
BOAT ON WATER OF SOUL

WAKING UP INSIDE TO WHAT MATTERS MOST
THROUGH NATURE-CONNECTED DREAMWORK

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To my parents

Maria Cecilia "Cece" Theresa Pierson Prieto Morehouse,¹

Jaime L. Prieto-Hernandez-Vales-Saavedra,

who have crossed over,

que en paz bailen y descansen,

whose love, gifts and challenges contributed to who I've become.

And to my son Alex Miguel Prieto-Rivero-Pierson-Garcia,

who has most of his life ahead of him,

may this boat inspire you to explore deep water.

¹ This is the convention used by Cece most frequently, taking on the names of her father, and two husbands. The Latin American convention, shown for my father and son, include the father's and mother's last names would have her name as Maria Cecilia Pierson-Ramsey-Buitrago-Clymer.

Sometimes dreams are wiser than waking.

– Black Elk

Oglala Lakota holy man, educator, and spiritual leader.

From *Black Elk Speaks*, Translated by John G. Neihardt

This is how a human being can change:

*there's a worm addicted to eating
grape leaves.*

*Suddenly, he wakes up,
call it grace, whatever, something
wakes him, and he's no longer
a worm.*

*He's the entire vineyard,
and the orchard too, the fruit, the trunks,
a growing wisdom and joy
that doesn't need
to devour.*

– Jelaluddin Rumi

Persian Islamic scholar, theologian, Sufi mystic, poet and
founder of the Mevlevi Order

THE WORM'S WAKING, Translated by Coleman Barks

INTENTION

Some of my elders say the Earth is dreaming us, and that your Soul, the voice that is uniquely yours, speaks through dreams in mythopoetic language compassionately tuned to your heart.

They say the one who weaves dreams is known as MuseBeloved, a guide to your Soul.

My intention is that *Boat on Water of Soul* inspires you to cultivate a relationship with MuseBeloved through the deep imagination window of knowing.

Along the way, you might find ones who are looking for you, who you'll want to know better...dream characters with hidden gifts and a world that is alive.

I met many allies along the way – this book reveals what is most important from my journey as “Dreaming Salamander,” aka “Dreamer” toward one who’s been calling me since I was born through dreams, visions and synchronicities.

As I’m holding this manuscript, about to read it to you,
I feel some tenderness – it could slip out of my hands
at any moment, carried away by Wind up into Sky...

There’s a place I go to in my imagination when I want to enter
Rumi’s doorsill between worlds that is round and open,
where my friends and I are giddy like children
as we enter a timeless *Garden of Luminous Beings*,
each of us uniquely enchanted by one of them –
They are waiting to be found!

¿Would you like to go there with me?

FOREWORD

I encountered *Boat on Water of Soul* at precisely the moment I needed it. Three months into a move to Guatemala, a return to the land of my Mayan ancestors, undertaken in hopes of understanding myself and my lineage more deeply, I found myself holding this book that seemed to recognize where I was before I did. Jaime's story of sensing into his Taíno heritage through dreams, active imaginations, and poetry mirrored the very questions stirring in me:

Where do I belong? What is my place in the village?

From the very first pages, this book feels like an invitation to sense more deeply. It asks nothing of you except attention, curiosity, and a willingness to let images rearrange something subtle inside. Though autobiographical in texture, the book is more like a doorway, rather than simply the story of one man's journey. By exploring the terrain of his own soul, Jaime quietly invites the reader into their own.

As I moved through these pages, I felt the unmistakable sense that the author needed this book. Needed to unburden, illuminate, and place pieces of himself into the world in a new form. Somewhere along the way, I realized I needed the book too. When Jaime writes about his father's crossing, I felt my own father's presence rise to the surface. Not in grief, but in recognition of the unfinished conversations between us.

Jaime establishes trust early, grounding the reader in the "ordinary" before gradually guiding us toward the imaginal, toward what Western culture often dismisses but ancestral cultures have always known: that there are many ways of receiving information. Storytelling opens the door, dreams reveal hidden rooms, imagination brings us into the deeper chambers of soul.

One of the delights of this book is its careful use of form. The poetry breathes through line breaks that feel like small revelations. New characters (Flower, Roots, Water, Ceiba, SoulWoman, etc.) emerge organically, as if we are witnessing the gradual arrival of beings who have always been present, waiting for the right moment to appear. The

motifs accumulate. Patterns take shape. A dream becomes a portal, then a guide, then a teacher.

Reading Jaime's active imagination sessions (his willingness to enter dreams while awake and conscious and converse with them, to let them shape his understanding) expanded my sense of what human experience can be. His relationship with Water especially awakened memories of my own recurring dreams of waves and rising tides, inviting me to revisit and reinterpret dreams I had long forgotten.

