

REM is

Rose was in the back of Dr. Clark's old green and white Ford station wagon. Dr. Clark was up front driving with his back to her. Rose did not understand why she was here in the back of her psychiatrist's car being driven like a kid somewhere.

"Dr. Clark...?" she asked tentatively toward the back of Clark's head. Clark turned partway toward the rear of the car; the March sun glinting off the lenses of his wire-rimmed glasses all but blinding, still Rose could see it was him chauffeuring the car.

"Yes?" he responded, his tone peremptory.

"Where are you taking me?"

"You'll see, Rose. Be patient. Be patient, please."

He turned back to his driving. It was some kind of dream thing Rose figured, like dreaming belonged at the back of the psychological bus or something. Or it was like she, Rose Seewell, represented Clark's dreaming brain somehow -- but how? She resigned herself forlornly to whatever destination her psychiatrist had in mind for her and tried to remember where it was they were driving from -- but try as she might the harder she tried to catch it, the further it faded from her grasp -- like Eurydice, she thought, like a dream. *Don't look back and maybe you'll remember*, she advised herself. Music, she remembered music, Mahler maybe, one of her favorites -- something from his vast Second Symphony, the Resurrection. But it was faint and she didn't know if it had anything to do with the missing memory or whether it, the bit of music, had just appeared in her head for no particular reason. Whatever it was that preceded this little drive was gone, lost.

Her head hurt, that was one thing for sure, her head hurting for no apparent reason, but it wasn't much of a clue. She gave up trying to remember, ducked her head a bit and looked out the side window of the station wagon instead.

They bumped down a road through an affluent neighborhood that fronted Lake Mendota. Rose knew the neighborhood a bit. In fact, she recognized it as the one where Dr. Clark lived. He had invited Rose out to his house on the lake for dinner one time. The guests had been mostly other psychiatrists and psychiatric residents and their wives from The Temple, as the University Mental Health Clinic was called, a few patients to add to the "psychiatry Madison-style" mix, a hawk-faced, Eastern European sculptor, Johan Steppat, from the Art Department who had paid Clark for therapy with a large metal sculpture of a jaguaress with welded tits and teeth that stood roaring in the living room, a brilliant, but unstable mathematician Clark had described as "a genius-level ambulatory-schizophrenic" and a scattering of other university types, including Rod Umber, the enfant terrible of the Philosophy Department, and author of a best selling thriller whose hero was a brilliant symbolist.

There was much drinking at the party and Rose found herself drinking more rapidly than normal. The presence of all these shrinks made her decidedly uncomfortable. How was it possible to "act" normal around them? Certainly some of them knew she was Clark's patient; it was hard for her to see herself as anything but in this setting. Clark, himself, drank a lot. He had something of a reputation as a drinker and there were rumors he made passes at his patients, male and female alike, when he was under-the-influence. Clark's wife was there, of course, an elegant blonde with a mole on her chin and a powerful laugh. She was the Director of the Vilas Museum including the Remis Theater where most campus musical events took place.

Just then the station wagon turned down the driveway to Clark's house and jounced toward the three-story stucco structure. Rose remembered with a start the smell of gin on Clark's breath as he approached her in his office in the house where she was standing in front of the fire in the fireplace. She had retreated there from the party to escape her humiliation...or maybe it was more her revolutionary rage she had removed from the party?

"Damn, you're so stupid!" she scolded herself. She had drunk too much wine and that had caused her to broach her "REM is" interpretation of Clark's dream to Clark as they stood together over the steel jaguaress in the living room.

Clark had listened attentively, a wry smile in the corner of his mouth, his gin and tonic in his hand along with a white paper napkin. As he did when Rose saw him professionally he looked slightly away across the room as she talked. Several of his colleagues, a rather chilling bearded fellow, Dr. Abraham, and maybe the most famous psychiatrist on campus, Dr. Hallow, a criminal psychiatrist whose work on the criminal mind had been widely published, came over to listen as Rose held forth on the subject of Clark's dream from his book on the subject of dreaming, The Dreaming Mind.

Rose had read the book before becoming Clark's patient. His interest in dreams was one of the reasons Rose sought him out. Clark sorted dreams into several categories. In one were all the dreams he identified primarily as physiological signals, as in a dream about flowing water indicating a need to wake and urinate to the dreamer. In another category he lumped dreams he considered "clear," that simply regurgitated the day's events and contained no deep symbolic or psychological meaning. In the third group, with a nod to Freud, he put those dreams he felt did contain such deeper, or "latent" meanings, sometimes censored, requiring work to decode. But

mostly he seemed to think dreaming served no higher purpose than, say, taking out the mental trash.

