

Chapter 1 Waking

Deep sleep. Bottomless, dreamless. No beginnings: wordless and breathless. No endings: formless and timeless. Boundless as a sky without stars. No mind, no shapes, no dreamer making magic on the walls. Not a trace of the man lying at the foot of his mother's bed. Not a trace of the past and its gallery of relics nor the future in a motherless world. A geography of nothing. Limitless. Only the one with no arms holding the many. Quiet as death though not death. Still as death though not death. The great silence at the heart of all. That silence the wind searches for. That stillness known in the depth of oceans and lakes. The unborn, faceless and unfathomable, where the many come to rest, dissolving into the reservoir of forms. Where even the mind settles and finds in that baffling merger the most effortless sanctuary. Where even the most restless of boys looking for his mother is taken in.

Deep sleep. Selfless. No one moves. No one dreams. No one shudders. Not empty, not full. Unpeopled: a biography of zero. Featureless: an epic with no tales. Prior to worry, prior to want. Undisturbed.

But then, a stirring. Faint; too faint to recognize. A ripple. Far away. So far away. And again, a quiet, lasting centuries.

Deep sleep. The mind lying in shadows. Shadows lying in the mind. The first stirring passes. It is like that for another hundred years. Falling, settling: snow lighting on a leaf. Silent.

It is like that before the first sound laps upon the shore. Before the first sound makes a crease in the night sky. The first sound, which is more of a movement. More of a bend in the space that is not there. The first sound; the breath of breath, the bringer of worlds upon worlds, dream upon dream: image and light.

He is lost. Lost and bewildered. Memory tries to stand and falls. Where? Remembering is birth. It could be a womb: that sound. What is it? The distant hum of waterfalls. Confusion. That sound. Floating, floating to the sound. No body, no mass. Toward. Floating toward the sound. It is dreaming; the sound dreams a world. Sound and movement. A floating dream. A cell dividing in slow time. In slow time, in slow space, shadows grow forms and the outline of a mind opens and closes.

The sound is breathing, is breath, is calling. Calling a shape into being. Calling the forgotten forth. A confusion is lifting. Awakening is calling, breath is calling, death is calling, daybreak is calling. She is calling. The breathing belongs. It belongs to her. Mother. And more. The dreamer is born to waking. The breath belongs. Remembering breaks the seed open. Out comes a fragile stem moving toward. Breathing is calling; it is a flute and dancing and it calls across a valley. And a rustling amoeba self reaches out into the dark.

