



## "Gifts from the Realm of the Higher Self"

This painting tells the story of a medieval Queen who lives as a virtual prisoner, like a bird in a gilded cage. Despite being surrounded by opulence, she is lonely and unhappy as she has no freedom to be herself; the wealth and riches come at a dreadful price. Her King and master is unfeeling and cruel. The marriage was forced to keep peace between two lands. It is loveless and governed by marital duties alone. The King cannot perceive the Queen's brilliant mind, her gifts and talents, and her radiant inner beauty. He treats her as a pawn in his game and prevents her from knowing the joys and delights of life. She feels irrelevant, like an inconvenience and an unwanted burden who has been foisted against her will into this marriage.

Forbidden to leave her golden chambers, one day the lonely Queen hears a bird sing outside the castle walls. The joyful song stirs a deep longing inside the Queen. As she draws near the window to see, a rainbow falls across the Queen's heart and awakens her dormant soul. To her astonishment, the window opens not to the garden, but instead to a crystalline realm of indescribable beauty. Therein dwells her own Higher Self, calling to her through time and space with a message of everlasting hope.

As the Queen draws closer to the veil between the ordinary world and the Higher Realm, her Higher Self approaches. The Queen peers into the true glory and majesty of her Higher state of being — a stark and profoundly meaningful contrast to the "majesty" of her superficial life as the King's wife. Instead of empty pomp and ceremony in the ordinary world, the Queen now learns of true ceremony and ritual from the Realm of her Higher Self. She learns to access knowledge from beyond the physical world. This new power becomes crucially important, and she learns to trust the way Spirit communicates for her work in later lifetimes, including the one she lives now in the 2000s.

## A Message from Divine

*You are infinitely beautiful, precious, and powerful, despite how it sometimes feels in the outer world.*

*It is easy to get lost in the labyrinths that open to your spirit and mind. Focus your energies into your Heart to find healing. Focus like a laser beam of love directed at those who wait to be healed by you. They are many, sometimes seemingly as many as the stars in the Milky Way. One by one, call each broken soul to you, and by this devotion, you will find endless perfect concentration, determination, and abundance.*

*This painting is written in the form of a mirror. Two figures meet at the middle, and as you move outward, each pair of figures are balanced in the normal and Higher realms. The figure on the far left balances with an invisible figure in the Higher realm. The sadder she is in ordinary reality, the more dazzling she is at the far right of the composition in the Higher reality on the right. She comes to meet you with great gifts whenever you call.*

# THE RHYMING COMPOSITION in "Gifts from the Realm of the Higher Self"



The painting, "Gifts from the Realm of the Higher Self," is structured into four *rhyming* pairs of figures. Each pair contains a *Queen* (lower self) and an *angelic embodiment* (Higher Self). The painting can be read in two directions: a) from left to right as a story of ascension, from the lowest and darkest psychological place, to the highest and most illuminated state of pure consciousness and b) from the center outward in both directions (illustrated above). In the mirrored or rhymed reading, four pairs of figures correlate into the Steps of Ascension. When the lower self meets the Higher Self through daily meditation, the levels of consciousness are increased. Meditation is a metaphysical portal where the lower self encounters the Higher, and the need to stay in the lowest, darkest place (figure 4 at left) diminishes and eventually disappears. The analysis of each pair of figures is below, corresponding to the circles above.

## 1. The Encounter

In the center of the composition, the Queen directly encounters her Higher Self through the veil between worlds. Both selves see their respective counterparts. Both extend a hand to touch across the metaphysical boundary that separates them. The Higher Self offers her gift of wisdom, the tool for help (The Steps of Ascension to higher consciousness).

The figures rhyme in a simple symmetry. The symbolism is that our angelic, eternal self remains untouched, in perfect condition regardless of any trials and turmoils that our physical self (the Queen) experiences in the course of life.



## 2. The Gift

The second pair of figures symbolize asking and offering, or giving and receiving. The Higher Self offers hope: a crystal with The Steps of Ascension, which emanates a traditional rainbow and a ripple field of Divine activation, representing awakened consciousness: a seed of Truth dropped in the heart's waters, whose effects propagate outward in all directions.

The Queen's heart is stimulated by the rainbow of hope. She reaches her hand to receive the offering from her perfect Self.



