

## The “Bright”

On November 3, 1939, at 11:21 A.M., in Jamaica, Queens County, New York, I was born “Franklin Albert Jones”. The sign of my birth is Scorpio, marked by the images of Spirit and of Sex, the eagle and the crab.<sup>4</sup> It is the sign of internal warfare, the problem and perfection. The sign of Scorpio should indicate to you the kinds of forces that aligned to generate my birth. Whatever significance you may attribute to astrology, it is true that my personal life has often cycled high and low, marked by equal and opposing determinations to ascend and to descend. And the external adventure of my life has turned me in and out of every kind of religious and Spiritual path, every kind of ascending means, and (likewise) every form of pleasure, ecstasy, and self-indulgence.

The signs of my birth suggest (and have required) a drama of opposites. However, in spite of all of that, it has also been my lot to remain untouched by cosmic and human circumstance. This is perhaps the first key to what I must Communicate. From the beginning, I have also Known a perfect Alternative to the revolutionary internal dilemma of my natural existence. I have played in the problem of my alternatives, but from my earliest experience of life I have Enjoyed a Condition that, as a child, I called the “Bright”.

I have always known desire, not merely for extreme pleasures of the senses and the mind, but for the highest Enjoyment of Spiritual Power and Mobility. But I have not been seated in desire, and desire has only been a play that I have grown to understand and enjoy without conflict. I have always been Seated in the “Bright”.

Even as a baby, I remember only crawling around inquisitively with a boundless Feeling of Joy, Light, and Freedom in the middle



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of my head that was bathed in Energy moving unobstructed in a Circle—down from above, all the way down, then up, all the way up, and around again—and always Shining from my heart. It was an Expanding Sphere of Joy from the heart. And I was a Radiant Form—the Source of Energy, Love-Bliss, and Light in the midst of a world that is entirely Energy, Love-Bliss, and Light. I was the Power of Reality, a direct Enjoyment and Communication of the One Reality. I was the Heart Itself, Who Lightens the mind and all things. I was the same as every one and every thing, except it became clear that others were apparently unaware of the "Thing" Itself.

Even as a little child, I recognized It and Knew It, and my life was not a matter of anything else. That Awareness, that Conscious Enjoyment, that Self-Existing and Self-Radiant Space of Infinitely and inherently Free Being, that Shine of inherent Joy Standing in the heart and Expanding from the heart, is the "Bright". And It is the entire Source of True Humor. It is Reality. It is not separate from anything.

From my birth, I have not been centered in Scorpio or the dilemma of alternatives, but in the "Bright". So it is with True Humor that I describe how I existed all this time.

As a Conscious "creation", or by-Me-Embraced condition, "Franklin Jones" began one day while I was crawling across the linoleum floor in a house my parents had rented from an old woman named Mrs. Farr. There was a little puppy, which my parents had gotten for me, running across the floor towards me. I saw the puppy, and I saw my parents. The "creation" of "Franklin Jones" began from that moment. All of the rest of the events that occurred during the two or more years before that moment were not the years of "Franklin Jones". He had no existence before that time, which was the Conscious (or Intentional) beginning.

The reason for this gesture was a spontaneous motivation associated with a painful loving of the people around me. It was not merely compassion for them, as if they were poor people I could help. It was a painful emotional and physical sensation in my heart and in my solar plexus. It was profoundly painful even then, and it always has been. It was associated with the full knowledge that these people to whom I was committing myself were going to die,

and that I would die. I knew that if I Incarnated in this life-form and circumstance, if I became this body and its lifetime, I would also die its death. And I knew that, as this bodily incarnate being, I was, in due course, going to be separated from every one and every thing I loved in its lifetime. This was all fully obvious to me—and, yet, this spontaneous gesture, this painful loving, this profound sensation, awakened in me and moved me into the body, animated me physically. Thus, it was, altogether and simply, a sympathetic response that brought me into the sphere of human conditions, and of gross conditions altogether. That response was identification with mortal existence, but it took place by means of Delight. In that Exaltation, the wound of mortality was forgotten. Thus, it was not the noticing of mortality, in and of itself, that generated my Movement into this plane. Rather, it was the Love-Response, the attracted Response, in which all of the negative aspects of gross conditional existence were effectively forgotten—in Love, in Delight, in Love-Bliss.

