed I had been in alone for a long time, I looked over at the bed next to me and saw an image that I will never forget.

Esteban was lying on the bed, very straight and very still, in the blue shirt and pants that he wore the day of the accident. The brilliance of the color blue of his shirt was beyond anything I had ever seen on the Earth. The image was strong and clear, like a still shot of a high definition video film. This communication comforted me beyond words. It was Esteban's way of acknowledging how difficult it was for me to go to bed without him. I know it is not easy for a spirit to manifest in that way, especially so soon after crossing over, and I am absolutely grateful that he came to me at that moment expressing reassurance and compassionate divine love.

My brother, Tom, arrived the next afternoon. He experienced a small miracle as he drove into Granada from Madrid. Granada has a well-deserved reputation of being a city where one easily gets lost. Tradition says that the architects of the city created a maze of streets to prevent enemies from invading the city. Tom found Granada's reputation to be true, as he drove around the city for over an hour, trying to find his way into the center. Finally, he asked a taxi driver to take him to my hotel. The driver indicated that it was just around the corner, so Tom drove on alone. He spent the next hour weaving through blocked and one-way streets. Very frustrated by now, he decided to ask the next taxi driver he saw to take him to the hotel. This driver was the same one that had directed him earlier! This time he took him directly to the hotel.

The American Embassy arranged our flight from Granada to Madrid, so that we could pick up my new passport in time to take the next flight to Buenos Aires. Jose Maria showed us the way to the airport, but we still were very late for the plane. It did not occur to me until later that the crew of the Iberia plane knew that the Embassy was helping us. They held the plane for us, which is a rare event for European airlines, and the entire crew appeared from the cockpit to wave good-bye to us. I remember this as a sea of smiling faces.

On The Plane to Buenos Aires: Telepathic Communication

I could not sleep on the plane, although I had only had three hours of sleep in the last three days. I wrote to Esteban in the dim light of the night, while everyone was sleeping. "I love you beyond words. I am and will be totally with you. I love the idea of your teaching me about the Other Side, but I do not know if this is possible or if this is what you want and or if this is what is best for you. Perhaps I can be with you in this way. I miss you so much, your

touch, your love, and your body close to me. I cannot accept that this will never be again. I cannot imagine that we will never make love or drink wine together or share beautiful sites or read books and teach each other. I am totally and completely with you. Where are you? I hope that you will help me and show me the way. I was so happy to see you in bed with me last night. I hope that you will come again."

I began to plan for the days ahead, knowing that everyone will ask me what I want to do. I wrote down a plan for the ceremony in Buenos Aires, with Esteban's help. I soon began a full-fledged conversation with Esteban about the details of his ceremony. I heard his beautiful voice in my head, strong and resonant, as if he had never left the Earth.

Carolyn: *On Saturday we can have a ceremony in our apartment. We can create an altar with pictures of you and things that remind us of you. We can have flowers around and incense. Should we burn the altar?*

Esteban: *No, surround it with water in a circle. Have the four elements there, water, fire, earth and air.*

Carolyn: *You will see how much people loved and valued you in just being who you are.*

Esteban: *I know. I can feel this now.*

Carolyn: *Am I pulling on you too much?*

Esteban: *Just a little.*

Carolyn: *O.K., I will try to let go of you a little more.*

Esteban: *You do not have to do that. Just relax. I am with you.*

An hour later:

Carolyn: *Can we go back to the ceremony?*

Esteban: *I want to rest now. You do it the way that you want to. You know how I would want it.*

Carolyn: *O.K. I will do this. I love you beyond words and I will always and forever be yours wherever you are.*

Esteban: *You are well-prepared for what you will meet now.*

Carolyn: *Thank you for saying that. I love you so much. Is Jesus there? (I saw an image of a drop of blood in whitish gold light).*

Esteban: *This is what I see as Jesus now.*

Carolyn: *Is there more about the ceremony?*

Esteban: *Tucha (his mother) wants to take care of you. Let her do little things for you. It's like doing things for me.*