What comforted me most was the tenderness with which the book unfolds. It is not meant to be consumed in one sweep. It wanders, pauses, circles back. At times, passages feel as if they drift aimlessly, until suddenly and subtlety, everything before them falls into place. This nonlinearity of time is a beautiful demonstration of soul language, revealing itself in spirals.

Throughout *Boat on Water of Soul*, Jaime models a regained innocence, an openness to mystery, play, and wonder that becomes rare in adulthood. His dreamworld becomes a village of its own, populated by characters who evolve alongside him. It left me hoping that someday I too might experience a dreamworld as fully inhabited as his.

This book offered me techniques I didn't know I needed, like exploring a dream from another perspective through active imagination. It demonstrated how creativity, memory, ancestry, and the unconscious converse with each other. It showed me how one can live a life guided not only by thought, but by image, intuition, and the subtle movements of spirit.

As I read, my own shadows sat beside me, echoing Jaime's courage in confronting his. Again, the timing was uncanny, as I settle into a small Guatemalan mountain town, beginning a new chapter of service with the PeaceCorps, allowing my imagination to blossom in ways I hadn't expected. It truly felt as if this book found me.

This book is a companion for the inner journey.

Read it slowly.

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Read it more than once.

Let it speak to the places in you that are ready to be seen.

Of the many numinous questions presented, the one that's engrained itself into my psyche is:

“¿What if miracles were so common that they'd be hidden by their frequency?”

Robert Castillo

November 24, 2025

Chinique, Guatemala

“*Boat on Water of Soul* takes readers on a mythic journey into a world animated by dreams, where nature is kin. Through dreams, poetry, and active imagination, Jaime L. Prieto, Jr. explores a contemporary soul path shaped by lineage, grief, devotion, and awe. This book invites readers to remember a way of knowing rooted in relationship, wonder, and the living Earth.”

— Rebecca Wildbear, author of *Wild Yoga: A Practice of Initiation, Veneration, and Advocacy for the Earth*

MYTHOPOETIC INTRODUCTION

Welcome!
Welcome all!!
Welcome to my Boat!!!
We're embarking onto living Water
reflecting what matters most.

You're invited to swim underwater
and to breathe there.

The deeper you swim the darker it gets,
becoming easier to see your shadow disguising treasure.

If you are willing to close your eyes,
your in-sight will show you shades of many colors,
the feelings behind them,
and the flow of life-energy in all beings,
human and more-than-human.

This first Boat,
in which many souls travel together,
is the mythopoetic tale of Dreaming Salamander's search for Soul,
the one who knows why he was born.

~~~//~~~

A never-before-seen Bird hatched from an egg  
bigger than hands can hold  
stands on a platform in the middle of a church  
where all voices sit quietly,  
sings her song in the natural ways that birds do  
while listening to Roots of the Tree she is perched on,  
voicing the parts that matter most.

~~~//~~~

If a tree falls in the forest, those all around her feel her fall
as they receive a life-force she gives back.

There are many trees that fall that no human ever knows.

~~~//~~~

Once,  
I wandered East of Road 5 in the Ventana Wilderness  
stalking a surprise,  
and came upon a solitary purple flower,  
long green stem leaning on one side.

I asked it,  
"¿Why did you come out of the ground?"

A bee landed on it like it belonged,  
and then it flew away.

~~~//~~~

One night,
near the edge of Aravaipa Creek
in a rhythmic space held by one known as SalmonKing,
a salamander image came to me as an ally
of the West window of knowing,
the one between day and night,
offering perspective from below Roots.

Weeks later,
as I wandered the Sunol-Ohlone Wilderness,
Salamander recognized me,
slowly crawling under my left boot.

I asked many questions,
but he remained in place in following his ways.
I realized my standing upright didn't match the flat world he knows.
So, I joined him hands on ground, elbows bent to gaze eye to eye.

Salamander,
without hesitation came directly toward me
following my right arm's inner edge
continuing down my torso,
taking a sharp turn,
crossing my belly confirming his allyship.

~~~//~~~

Embarking on a solo fast with a cohort of wanderers,  
dreaming while in Beauty's Mesa, Utah  
I died, and woke up without a name  
as one who's apprenticing to the maker of dreams,  
guiding Souls onto Water.

~~~//~~~

No one knows the metaphoric meaning of dreams,
except the dreamer brave enough to explore and embody the images,
helped by Boulder, Tree and River.

~~~//~~~

Open the door, go outside toward the places where Trees grow  
together.

Explore, listen, feel.

Notice the places that call you closer.  
Some will be off the main path.  
Follow the nudge, even if a bit uncomfortable.

Say "hello" to the beings there.

Listen.

Perhaps a tree, a bush, or a rock calls to you.

Respond! Tell it what matters most right now!

~~~//~~~

One time,
a boulder in the shape of a whale reached toward me
from an outcrop in a canyon.

He let me lay hands on his head.
I closed my eyes and recounted a dream that was heavy,
painful for me to carry.

A loved one was lost.
I needed his help in reaching her.
Would he be willing to help out?