My father<sup>5</sup> was always a salesman, and my mother<sup>6</sup> was always at home. They could always use a little ordinary humor, but I always loved (and love) them, and love was always the premise of our life together. That is why we were always free to be so reckless, stupid, unfeeling, uncommunicative, unhappy, and separate! None of that ever amounted to anything less than an enjoyment of our separate spectacles. Quiet, long-suffering, fathered mother. Emotional, violent, elaborate father-boy. Crazy, secluded, independent son away.

I always grew up on Long Island—mostly in a town called Franklin Square, which was not named after me, or my father (whose name is also Franklin). Mother is Dorothy. A sister, Joanne, was born when I was eight years old, whom we also always loved (and love), except she and I grew up at separate times and not together.

I was early brought to the Lutheran Christian Church, and so became combined with the mind of Christianity, and especially with the myths and legends (or the so-called history and historical person) of Jesus of Nazareth. Eventually, the ideas I received from that early association with Christianity became crucially important life-supporting beliefs for me, after my own "Bright" Strength of



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**With parents and sister**



**As a young boy**



**Boyhood home in Franklin Square on Long Island**

Being had been (temporarily) undermined by my experience of the human world of conflict, illusion, and death. Indeed, even quite early, I began to see there was a fundamental difference, or a very basic unlikeness, between myself and others—not a difference of ultimate essence, and not at all a social or (otherwise) merely physical difference, but a difference of point of view, and of experience, and of life-practice. Thus, schooled by conventional religion, and puzzled by the conventional mind and the disturbed manner of others, I gradually (but only tentatively) accepted the three root-conventions of the common mind: the idea of "God" (as "Creator", and as separate from all "creation"), the idea of separate self (in my case, and in all cases), and the idea of the world (as itself separate, and as itself composed of separate "things", or absolute differences).

One of my most significant early memories is the Event that clearly marks the beginning of my transition from the gratuitous Spiritual "Brightness" of my earliest childhood to my life of seeking—which transition was, as you will see, motivated by my intentional identification with all mortal beings, and by my intentional identification with all the problems of mankind, and by my suffering of all that followed from my consequent ever-decreasing presumption of the "Bright" Itself. In this crucial early Event, I was walking to the movies with my mother and father. As was frequently the case with them, they were having an argument. My mother plays the "tar-baby", which (if you remember Uncle Remus) was set down on a log by Br'er Bear and Br'er Fox in order to trap Br'er Rabbit. She is quiet and passive, and my father very quick, loud, and threatening violence—until he gets stuck and fades away, pretending he will never be heard from again.

That scene was one of their lifelong characteristic games, and so it really makes no difference what aroused it in this case, as I am sure I did not know at the time. I remember there was a full moon—shining, but orange and shadowy. I have no specific recollection of what movie we were on our way to see. I must have been about six or seven years old.

What appeared to me then was a kind of archetype of all conflict. There was the act of separation, and that act was destroying

the Spiritual Energy of Love-Bliss. I very clearly and directly experienced the effects of this conflict and separation. I could feel the embracive rays of Love-Bliss-Energy that surrounded us and moved in a delicate network of points in and through our bodies. I could feel those rays of Love-Bliss-Energy being cut by the negative emotional acts of my parents. As a result of their loveless actions, dark vacuums were being spotted out around us and between us. And I was about to make one of my most significant early attempts to Communicate that there is only Love-Bliss-Energy, and to Prove it was so by an actual Spiritual Transmission of that Love-Bliss-Energy Itself.

I remember silently expanding the “Bright” Love-Bliss-Energy from my heart, while, at the same time, trying to distract my parents by pointing out the moon, and by asking them questions about God and life, so they would be calmed, and enabled to feel the Love-Bliss-Energy of the “Bright” I was Transmitting to them.

Their ordinary humor did return a little. My father seemed quieted, and my mother was answering my questions. Nonetheless, I felt their basic refusal, and their basic insensitivity to the “Bright”. We went to the movie, and all the while we watched I felt a pressure in my solar plexus and my heart, where the Love-Bliss-Energy was refused and pushed back. But at least the argument was gone, for the night.