Carolyn: *OK. Am I draining you?*

Esteban: *I am a little tired now. We can talk soon. I love you so, so much.*

A little later:

Carolyn: *We can sing Amazing Grace. But how will I get the words?*

Esteban: *Ask Denise.*

Carolyn: *What is a Spanish song that you like?*

Esteban: *Ask the kids. Ask the kids to sing to me. They will love it and others will love it, too.*

Ask Tucha what she wants to do. Begin with the older generation and ask everyone to share a memory or thought. My love, I am with you. I am here now. It was very, very painful, like being

born again, but I am OK now. I will communicate with you in Spanish, so that you can talk to my people.

Several hours later:

Carolyn: *Esteban, are you there? How will I know that you are there?*

Esteban: *I am all around you and not far away.*

Carolyn: *Do you want April to come?* (Someone who had hurt him in the past)

I felt him pull up away from me.

Carolyn: *O.K., she won't come.*

I felt him come close again like a warm balloon or cloud around me. I realized he pulled away in order not to be hurt by thoughts of this person, and that he was vulnerable, too. I understood that he could come close to me, because he felt so safe, loved, and welcomed. It was the same in our life together here.

Carolyn: *What should I do with your ashes?*

He did not seem to know about this.

Carolyn: *Should I take some of your ashes to Santa Fe?*

I felt his warmth increase, and I realized that he wanted to be close to me, too. I decided to bring the second urn of ashes to Santa Fe. At some point later, I asked him what I should do with these ashes. He said, *"Bury them with you."*

Ceremony in Buenos Aires

All the Cobelos who live in Buenos Aires were at the airport to meet Tom and me. It was a warm and tearful meeting.

An hour later my sister, Tsultrim, and her fiancé, David, arrived. They had just returned to the US from Singapore only two days before. My parents, Ruth and Jim, two of my three daughters, Nicole and Tonya, and Tonya's fiancé, John, arrived from the US two hours later. It is truly amazing that all these people managed to leave their busy lives and arrive in Buenos Aires at the same time within three days of the accident. Another small miracle that happened was that John was able to get a passport in four hours, rare in the American bureaucratic maze. Before dinner that night at Esteban's mother's home, I described in detail the accident and the two days afterward in Spain. We made a plan for the next few days, based on the program Esteban and I had designed on the plane.

The first night in Argentina was very painful for me. I slept intermittently. Some time during this night I said to Esteban, "Tsultrim contacted the Lopan about your death, and perhaps the Lopan is working with your energy now."

The Lopan is the spiritual leader of the Bon Po spiritual tradition, which is the Earth religion foundation of modern Buddhism. When Esteban met the Lopan in Jemez Springs, NM, two years ago, he fell in love with him. They spoke few words but Esteban felt an incredibly strong bond with him. He said that the Lopan's smile filled his whole body with warmth and love. For the rest of the day, Esteban was smiling constantly, even in meditation.

When I told him about the Lopan, he hesitated and then understood my message. At first, he was confused and uncertain about what was expected of him. I thought, "This is like putting two people together to do something, who speak different languages." As soon as I thought this, I felt him let go and shoot up into space like a rocket. I saw him pass through a dense wall of energy.

I wrote in my notebook in my bed:

"I don't want to interfere with your journey, but I don't want to lose you, either. Now it feels different, you are less around me, more empty space. I know you thought of the Lopan as a spiritual father, and that you trusted him with your own heart. Now I feel a wall between us. I cannot reach you, as I did before. I know this makes it easier for you, at least I think it does. But I miss you so much. Did I create this separation? I ask that you come back when you can and that I never lose you. Now I feel you cannot come so close."

