

YANCEYGATES GUEST POST-1

I wanted to write a non-fiction book about the spiritual realm – metaphysics – and I knew a lot about metaphysics. It began some decades ago. In Berkeley, I combed the metaphysical bookstores in search of answers to those big questions: Why do we exist, what is our purpose? I found those answers, written by entities who are from a different realm. These aren't philosophers, religionists, or psychologists, they are eyewitnesses to that next world beyond. Not all books are legitimate of course, but it was easy to spot the jewels there mixed up in the bookshelves with the marginal. I think the best set of books on earth are the Seth Books by Jane Roberts, today in reprint.

For the next few decades I went about living an ordinary life in an ordinary world, but in my mind reminding myself continually that the world about me is a construct of my mind; I am "lucid" dreaming. Such imagination breathes life into a mundane situation; it becomes surreal, even magical – we are creating our world, now, in this moment!

Eventually, it was suggested that I write down what I had learned, but I didn't really know anything that wasn't already known. I had learned it all from books. I went ahead anyway and started a book, a non-fiction book, about metaphysics. To my surprise I found I was actually learning new things as I wrote, and more yet as I read back my own written words. In my new book Yancey Gates, Yancey imagines a spinoff story of a spiritual man, Granger, who takes him out on his sailboat. Granger explains to Yancey that "you tell a story as you live." I originally had this fiction spinoff in my very first book, the non-fiction book that I never published. But I liked the story, so I put it in Yancey, which makes this book unique in that it contains a small bit of my earliest writing along with my very latest writing. Ten years ago, I was writing about this idea that we tell a story as we live, but didn't know where I had picked up the idea. So I reviewed my unfinished non-fiction manuscript to see where that idea was introduced. It came, as I say above, from the fictitious character Granger, from the pen of a writer (me) who had not before entertained such an idea. Further research, however, reveals it is mentioned in the Seth Material that I read as a young adult. But it is not so obvious and not so easy to comprehend until some background living has transpired. Maybe I had nothing entirely new to say, but I had put my own twists on the ancient knowledge that enlightened even me, and I hadn't even realized that I had done that; I mean, that life tells a story. It was my character who voiced it, but of course the character *is* me. I had to hear it from him to consciously pick it up. That's what I mean about learning new things from my own writing. Yancey, a seeker of knowledge who is determined to resolve the hard questions, the big questions of life, was essentially the theme of my early non-fiction endeavor that I never completed. Presenting it as

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a novel made it work. I'm not entirely sure why. I think fiction gives the writer more leeway, He can introduce things that he would need to develop on more, if it's non-fiction. Some of Yancey's experiences are based on my life, some are not. Others, like the Governor's World's Fair idea, come right out of my imagination from my youth. These are things I had no wherewithal to bring about, but any author's fictitious characters have no such limitations – they can do anything, and any result is possible. If I decided for Yancey to walk on water, he would. But I wanted this book to be believable.

While the angry spiritual tribal Chieftain "Ground Hog" is entirely fictitious, as is his Mowanabee tribal reservation, the City of 10,000 Buddhas in the Northern California redwoods is real, as is its Asian founder who died twenty years ago yet *is* still searching for a suitable successor. I talked to a monk at a temple attached to this monastery, and he told me of how the founder, now in spirit, visits and discusses such things with him. It is a central element of Eastern philosophy, there being other worlds apart from our world, where communication happens rather nonchalantly. The City of 10,000 Buddhas was founded in the United States exactly for the purpose of educating us Westerners to the truer nature of reality. But the Governor, with his World's Fair project, sees a greater picture yet; a world bringing metaphysical knowledge into the industrial technological world of physical forms, a more complex, more sophisticated, reality emerging that, astonishingly, is entirely of the mind. And for this same purpose, Yancey Gates was written.