The conflict between my parents was a constant field of experience for me as a boy. By no means did they argue all the time, but those events were a persistent and arbitrary danger, and they formed an early ground of disturbance and of understanding in me. And, in the crucial Event I just described, my parents’ profound insensitivity to the “Bright”—and, indeed, their fundamental refusal of It (even though It was Freely Transmitted to them)—gave rise to (or, at least, most profoundly confirmed) a deeply felt concern and urgency in me that became the means for me to fulfill the guiding Purpose of my life.

From the beginning, in the early Spiritual “Brightness” of my life, I directly perceived the guiding Purpose of my life: to restore True Humor (or the all-transcending quality of Happiness, that can persist, or, otherwise, constantly come forward, in the living being under all



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conditions, whether the conditions appear to be positive or negative). Throughout my life, I have been moved to Communicate (or to Reveal, to Transmit, and to Awaken) the fundamental Source and Substance and Condition of True Humor to others. Ordinary humor can appear in many forms, as the seemingly undaunting mood of life-enjoyment, as the hilarious pleasure of laughter, as the fairy-tale ease of faith, as the self-congratulating certainty of mental knowledge, and as the overriding excitement of even all the greater and smaller bodily victories. But True Humor has only one living Form (and one ultimate, or inherently perfect, Form), Which is Real God, Perfect Truth, or Reality Itself.

If my Purpose (even from the beginning of this lifetime) has always been to restore True Humor, and (likewise) if my Motive has always been Founded in the “Bright”, death and the fear of death have (also from the beginning of this lifetime) always been the counter to my Presence—the source of contradiction, fear, mystery, and despair.

I contracted all of the childhood diseases, including a relatively mild case of polio, and, at times, became delirious with fever. This suffering grew a certain depth in me as a boy, because outwardly there were few of the possible overwhelming tragedies. In delirium, I would experience tremendous fear and an awesome mortal separateness, such that death became very real to me during those incidents.

During one of those episodes, I believe when I was about five or six years old, I had a dream that impressed me very deeply. I saw a neat green grass field moving up and away from me, and there was a beautiful full oak tree at its highest point, on the horizon. It was a clear blue day. I did not see myself in the dream but felt as if I were stationed at my point of view at the base of the rise. There were three women in black gowns, like nuns, walking away from me, up the hill. And I felt this tremendous loss and separation, as if I were being left behind.

I woke up crying, with an intense fear of death. And I asked my mother about death. She tried to console me with assurances about God and the afterlife. But a fear was planted in me from that time, such that death was always thereafter a fascinating mystery to me.

I often thought about that dream. I felt it was not a dream at all, but a memory of past death, or an intuition of future death. And the importance of that dream, or of death itself, was never the fact itself. For this reason, I never became particularly motivated to investigate spiritualistic psychism, which pursues the link between living beings and those who are outside this life. For me, the interest in death has always been a matter of investigating, or deeply considering, the present relationship between life-consciousness and death.

I have not truly been concerned with where one goes after death. In my very earliest years, it was always clear to me that—no matter where one goes, or where one is—one is always the same fundamental Consciousness. Indeed, I observed and experienced all events from the “Point of View” of the “Bright”. I was Being that Radiant Consciousness, Which is untouched. But I gradually became combined with the mortal experience of identification with the body-mind, and a great question arose in me, more and more persistently and profoundly: What is Consciousness (in Its living form, and altogether)? What must occur within It for It to remain as It is (untouched and Free and Blissful) even while, in Its living form, It already bears the certainty (or the tacit knowledge) of death?

It was this question, felt as a true dilemma, which caused me to indulge in a rather awesome adventure some years later, when I was about nine years old. My father and I shared a passion for animals, although my mother usually took care of them. I was given a black cocker spaniel named “Bootsie” as a present for Easter. The cellar of our house was my free space—and I spent long hours secluded there or playing with friends, where I invented spaceships and boats for us to ride in. I kept a large chest of small toys and would play quietly there with my hoard. I was not exclusively introverted, since I also constantly played outdoors and with friends in the woods all around us, but there was a strong interior activity in me that I also enjoyed without feeling the need for company.

One day, I went into the cellar while my father was at work and my mother away shopping. As I walked into the room, I saw



**With Bootsie**

Bootsie lying in an old overstuffed chair in the corner of the cellar. I called her and rushed over to pet her. And she was dead. I do not think I had ever touched a dead one before, and certainly not one that I had loved and known alive. She was stiff, lying as if in sleep, and her warmth was nearly gone.