## 3. The Portal

The third pair of figures from the center symbolizes the mirror-like portals between our world and the next. The Queen gazes in an oval mirror. The oval reminds us of an egg: the symbol of what is yet unborn — her awakened consciousness.

Similarly, on the opposite side the Higher Self enters through a golden oval-shaped portal. Beyond this portal we cannot see. It is as though the Higher Self takes on a visible, embodied form by crossing the threshold to meet her lower self. The embodiment appears angelic and other-worldly, with the winged headdress, chimerical hair and clothes, and brilliantly luminous eyes. The Queen cautiously investigates, her armored hands crossed in tentative curiosity.



## 4. The Disconnect

The final pair of selves represents states of being that cannot perceive one another, as they are too far apart. On the extreme left is the cowering figure of the Queen. She dwells in a state of hopeless despair, experiencing herself as a victim of her worldly circumstances. She has no awareness of her Higher Self. She is unawakened, suffering, and spiritually blind. It is a state of self-pity and utter disconnect from the eternity of the soul.

The fourth Higher Self remains unseen. She has not been called by her lower self, and cannot in any way reach her or intervene in the cosmic laws that prohibit angelic beings from helping until called.

# CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION SYMBOLS in "Gifts from the Realm of the Higher Self"



## Stone Chamber & Moon

The Queen, in her darkest hours, is locked inside a cold stone chamber.

The walls feel like a prison.

The inverted **crescent moon** symbolizes the passage of time. Life in this state is full of grief and woe. The hours pass slowly, dreadfully. It feels like the Queen is wasting away, with no option to move forward or bring meaning into her life.

She misses her true family and friends, along with her connection to Nature and the realms of healing plants and animal spirits.

She hides behind the mirror (truth), under her dark cloak and hood, covering her mind in hopelessness.



## The Labyrinth

Seeking help from wherever it might come, the Queen looks at herself in a gilded mirror.

The wall behind her has transformed to gold. The spiral pattern on the wall is the sacred geometry of a **labyrinth** - the ancient symbol of the soul's journey through life to the Higher Self.

The act of looking in the mirror is parallel to the symbolic act of walking the labyrinth. Each round of the spiral brings her closer to herself. Looking honestly into the mirror transforms it into a portal, in which the Queen becomes aware there is more to herself than her current situation.



## Animal Spirits

As the rainbow touches the Queen's heart, she awakens to a higher level of consciousness. Hope has aroused her spirit.

The wall behind her is now tiled in images of animals. The language of animals, each with its special strengths and gifts, awakens the Queen to deeper searching. This language is one she can understand, even with limited education. Animal symbols are an ancient and intuitive way of knowing the spiritual world. In its diversity, the animal kingdom has all the powers and special messages needed to transform consciousness. The Queen now has the wisdom to seek her Higher purpose and begin powerful healing.



## The Flying Bird

The golden bird from the background wall begins to fly free as the Queen reaches the true mirror between the ordinary world (physical body and outer appearances) and the metaphysical realm of the Higher Self (the inner world of the infinite Soul and its access to all knowledge, all time, all realms).

The Queen is reflected in the lucid, liquid-like barrier between her world and that of her Higher Self. She sees and almost touches her Divine aspect of being.



## The Steps of Ascension

The mystical infinite realm of the Higher Self is iridescent and luminous with shimmering light in every color. Where the Queen meets her Higher Self lies a crystal gate with two pillars. Each pillar has a pyramid at the top, and a set of metaphysical steps inside: The Steps of Ascension. These planes of increasing consciousness lead to the highest, purest realm in which there is no separation from the Divine. The Queen's Higher Self holds a miniature crystal based on the majestic gates, inside of which is a miniature ascension staircase. The held crystal is the source of the rainbow that stretches from the angelic realm to the ordinary realm, touching the Queen's heart.