The dream that practically took the top off Rose's head came as the primary example of the middle, or "clear" category. Clark felt it was a simple review of the previous day's events, attendance at a concert of Mozart's music in the Remis Theater on campus with his wife. As she read the dream the name "Remis" struck her as strange, the proverbial sore thumb. And then it happened, like the famous dream leading to the discovery of the benzene ring or Singer's eureka dream about savages threatening him with spears with holes in their tips leading to the breakthrough necessary for the modern sewing machine -- the two syllables of Remis divided like a paramecium and there glowed a revelation, a nuclear fission of content, meaning, approximately the size of Africa. Clarke, it seemed to Rose, had completely missed it! Remis, Rem/is or REM, Rapid Eye Movement sleep, the sleep where dreaming occurs, is!

The name of the theater in the Vilas Museum announced the meaning of the dream: REM sleep is the following. Or this dream is about what REM sleep is. When she gave the name of the theater that meaning the dream became a veritable Rosetta Stone concerning the nature of dreaming, the dreaming mind and body. Among other things it depicted our sleep state being open to "music," of the "sing Heavenly Muse" variety, angelic music or inspiration coming down from above as in, say, Mathias Grunewald's depiction of the Angelic Concert in the left panel at the center of his famous Isenheim Altarpiece in which Heavenly influence is asserted from above, the Holy Mountain, through the angelic musicians playing for the Virgin Mary and child in the Marian rose garden in the right panel.

Among other things the dream was saying dreaming is like that. So, in a way, Clark's dream was a confirmation and exploration of the themes in that great artwork, which Rose could

see because that was her area of expertise, Art History, Grunewald and Hieronymus Bosch in particular.

Clark found the concert of a Mozart piano concerto without orchestral accompaniment in the Remis Theater left him feeling, "refractive," a "fifth wheel" to his wife's importance there, so he left it to explore down into the bowels of the Vilas Museum where, among other things, the Egyptian exhibit was located. Ostensibly the reason for this descent was the need to find a men's room to urinate. But even without the Remis revelation the dream fairly bristled with latent meaning, symbolism, so Rose felt he had put it in the wrong category entirely, missed its importance. It should have been the primary inspiration from which the rest of his book flowed. Instead it was tucked away as "clear," unimportant. This all but drove Rose crazy. She had even written a paper on the dream with her interpretation called "REM is" and sent it to an academic journal specializing in dreams, called Dreaming, which Rose learned along with her rejection slip "did not print any interpretations of dreams, only scholarly, peer approved articles about them."

"Be patient," Clark said to Rose, "be patient!" as she bumped along unable to sit up straight. How had that happened?

She was in the basement of the hospital -- that's it! That's what it was. That's what was before this! That's where she had been. But it didn't come back all at once. That's all she had, the basement of the hospital, University Hospital, where she was searching for something...a medical record maybe -- no, she had found a record, maybe a medical record. She did not remember what record it was but it was huge, a huge record, like an old LP, a dinosaur disc, imbedded in the floor of the hospital basement. There was something sticking up from the middle of it.

“Patient taking the shrink to class, eh?” chided Abraham when Rose had finished in a rush about REM is, musical concerts, the Isenheim Altarpiece, Muses, sarcophagi, the judgment of souls in *The Land of the Dead*, among other things. The old Eastern European sculptor, Johan Steppat, creator of the jaguaress, was the only person listening in who seemed sympathetic. He stood on the periphery of the group smiling like Harpo Marx. Rod Umber joined them and stood listening while looking out the window.

For a moment Clark looked very frightened, but then he laughed. His laugh hurt more than a slap. Rose felt a sharp pain in her head.

“Rose, Rose, so very serious Rose. No, no, you make way too much of it,” Clark responded with a laugh. “You’re turning a very slight short story into James Joyce’s *Ulysses!* “Remis” means Remis! It’s the name of the theater, the Remis Theater I left, that’s all! Not an announcement, like the title of a movie, *REM is!* The meaning of REM sleep **is** as follows!

“You make this very slight dream into *Ben Hur* or the *Ten Commandments*, a psychological Rosetta Stone! Yes, I felt 'refractive' at the concert with my wife, but that's just a word I happened to use, not a slip of the tongue, a clue to a suppressed intent on my part!

“Yes, I descended through those layers of museum including the Egyptian exhibit with the sarcophagi but I don't think that necessarily means the judgment of souls, a descent into the Underworld, the realms of Hieronymus Bosch including his Musical Hell, as you would have it, or the Mysteries as Rod might write about!” Here, Clark nodded toward Umber who was standing behind him.