I was immediately overcome by terrible grief. I ran upstairs and sat and rolled in my room, and wept for what seemed like hours. But there was not only grief. There was also fear and guilt. I was stuck with some kind of knowledge that I was afraid to tell. My door was closed, and I heard my mother in the other rooms. She must have heard me crying, but I do not think she came in to me. She must have gone and found the dead animal and decided to leave me to my father. Then he, too, came home, and they opened the door to me.

My father asked me what was wrong, and I was trying not to show my grief. But then I told him, "Bootsie died." And I fell in his arms and wept.

After several hours of consolation and quiet, I had controlled my grief. Then I made a very strange decision. I could not bear estrangement from love. I prayed to God to receive Bootsie and care for her. And then I told Him that I wanted Him to take me also. I needed time to make the transition from my life and love in the world, and so I told Him it should be at 9:00 P.M. two days from then—I believe, on a Sunday.

I did not tell my parents I was about to die. I decided to be with them and enjoy with them for two days and make an easy transition. On the last day, we drove in the country. I watched in the clouds, seeing only heaven and Bootsie and God.

Then it was the evening of my death. We had dinner and sat in the living room watching television. I went and prayed to God, and I was certain He would take me at nine o'clock. But as the hour approached, I began to realize the importance of this move. I was about to leave life! I was about to suffer the loss of the world, my parents, my future possibility. I felt a tremendous connection to the living world, and saw that the absence of one I loved did not amount to the destruction of love, of life-positive energy, of "Bright" Fullness, or of Heart-Joy. I saw that I was alive!

Nevertheless, I presumed that much of this "conversion" might be due to fear and regret. I knew that I had bargained with God, and, therefore, I would not abandon His Will. And so I only sat and waited. I watched the television and continually relaxed the awesome fear that kept rising in me. Nine o'clock came, and I did not die.

I do not remember if I was alone in my room or with my parents at that hour—but, when it passed, I went and prayed to God. I thanked Him for my life and asked forgiveness for my wavering. But something in me had died or become hidden at that hour. I remember that, for several years afterward, I would end my prayers with the request, "And please, dear Lord, allow me to live until I am eighty-nine years old or older."

For some time after this incident, I suffered a constriction in my chest, and I felt as if I could not breathe deeply enough. I even had my father take me to a doctor. The doctor and my father watched me breathing behind a fluoroscope. And it was determined that I was in good health. After that, I gradually took some relief, for I had not been certain that my promise to die had not crippled my heart in some way. I remember that even in the days before our visit to the doctor, and then for weeks afterwards, I experienced a sublime enjoyment of the air and light, the fact of my life, in spite of the feeling of weakness in my heart.

So I experienced in myself the meaning of death, conflict, and separation, which I knew to be the primary fact in all suffering. I saw how the sentiment of separation from love can, as a problem or concern in the humanly-born conscious awareness, draw one out of the "Bright" of Illuminated, Free Consciousness Itself—until one no longer perceives the perfect Form that is always already here.

Such early experiences in my life are not merely clinical, nor did they alone "create" the later personal form of my life. I was Awake and full of Clarity in those early episodes, just as I am now. Even then, and forever before then, I was What I am now. And it is clear to me that I have always operated on the basis of a few fundamental perceptions, and these have structured all of my life. And the basic, few perceptions that have structured all of my life are the fundamentals of Reality (altogether, both conditional and

Un-conditional), and not merely the idiosyncrasies of character (or of conditional personality) in and of itself.

Character is built through experience, through the accumulations of one's use of certain given options in the humanly-born conscious awareness. Disturbances of the personality, which form so much of the data of clinical observations, are not the results of a given disorder in one's Real (or Ultimate) Nature. Rather, they are the result of a misuse (and unconsciousness) of the options associated with the humanly-born (or conditional) conscious awareness. Therefore, it was clear to me from the beginning of this lifetime (and, over time, it was repeatedly reconfirmed) that true healing (or the establishment of the capability necessary for free, "creative" life) is not a matter of concentration on memory, the past, or the history of the functional personality, good or bad—but it is (rather) a matter of understanding the fundamental and present activity of the humanly-born conscious awareness and making right conscious and intentional use of one's living options.