We had the ceremony for Esteban the next morning. Our two families joined with our friends and students in saying good-bye to Esteban. We placed his ashes on a round table in the center of the room. I found beautiful white tablecloth in a nearby store one hour before the ceremony began. We all placed our photos, stones, letters, and momentos of Esteban around the urns with his ashes, and formed a circle around the table. It was a very big circle. Everyone who wanted to say something to him or about him spoke in turn around the circle. Most of us were in tears. We spoke in English and in Spanish, and although there was no translation, we seemed to understand each other. He felt very big around us, filling the room with his presence. Several people said they saw him in his light body, sending rays of light to each of us, and others saw him standing next to me.

Together we sang the first verse of Amazing Grace.

Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.

'Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear and Grace my fears relieved How precious did that Grace appear the hour I first believed.

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares I have already come

'Tis Grace that bro't me safe thus far, and Grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope secures He will my shield and portion be, as long as life endures.

The Argentines sang a bolero. Julio led us in the singing. He said that Esteban himself chose the bolero and that he used his (Julio's) voice to sing it.

The words in English are:

Please listen, I need to tell you something.

It would be unexpected, it will cause you pain. Please listen, although this hurts my soul. I need to tell you something, and so I will. We two have always been sincere,

And ever since we met,

*Have loved each other dearly,
We two have achieved of love,
marvelous big sun,
romance so Divine.
We two, who have loved each other dear,
And now we have to part.
Don't ask me ever more.
It isn't lack of love,
I love you in all my soul.
I swear that I adore you,
And in the name of love and for your soul,
I say good-bye, farewell.*

The singing of this bolero was very beautiful, and although I could not understand the words, I did feel Esteban's presence while we were singing.

Somewhere during the ceremony, I thought, "How little we share this love and appreciation of someone's beauty and strength when we are alive." I was so happy Esteban could hear all of the love that poured forth to him and to us.

That evening many people came to see us at our apartment. At one point, the apartment was overflowing with people who came to share their grief with us. I could only manage small pieces of conversations, which were primarily in Spanish, and I fell asleep for half the time.

San Martin de Los Andes: Spreading the Ashes

The next morning Esteban's family and my family flew south to San Martin de los Andes, where Esteban and I had met. I carried the urn with Esteban's ashes on the plane in a plastic bag from Cortes Ingles in Granada. I surrounded myself with my two daughters on the plane to protect me from outside influences. I could not look at strangers, and even to hear the conversations of others was painful. My emotions were at the level of raw, barebone vulnerability.

Eduardo and Sandra with Nicholas and Augustine, their sons, met us. It was another warm and tearful meeting.

We shared a loving evening all together at Eduardo and Sandra's home. Esteban was designing this house when we had met in San Martin for the first time. I know he was happy that we were all together in the house he designed.

The next day we all drove in a caravan to the place where Esteban had told me that he wanted his ashes to go. It was a cliff high above the lake with a beautiful view of the mountains and lake below. We made another circle with the urn of his ashes in the middle, sharing our love and respect for Esteban. My brother Tom read a poem he wrote for Esteban.

For Esteban

Grieve not for me, oh family, for I am not dead.

I live in the rhythm of the sea.

When you go to the ocean and feel the pulse of the waves wash over you, I'll be there with you for I am alive in the spirit of the sea.

Grieve not for me, oh family, for I am not dead.

I live in the power of the wind.

When you feel the cold gale bite hard at your face,

I'll be there with you for I am alive in the spirit of the wind.

Grieve not for me, oh family, for I am not dead.

I live in the ancient rocks of the mountains.

When you feel the awesome strength of the rocks beneath your feet, I'll be there with you for I am alive in the spirit of the mountains.

Grieve not for me, oh family, for I am not dead.

I live in the flame of the fire.

When you sit by the fire and feel its warmth caress you, I'll be there with you for I am alive in the spirit of the fire.

Do not grieve for me, my daughters

Do not grieve for me, my mother

Do not grieve for me, my wife

Do not grieve for me, my sisters and my brother

for I am alive in your hearts

Whenever you need me, close your eyes, turn your face into the wind, breathe deeply and think of me.

I'll come riding forth out of the darkness, with my sword in my hand, to be by your side.