“There is no such Underworld, no such Hell, not in the Department of Neuropsychiatry I run at the Medical School anyway! Largely, I was simply looking for a bathroom, a men's room.

Then I heard the sound of Mozart coming from behind a door, the same piano concerto being played up above except on a harpsichord, and opened it because I was curious. That door is the door to the old theater where the concerts now in the REM, I mean the Remis Theater, used to be held! Yes, I got a glimpse of Mozart himself in a red brocaded coat with gold filigree wearing a powdered wig and yes, he was overweight, corpulent but I don't think that means anything about the scales of judgment or the Devourer, as you seem to think!

“And certainly I don't think it means anything about what theories about dreaming or the Mysteries -- only the lightweight scientific ones, the ones that sacrifice meaning as you say will be accepted up above in the academic world. Even if, as you point out, Dreaming only accepts articles with a scientific or statistical approach and rejects all actual interpretations of dreams I don't think that has anything to do with the relative merit of what approach is taken.

“Dreaming is simply a publication that specializes in the latest scientific research into the subject. Is that a form of poverty, a vow of poverty as you suggest, to remain lightweight, weigh less than a feather of Maat, God's Law? No, I don't think that it has anything to do with the Judgment of Souls or the Magic Flute or Masons or secret initiations or even with music really and certainly not some sort of deal with the devil for success as you seem to imply!

“My nick name here among my colleagues," here, Clark, smiling broadly gestured to the covey of shrinks surrounding him, "is 'Mozart' because I admire him so much and try, albeit without much success, to play his music! I've worked on that concerto for years and still am unable to play it!"

He gestured to the black grand piano in the corner of the living room while the group at large laughed releasing the tension in the confrontation.

"And, after all, my primary motivation for descending into the basement was the need to urinate, only secondarily to explore! I woke having to urinate! Clearly that suggests the dream fits in both the physiological and the clear categories.

"Yes, I considered having Mozart in the basement a bit of a coup for my wife, for the music program she runs up in the Remis, but I don't think that word 'coup' really suggests some kind of coup has been performed in the dream world. One where Mozart, a kind of artist inspired from above has replaced some other kind of dreaming that used to occupy the basement!" Turning to Umber Clark asked, "What do you think, Rod?"

"Well," Umber offered, "the lady has a point. The Mysteries, at least in my studies, have become the property of secret societies and could be viewed as a form of basement knowledge. But, largely this was done because it was felt by the Masters of those Mysteries, including those associated with the Egyptians, that we were not ready for them, not mature enough to handle the powers..."

"But Dr. Clark, Professor Umber" Rose interrupted, all but spluttering, looking up into Clark's scholarly face, his forehead wrinkled beneath his receding hairline, his amused gray eyes enlarged behind his wire-rimmed glasses, "forgive me but I beg to differ! The need to urinate, to pee, to piss can also mean the need for emotional or artistic release, or the need to claim something or even to create, father something as in the case of Orion, the great hero, who was conceived when three 'refractive' male deities pissed on a heifer hide, sacred to the Goddess, Hera! But that...is beside the point."

Clark was barely paying attention. He was busy exchanging smirks with Abraham. "Professor Umber," she interjected, turning to him because she thought he might be more sympathetic to her point, "isn't Dr. Clark, Mozart?"

"What? What did you say?" Clark looked back her direction.

Rose turned back to Clark, "Aren't you Mozart?"

"What do you mean?" Umber asked, paying close attention now.

"His nickname, 'Mozart,' doesn't that suggest that the Mozart behind the door down in the Old Theater is you, Dr. Clark?"

"Hmm!" Umber muttered. Clark's face flushed. "That's an interesting observation, but if that is the case, what would it mean?"

"It would mean," Rose barged ahead, "Dr. Clark and his colleagues have conducted a coup in which their version of dreaming, one in which dreaming is a function of the brain, has replaced a much older, much deeper dreaming coming from below, from the body or from the Garden of Creation itself. It would mean, Professor Umber, that the so called Mysteries, all the incredible power, the power of true creation itself has...been tossed in the pit, the pit of Musical Hell, the pit where Joseph was tossed by his brothers and sold into slavery...in exchange for success, for tenure, to get published, for Mozart! We get Mozart, albeit a very great musician inspired from by God, in exchange for true creation, for relinquishing, offering, selling the power of true creation. Into slavery. In the brick pits. We sell, we offer the single greatest human power, the power of true creation, in exchange for essentially nothing, for inspiration from above, for...Mozart!"