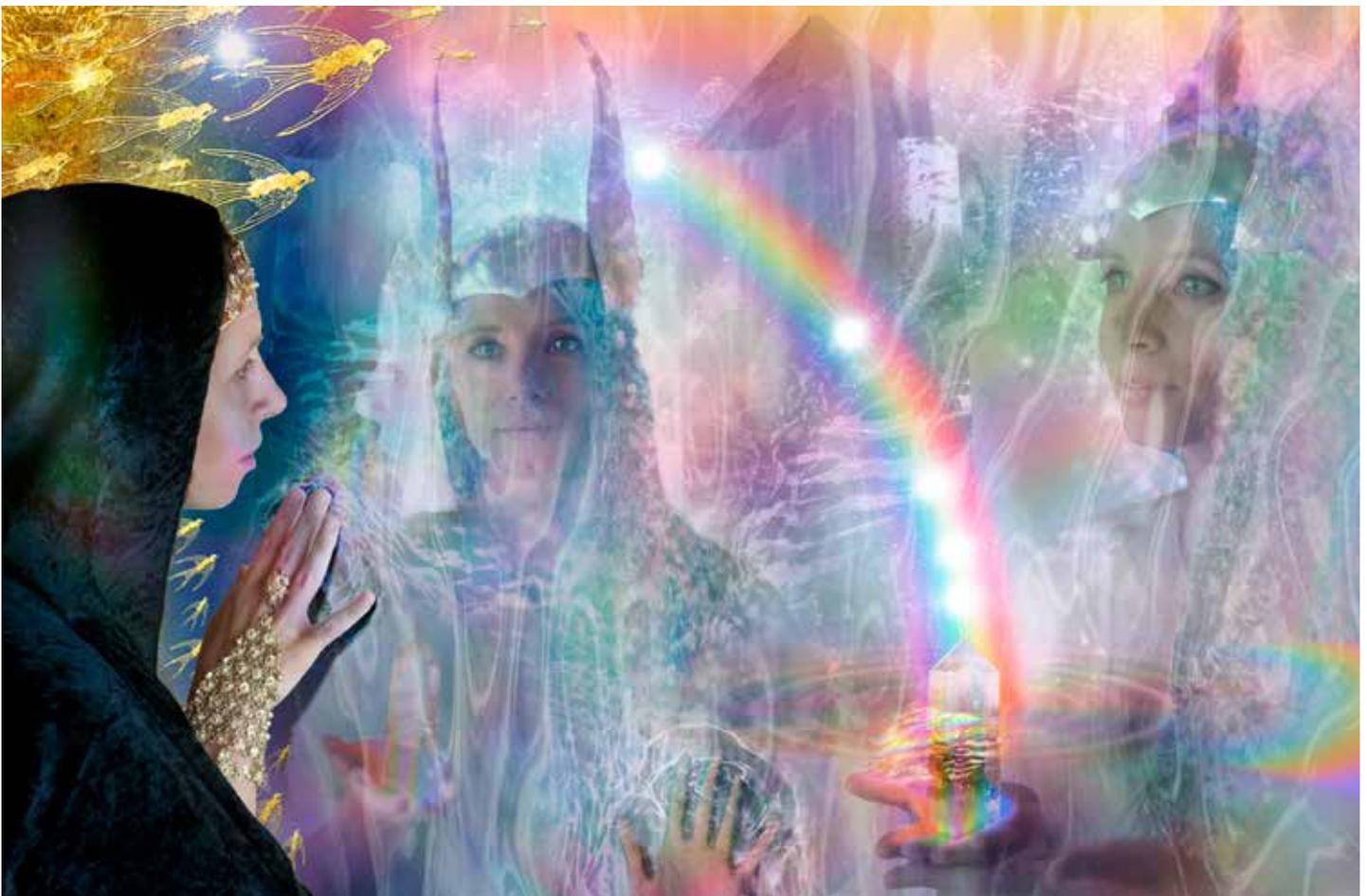
## The Veil of Higher Realms

Most of the Higher Realm is obscured behind a radiant veil. The veil lets us glimpse the glories of angelic consciousness, yet we cannot discern the details. The Realm of the Higher Self remains hidden while we are on earth: so beautiful is it that we might be tempted to go there before our work here is done. We can see just enough to discern our Higher Self, as does the Queen, and to know we can call upon our Higher Self at any time, for any reason — and trust that she/he will answer our prayers for protection, guidance, and the satisfaction of all our needs.

## Sacred Numbers: The Fibonacci Sequence

In "Gifts from the Realm of the Higher Self," the Higher Self communicates the sacred structure of conscious growth to the lower self (the Queen). This structure is the Fibonacci sequence of numbers: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21... The next number is found by adding up the two numbers before it:  $1+1=2$  |  $2+1=3$  |  $3+2=5$  |  $5+3=8$  |  $8+5=13$  |  $13+8=21$ ... This sacred pattern of growth can be found in the division of cells of the human body, the branching patterns in trees, the spiral patterns of the nautilus shell, sunflower seeds, and even spiral galaxies in our Universe.