Do you feel me? I am with you, here, now.

Then each one of us, beginning with his children, Vanesa and Carolina, took a handful of ashes and distributed them around the top of the cliff. I was the last to take the ashes. We all sat for a few minutes in meditation and quiet contemplation. I felt strong healing energy coming from the Earth, telling me, "You and he are safe here." Esteban's presence was all around us. I felt his gratitude to me for doing this.

Following this ceremony, we drove down to the lake, where we boarded a large motor boat. The captain and the crew seemed honored to be a part of this event. The crew volunteered to be photographers. When we reached the place in the lake opposite the cliff, where we had spread his ashes, the captain stopped the boat. With fear in my heart, I poured the rest of his ashes into the water. The light of the setting sun streamed through the clear water and his ashes glowed like tiny silver crystals in the beams of light. We all threw big white daisies over the ashes, and they floated together in a large pool of white. Then we sang Amazing Grace and an Argentine song, led by the children. My sister, Tsultrim, said she saw a cloud over the cliff above, and it looked like an angel with her arms stretched out. There were no other clouds in the sky. I learned later that the Captain gave us this trip without payment, as a gesture of honor and respect for the occasion.

On the plane from Buenos Aires to San Martin the thought came to me that it would be nice to for each of us to plant a tree for Esteban in San Martin. A tree is the symbol of the union of the Earth and the spirit world. The next morning we all drove out to Trompol, which is a small rock mountain near the cliff where we spread Esteban's ashes. This was a sacred place for both Esteban and me.

When I first came to Argentina, I asked where the sacred places were in Argentina. Several people mentioned San Martin de los Andes. The first morning I was there, I stepped out of the door of the cabin, and thought, "This is a place where I could die." The clear mountain energy was so uplifting and so beautiful. The next day I drove with a friend past Trompol. Without knowing anything about it, I said to myself, "I know this place, I have been here before. This is my home." I broke into tears, so moved by the feeling of finding home. Since then I have had many such incidents of the feeling of being at home in sacred places, but this first one was very strong. I discovered later the Trompol is a sacred place for the Mapuchi tribe. In their language Trompol means, "Thundering Head".

The second day that I met Esteban I suggested we climb Trompol. I packed a picnic with sandwiches, fruit, and wine. Esteban said later that when he saw the steep slope that we were going to climb, he was a bit nervous. He told me, "I realized what kind of woman you were when I saw you climb that mountain, and I loved this about you."

We all gathered for a tree-planting ceremony at Trompol. Esteban's brother, Eduardo, is an agricultural engineer who specializes in the care of mountain trees. He brought a small tree for each one of us to plant near Trompol. They were Ciphers de la Cordillera and Roble Pellin. Eduardo dug holes for the little trees near the mature trees of the same kind.

I spoke about the tree that Esteban and I met on our first day together. Eduardo, who was then a real estate agent, was showing me some land just across the border in Chile, which he thought would be appropriate for a spiritual retreat center. Esteban, who was visiting his brother for a week, came with us. There was a giant old tree on this land. Esteban and I hugged this tree together, while Eduardo stood looking at us with amusement. Esteban told me later that Eduardo had told him the night before we met that Esteban was going to meet "a woman as crazy as you are."

While we were waiting for the trees to arrive in Eduardo's old gray pick-up truck, I sat on a rock in meditation. I spoke to the spirit of Trompol, who has always been a spiritual father to me. He answered my questions slowly in a very deep voice.

Carolyn: *Why did Esteban die?*

The spirit: *The circle is closed.*

Carolyn: *How will Esteban and I be now?*

The spirit: *Daughter of Light, Son of Light, you walk together.*

Carolyn: *Where is Esteban now?*

The spirit: *He has crossed the rainbow.*

During this conversation, the energy of the spirit surrounded me. The spirit penetrated into the

depths of my heart, healing and comforting me, soothing the pain like a strong liquid medicine. As I planted my tree, I thought about how much Esteban loved trees. Whenever he was upset, he would seek out a tree or the forest for his healing. I, on the other hand, look for a large stone or rock formation to comfort me.