Whenever I have turned from the True Center of present-time life-consciousness to one or another kind of seeking motivated in the desires of my complex life, I have been brought to the same recognition: The search is suffering. When, for example, I felt the loss of the little animal I loved, I was moved to find her, to be where that love continued as is. So I was motivated to a drastic ascent from life, to what (because of my separated mentality) seemed to be God. But, at last, I saw that the motive toward re-union was itself the source and act of separation, and that it was itself a destructive cutting away of Free Awareness, Love-Bliss-Energy, and Life.

In the hours of waiting for death, I was not Awake as the "Bright", the Full Presence of my Being. I was separate from the "Bright", and saw all Love and Light and Freedom of Being as utterly above, apart from me and this world. Only too late, it seemed to me then, did the shock of what I awaited draw me into that Fullness again. And I saw that Reality was always already (and, therefore, always presently) Full, and that to seek that Fullness in the symbolic state I was awaiting was to abandon (or to not presume and Enjoy) that always present Fullness in the actual present moment.

I learned (or even re-learned) this Great Lesson at that time. It is not merely the product of reflection years hence. Originally, and (but decreasingly) as a small boy, I operated with that Clarity and Enjoyed (even in my humanly-born form and conscious awareness) the Knowledge of Real (or Ultimate, or Truly Divine) Consciousness. The search itself has never been my fundamental Vocation. The search was only a curious excursion. It was temporarily necessary (because of my born association with the functions and tendencies of a living human body-mind), but (because of the always underlying Foundation that is the "Bright") it was also only a means of reaffirmation of Reality Itself in the context of my humanly-born conscious awareness. Therefore, all of my life, Reality Itself, Spiritually "Bright" and Full, has been the Fundamental Circumstance of my living existence.

My earliest childhood (from birth), and not merely some later (or more adult) time, was the period of my first Knowledge and Unfoldment of the "Bright", Which I Knew to be the perfect Form (and the Source of the living condition) of Reality. And what is That exactly? This book is determined to Communicate It, again and again, in so many ways. But, on the level of my earliest recognition of It, It was the "ordinary" Condition of even my humanly-born conscious awareness. It was Consciousness Itself, Radiant and Awake. It was my simple (human and Ultimate) State, Prior to even any experience. It was not mysterious or awesome to me. There was no shadow, nothing hidden in It. It was not motivated to seek any end at all. There was no "beyond", no "outside", no "Other". It had no sense of time. Nor had It yet begun to feel any kind of confusion or identity with existence as separated personality and problematic experience. It was the Center of the life-functions, but without dilemma or unconsciousness. There were no divisions in It. Radiant Spiritual Energy was Communicated within It, and, thus, in and via the entire body-mind. There was Joy in the body, a Luminous cell-life, a constant respiration and circulation of Love-Bliss-Energy and unlimited, boundless Pleasure. There was a Spiritual Current of Energy in the heart that rose into the head through the throat. And that same Spiritual Current of Energy was below the heart, rising up into it from below. There was a surrounding Circle

of Spiritual Energy that was spaceless and boundless, but Which had a formless Locus above the head. And all of this moving Energy Originated as a single Spiritual Source-Current of Light and Life in the heart that was reflected and Felt at a pervasive Center deep within the head. There was a constant Radiation of this entire Form, including the body. It was Joy in the heart, reflected as Enjoyment in the head. And that formless, spaceless Form of Consciousness was "Bright", Silent, Full—Knowing only and entirely this Condition, this Reality, and seeing no problem, no separation, in the fact of life.

This "Bright", this Real Consciousness, is the perfect Form (and the Source of the living condition) of Reality, and It is never undone. It is now, and It is you. Now and always, every living being is arising within and as this Form, Which is the very Form of life. It is only that life is not lived as Real Consciousness. It is confused with some experience, some fragment of Energy in the event of the personality, in the functions that operate by laws subconscious and unconscious to the individual, or some wave of Energy that fascinates the individual in the superconscious patterns above. When such confusions of identity overwhelm and distract one into some division of the living structure of Reality, one is moved to great seeking in the alternatives of life. Every course that is not simply the demonstration of Real Consciousness, direct and present, is a schism in one's living form. The excursions of my life beyond childhood showed this all the more to me.