Umber laughed uncomfortably. Clark turned and shrugged toward Drs. Abraham and Hallow as if to say, "See what I have to deal with!"

Rose finished in a righteous rush, her voice much louder and more intense than she had intended. Now she looked up at the audience of shrinks, philosophers and others smirking in varying degrees of derision and discomfort. Rose flushed, looked down, took a quick sip of white

wine, swallowed too fast, choked and then coughed sputtering wine across her chin, down her blouse. Tears from the wine rushed to her eyes, she looked up and saw approximately three megatons of psychiatry, including criminal psychiatry in the presence of Hallow, staring down at her with expressions varying from derision, dismissal, to pity. Only Johan Steppat giving her a two-handed thumbs up and Harpo grin from the back of the pack saved her humiliation from being complete. Still spluttering she turned and exited the room without excusing herself.

"You're so beautiful!" Clark commented putting his hand on Rose's shoulder when he joined her in the study, "Do you know that?"

"What is that supposed to be, a therapeutic come on?" Rose asked with as much contempt in her voice as she could muster.

"No, just a compliment -- maybe a bit of a peace offering." The hand lingered on her shoulder.

"No, I'm not Dr. Clark," Rose stiffened her neck and shoulder muscles so Clark removed the unwelcome hand. "I feel ugly, angry, and my head hurts because I've drunk too much...but I do know one thing."

"What's that?" Clark asked, his tone cool, probably because Rose had rebuffed his touch.

"I think I'm done with therapy."

"I tend to agree," Clark replied.

"I still suffer from a great deal of anxiety..." she qualified her proclamation. *Coward!* She scolded herself. She was backing out the door still bowing and scraping, not leaving proudly AMA, against medical advice.

"Not so much that you couldn't all but accuse me of being Salieri, killer of The Dream in front of my colleagues!" Clark chuckled grimly. "That hurt, Rose, and it tells me that you don't really respect me or, probably need me so I agree with your decision to suspend therapy."

"I do respect you, Dr. Clark, I just simply disagree. Profoundly. With Rod UMBER too. Do you think I should try to find somebody else?" Rose asked half hoping Clark would tell her no, but he was noncommittal to the end.

"That's up to you," was all he said.

"Oh, I almost forgot!" He reached in his jacket pocket and pulled out a small, folded up piece of paper. "Rod UMBER gave this to me to give to you." He handed the paper to Rose. Rose unfolded it in front of the fireplace. It was a small scrap cut from the classified ads section of the newspaper -- the job ads apparently. One of the ads, a fairly large one with a square, black box around it was circled with red pen so Rose concentrated on it.

Inside the box was an illustration of a hand, palm outward, fingers spread. Maybe it was an ad for a reader of palms, fortunes? On the tip of each finger and the thumb was a small symbol. On the thumb -- a crown, on the index finger a star. That was all Rose registered. Inside the outline of the hand the words of the ad were printed across the palm:

"WANTED" the ad read, "The Hand of the Mysteries extends an invitation to all artists, poets, writers, actors, playwrights, musicians, and creative persons of all kinds for positions in a New University department, Forbidden Planet Studies. Only those creative persons, those Prometheans willing to take great risks in the effort to resurrect the power of true creation need apply.

Do you have what it takes? Do you have what it takes to have an impact? Are you willing to take the brain boost?

If you answer 'yes' to these questions then you are the kind of person we are looking for. For an interview please report to the Eleusis Center on Solomon Street across from the Christian Science Temple."

"UMBER thought the ad might interest you," Clark added.

“Well, it does, though considering his response to my ideas I’m surprised he gave it to you.”

“Well, maybe it’s worth exploring. I think he said the interviews were tomorrow.”

Now the old station wagon rolled to a stop beside the house. Clark got out, came around the car to the back gate and opened it for her. He did not offer his hand to help Rose out.

She had been in the basement of the hospital. It didn't all come back with a rush. That's all she had, the basement of the hospital, some music, Mahler's Second Symphony, the one about the funeral of the Titan, Prometheus probably. The record was huge, like an old LP, a dinosaur disc, but ten or twelve feet across, black, imbedded in the floor of the hospital basement and there was something, maybe a hand sticking up from the middle of it.

How could that be? That was silly, like one of those Surreal dream things that caused Clark and so many others to conclude dreams were largely meaningless discharges of electrical activity. Rose stared at what ever was poking up from the middle of the record -- a hand or maybe it was an Amanita Verna mushroom, a Destroying Angel? Curious she walked out onto the record to see what it was.