When I left the rock where I was meditating, I absentmindedly left my purse. I did not realize that I had lost my purse until we were leaving for the airport later that day. I was in a panic. My purse had my new passport and Esteban's wallet with his credit cards and bankcards in it. These were the only sources of identification I had. On the advice of my father, because I was not able to make this decision, I decided to go back to Buenos Aires on the plane, and hope that the Cobelos who remained would find and send me my purse.

When I arrived back at our hotel in Buenos Aires, the desk clerk handed me a note in Spanish. It read, "They found your purse." This was the first real joy I had felt since Esteban died. Later I learned that when Esteban's nephew, Lucas, and his father had found my purse, they jumped up and down and hugged and kissed each other.

The Return: Retreating into Despair and Grief

Over the next several days we all dispersed back to our homes in Argentina and the US, holding with great warmth in our hearts the moments we had shared together during this intense and moving week. This experience catapulted us all into an intimacy that brought love, compassion, and respect for each one of us. Some members of the families had never met each other, but we all parted as close friends. We shared many profound moments, where we reached the edge of life and death and traveled together back and forth across the bridge between them. Esteban was with us, holding us all in his heart of golden light. I know he was very happy about everything that took place.

It was a very painful re-entry, returning home without Esteban. My children and John were most helpful in managing the mountain of administrative details and mechanical and technical obstacles that I had to face. On the plane back to Albuquerque I discovered two more small miracles in Esteban's wallet: 1) the ticket to get the car out of the Albuquerque airport; 2) a card with the password to his computer, which holds much of the practical household information.

Our team of six met each morning to review the tasks for the day. We worked well together and passed through the worst ordeals with minimum difficulty.

I decided on the plane to Albuquerque to have a healing circle very soon after we returned at our home, and then to go into retreat until Easter.

At the healing circle, we placed photos and momentos on a circular white tablecloth that I bought in Portugal with Esteban. We spoke about our love and appreciation of him. Many people commented, as they did in Buenos Aires, about how strong our couple was and how it offered a model and support for others. Knowing this is great comfort to me.

After the healing circle, I continued my journey inward, seeking to connect to Esteban and to pass through the depths of my despair. My daughter Sophie and her friend Richard stayed with me, but much of the time I spent alone. I designed the trays for the Earth Mandalas, which was a project I had been trying to complete for months and Sophie and Richard constructed them.

One evening I became hysterical when some plants fell off a balcony. Because one pot broke, it was necessary to plant them, at least temporarily, in one pot. The thought that there were two separate plants that now had to share one pot, because the other was broken, was excruciatingly painful. I associated the plants with Esteban and I and I felt the brokenness of our bond and the inevitability of us now having to become one in another way.

I was raw, open, and hypersensitive. I could not tolerate conflict, aggression or manipulation. I was a snake without its skin, a crab in a new shell. I was vulnerable, ungrounded, unstable. I created a wall around me from the outside world by not answering telephone calls and making minimum contact. I told those who called that I would be available to talk after Easter, which would be forty days after Esteban died.

This period of incubation and hibernation proved a Godsend, allowing me to establish a firm connection with Esteban and to reconstruct my energy field without his physical presence. I reinforced my emotional healing journey with many forms of physical healing: aroma wraps, aromatherapy, massage, cranial sacral work, reflexology, manicures, polarity therapy, facials, haircuts, essential oils, flower essences, intuitive counselors, my astrologist, and hot springs. I consulted other mediums, intuitive counselors, and my astrologer. This nurturance supported me in moving through the darkness of my despair.

The Sphinx: Rebirth

A week after I returned to Santa Fe, I left with Nicole, Tonya and John for Washington, DC. I spent my last afternoon in Washington at the Smithsonian Museum. I was crying intermittently as I walked through the Mall on my way to the museum. I felt so sad and alone. The weather was cold and windy, so cold that the predicted blossoming of the cherry trees was delayed several weeks.