In the painting, the Higher Self beams this pattern to the lower self, to show her how to harness her consciousness and efforts so she may climb The Steps of Ascension. The pattern first appears at the extreme right side as vertical beads of light radiating upward from the crystal. As the Higher Self approaches her lower self (the Queen), she beams the Fibonacci sequence through a rainbow that enters the Queen's heart. The heart, not the mind, is the seat of Higher Consciousness. In Sufism (mystic Islam), the mind-world is known as the Palace of Mirrors. *"The mind is the surface of the heart, and the heart is the depth of the mind."* — Hazrat Inayat Khan The Higher Self touches the depth of the lower self (the heart) to awaken the Queen to higher knowing, to join with her True Self, which is infinite, perfect, and immortal.



## Artist Notes

With humility and profound gratitude to God, I believe that the painting "Gifts from the Realm of the Higher Self" is one of my life's masterpieces. Perhaps it is not my first...as I believe "The Narrow Gate," "Patchwork Earth," and "Burning Down the House" might be considered favorably by history as earlier masterworks. Yet this painting is a breakthrough to a new realm of channeling, technical complexity, and at least for me, artistic satisfaction. "Gifts from the Realm" is the most complex piece I have done to date, meaning: it has the most layers and the largest size if one measures in gigabytes (G). The piece was so large, I had to break it into 8 large-format documents, which were then flattened and composited into the final artwork. This process in itself represented a major breakthrough in the cinematic approach I have taken, and I now habitually break artworks into smaller pieces, each of which has its own internal geometry, composition, and order.

As I worked on "Gifts," I became deeply inspired by Renaissance lighting of the old masters. The left side of the painting is a study in time-travel, in terms of environments, lighting, and expression. As I worked on the Higher Realm, there was at one point at least an entire hour where I simply sat in front of the "portal" of this artwork, and received the "download" of channeled information. The Higher Realm was utterly mesmerizing for me to work with, and I kept starting, falling into a meditative void, before I realized my mechanical clock had spun a full revolution. It would be fair to say that I left normal time and space in order to bring back the messages permitted by the Spirit realm to reveal through this painting.

I must now praise my phenomenal model, **Lauren Eglé**. Without Lauren's talent, this artwork would not exist. Lauren is such a powerful healer that this piece opened the way for me to create the Higher Self Portrait business. I wasn't sure exactly what we would do in the photo session. We worked in her kitchen, the sunlight coming through a sliding patio door. The costumes were humble: a Batman-style Halloween cape, some belly dance jewelry, a delicate crown, a winged leather headdress I bought at a Renaissance fair, and a simple gold vest I sewed. The rest was Lauren's energy. Spirit gifted me the instructions for the painting as we photographed. Lauren is capable of going to realms far beyond Planet Earth. I gave her direction; she asked for subtle clarification, then pulled forth a performance worthy of a grand award, in my opinion. Like a true actress, she rose above normal concerns about her own appearance and delivered every nuance—beyond what I could have dreamed to put into the artwork, including the grief on the left and sublime radiance on the right. I'm eternally grateful.

With Endless Love, Sonya Shannon,  
Visionary Artist & Author

## The Higher Self Story

*If each human being is partially Angelic, how do we become who we truly are - while still on Earth?*

*The summer I turned 53, I woke to find myself unemployed, bankrupt, and foreclosed. My husband had undergone dozens of surgeries and continued to struggle for his health. My hair was grey and the glorious life we had lived in the New York art scene was finished. Who was I now? How could I define myself and move forward?*

*While meditating on these questions, I got a vision of an older, wiser person, a woman in her 50s who was strong, positive, and beautiful. There weren't many such images around in 2012, so I decided to follow my muse. The artwork that emerged, "Mystic Visions," inspired me out of depression and set the course for a whole new career - as a mystic visionary artist.*

*Before people asked if they could be in my artwork, I was drawn to the remarkable healer Lauren Eglé, to create this exploration of the lower self in relation to the Higher. Later, I realized I could create inspirational, healing portraits of others. Finally I knew I had found who I am, how to define myself and move forward: by creating visions to heal those who seek.*