“Come with me,” Clark requested simply as Rose got out of the car and uncrippled her cramped body. Without explanation Clark proceeded into the house. Rose followed, puzzled completely by this behavior.

Clark walked straight through the house down the long corridor between the dining room and the kitchen to the back door beside the big picture window that looked out on the still-frozen lake. The house was empty and cold almost as if no one lived there any longer

Not even looking to see if Rose was following Clark exited the back door, continued down the steps and then out across the lawn of late March brown grass. Annoyed and a bit frightened Rose followed, perhaps ten or so steps behind.

Clark strode purposefully across the lawn, between the two big, bare trees then down the steps to the lake. The ice had heaved up on shore and he had to make his way carefully, sometimes using his hands for balance between several big slabs stacked up along the rocks.

“Dr. Clark!” Rose called out to him.

Clark turned toward her, he was breathing from his mouth and his glasses were misted over. There was little expression Rose could read from his face except possibly impatience.

“Please follow me, I have something important to show you.”

It was more like an order than a request despite the ‘please.’

Rose acquiesced, followed. Maybe this has something to do with ending therapy? Maybe Dr. Clark is leading me to some great insight about our relationship? Hey, maybe I’m hypnotized and he’s taking me back to some trauma or something! That seemed the likeliest explanation for this inexplicable situation. So she followed clambering up over the slabs shoved up on shore then out onto the vast gray expanse of the frozen lake. There was nobody else on it, no ice fishers or snowmobilers. No ice boats either, as the ice was too soft -- plus there was no wind. Clark headed straight out onto the ice as if there was some destination, something he could see out there Rose couldn’t.

Rose could see now it was, yes, a hand, a pale, dead looking hand jutting up from the center of the record right where the hole for the spindle would be, and it held something.

Finally, out beyond Clark, maybe fifty yards or so further across the lake, Rose saw what looked like a stick poking up out of the ice. Clark was heading right for the completely unprepossessing stick. Rose trudged along behind noticing for the first time that she was completely inappropriately dressed for such a strenuous hike -- all she had on was a summer dress and low flat shoes. She was very cold; goose bumps sprouted from her arms and she had begun to shiver.

Finally Clark reached the stick and stood staring fixedly down at it. Cold almost beyond bearing now that she had noticed it, she came up beside him.

“What is this?” Rose asked shivering, “I’m very cold.”

“Look,” Clark ordered pointing down at the stick. Rose noticed how carefully he was dressed in a dark suit, with a white shirt and a tie tucked under his collar. “It’s the job site.”

Rose looked and saw it was a sign, a funny little sign shaped like an arrow, like something out of Alice in Wonderland pointing to some ridiculous jabberwocky destination.

“DEATH” the sign said in plain, unadorned letters.

When Rose reached the center of the record she stood above the hand and looked down at it. It seemed almost as if the person to whom the hand belonged, still somewhere beneath the record in the hospital basement, had reached this far and then expired trying desperately to get whatever it held in its fingers to someone above the surface...like her. Feeling a rush sympathy for such a heroic effort Rose reached down to take the folded up piece of paper the hand held in its

cold, gray fingers. When her fingers brushed the hand she got a terrible chill. Shivering, she unfolded the paper. It was a section from the classifieds and an ad toward the middle with the outline of a hand on it was circled with red pen.

The record, the record of the original “round beings!” Rose exclaimed. She knew, she just knew this was the record, the akashic record of how the original round human beings, “Great in the thoughts of their hearts and their power,” had been brutally cut in two by the gods to create, weak, needy creatures willing to offer up any wealth to curry divine favor. *They were cut in two at the dream!* Rose exclaimed. She just knew because she was standing on, playing...the record. As she excitedly calculated what to do with this incredible knowledge something slammed her in the head so hard she...blacked out.

“What does that mean?” Rose asked, not particularly pleased to have been led this far for a sign pointing down through the ice of a lake that said very simply “DEATH.” Clark turned toward her, his face pinched and tight.

“DEATH, that’s your job, Rose.”

“What do you mean that’s ‘my job?’ What kind of job is death?”

Clark seemed sad, resigned, a bit like a person who has decided to put his beloved dog to sleep and still needs it to lick its master’s hand...

“The most beautiful, Rose, sacrifice. It's because you’re too beautiful and you see too well. It’s because we need the wind.”

With that Dr. Clark drew the small, black revolver from his jacket pocket, raised it to Rose’s temple, and before she could react, pulled the trigger.