I sensed that there was something in the museum that had a message for me. It was as if something was calling me. I feel very connected to the Declaration of Independence, so I asked the taxi driver to leave me at the Archives building. The line was too long, so I asked I walked to the building that the taxi driver indicated held the Egyptian exhibits. I discovered that this was the African building, but there was nothing Egyptian there. The guard pointed me to the next building, but there were only Asian exhibits.

Finally, I found the Egyptian exhibit across the Mall in the Natural History Museum. By this time I was exhausted, so I sat down to rest and watch a video film on Egypt. The film stopped midway. It was closing time. I rushed out of the theater, and walked quickly through the aisles

of the Egyptian display. I heard the guard say, "Eight minutes to closing". Where was the object I was supposed to find?

Suddenly, I saw it. It was small sphinx from the time of the Greeks in Egypt.

I stood next to it with my eyes closed, struggling to concentrate, and asked it if it had a message for me.

The sphinx: There will be a six month cycle of rebirth. Be in the world of the plants and the trees and the rocks. Understand the cycle of death and rebirth and you will be free.

It spoke in a low feminine voice. Its strong, earthy energy enveloped me, entering my heart. It seemed as though the voice of the Earth was speaking through the sphinx. I felt lighter, freer, much happier, after this encounter.

A week before this I had a dream that of animal-headed humans connected by an arc. As I walked along Constitutional Ave. I thought, "The sphinx has always been a strong guide to me. I wonder why." Later I discovered that the sphinx represents the union of the our lower, animal, selves and our higher, spiritual, selves, which is actually the purpose of our journey here on Earth.

Resurrection and Release

On Easter, April 12, 1998, I gathered a few friends together for a ceremony of rebirth and new beginnings. This was 40 days after Esteban's death, and I thought of Christ's 40 days in the desert and Noah's 40 days on the Ark. My intention was to release my attachment to Esteban's physical self and to connect to his resurrected self. I was afraid, but certain that this was the right thing to do.

I selected four photos intuitively. The first was Esteban in a bathing suit with a bare chest, which reminded me of making love with him. The second was Esteban standing in front of Chartres Cathedral, which is a place of the Grail and the cathedral we both loved the most. The third was Esteban in a cowboy hat in Taos, NM, which symbolized him in the southwest USA. The fourth was Esteban standing before a memorial for the Cathars in Montsegur, which was a place of ascension for over 200 Cathars who were burned alive in the Inquisition.

We began with my favorite chant, which means "I am always with you, and you are always with me." We chanted the "Song of the Vajra", which is a Tibetan Buddhist chant, and we sang "Amazing Grace". Then we said the Lord's Prayer. The sound of our voices raised the energy in the room and opened us to love and connection.

We wrote on two pieces of paper the aspects of ourselves and our lives that we wished to release and those we wished to bring forth in the future. In turn, we burned the two papers in a copper pot. When it was my turn to burn the release paper, I burned the paper first and then the

photos. I prayed for the strength and the courage to release Esteban to the spirit world. I asked that I be healed, so that I would no longer have the pain in my heart when I thought of him as he was with me in our life here. As the fire consumed his photos, I thanked him for being in my life and for loving me so much. It was very sad and very beautiful to say, "Good-bye" to him in this way.

After the ceremony, I felt cleansed and uplifted. The next morning I woke up with the thought, "You have to let go for new things to come into your life." I thought, "Esteban is releasing me to go forward now."

Since that day, I have been at peace with his death. I have moments of deep sadness and loneliness, but the despair is gone. I accept his loss and the gift of our love and the life we shared together.

I continue to look forward to the adventures we will share in multi-dimensional realities beyond that of the Earth, and I welcome the new love and new life that awaits me.

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I would love to hear from you.

Thank you again, and I look forward to hearing from you!

Many blessings!

Carolyn Cobelo.

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