Instantly,
the grounded network he was immersed in activated.
All this was natural.

I saw his connection to all Earth beings
reaching the outcroppings of life nearest to her.

Sadly,
his influence reached the limit of concrete, rebar and mixed rock.

My loved one needed to open the door
and walk towards the woods,
away from the machine noises
and confusion of her routines
so she could receive the invitation to converse,
the hand of love extended from the heart.

My rock friend
then held my tears and my wailing,
telling me not to despair:

“All my Earth friends will remember the invitation for all time.
She just needs to meet them in the Woods.”

(Dedicated to Mary Flower)

~~~//~~~

Before going further into Dreamer's tale, you must know that he is a father to a son to whom this book is dedicated.

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## INTRODUCTION

This collection of dreams, visions, and poetry is a sample of my own journey of soul discovery, which includes cultivating wholeness, self-healing and courting my inner MuseBeloved, supported by guides from the Animas Valley Institute ([Animas.org](http://Animas.org)). The author is known as “Dreamer” or “Dreaming Salamander” throughout most of this book, which is intended for wanderers who are curious about the mysteries of life and death (i.e. Stage 4 of Bill Plotkin’s Eco-Soulcentric Developmental Wheel). The [Animas Glossary](#)<sup>2</sup> and [Animas.org](http://Animas.org) are good resources for concepts that are new to you.

The remainder of this Introduction is included for those who need information for their thinking mind to understand the context of what is happening in the book. It may be skipped if you don’t care as much, perhaps coming back later when context would be helpful. While the book is intended to be read from start to finish, you might also consider jumping around the Table of Contents reading dreams and poetry that pop out at you, or read the book in reverse order as in the dream “Captain Gives Dreamer Book of Wisdom.”

You will notice two main voices throughout the book: a left-brain voice whose prose is understood by the thinking mind, and the right-brain mythopoetic voice that speaks through dreams, poetry, art and the imagination. My original concept of this book only had the mythopoetic voice; after peer feedback from early drafts, I realized I needed the left-brain voice to create a context for relating to the other. In other words, the left-brain prose served as a boat toward the waters of the deep imagination.

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<sup>2</sup> Go to <https://www.animas.org/glossary-to-language-of-soul-canyon/>

All dreams arose organically while sleeping and were recorded chronologically in my journal after waking. This book lists impactful dreams chronologically at the top of the outline hierarchy. Poetry and stories related to a dream are included below the source dream and are usually written much later in time. The chronological order of associated poetry and stories is maintained within a dream, which may cause confusion when looking at poetry just a few pages away associated with other dreams. The date of when a dream occurs, tracked by the thinking mind is important as a means to finding and referencing the dream in the future; the dreaming mind is oblivious to chronological time. Without a concerted effort in recording dates, it would have been impossible for me to track it all.

Throughout the book, you'll notice some words capitalized, others are strung together and capitalized to transform them into proper names, acknowledging them as animate beings, not just objects or labels – e.g. Soul, Mystery, BlueRiver, SweetGum, SoulWoman, SmilingKing, Warden, WailingRock, etc. See the Glossary of Main Characters for reference.

“Mystery” is the name I use to refer to a universal consciousness which some refer to as “God.” “Soul” is what I use for the part of the Mystery which is uniquely mine, which knows why I am here, including the gifts and powers I have which the world needs most.

I first learned to write in Spanish while growing up in Puerto Rico before I learned to write in English. In my poetry, I've adopted the convention from the Spanish language of starting a question with an inverted question mark symbol “¿”, which is especially important when reading poetry out loud, so one can use the intonation of a question, instead of the intonation of a statement.

Dreamwork is my main practice for cultivating the deep imagination, the window of knowing of the West facet of the Self. Remembering

dreams is a practice that develops into a relationship with the DreamMaker, the mysterious source of dreams, which others refer to as Muse-Beloved, an archetype of the West facet of the Self,<sup>3</sup> which I usually call "MuseBeloved."

If you'd like to start a dreamwork practice, or for further exploration, go to Part 5. Invitations for Your Journey.

The Active Imagination practice, first developed by Carl Jung is similar to dreamwork in that a dream-like state of mind is elicited while awake and the resulting dialogue is recorded as it occurs. I start Active Imagination sessions with a dream as an entry point, though what transpires is not constrained to what happened in the dream. I found that typing what is happening in an Active Imagination session is an effective strategy for keeping my mind focused on which energies I'm embodying at the moment; without typing, I found myself getting lost, and not able to hold the thread of the session. I adopted the simple convention of using sentence case to indicate the dream-self is speaking, and ALL-CAPS to indicate the imaginal character voice<sup>4</sup>.

An "Imaginal Journey" is just like Active Imagination, except it is guided by someone else providing invitational prompts.

Artificial Intelligence was not used in this book, except for some spelling and grammar suggestions that arose automatically in the editor.

Animas guides WrenBear and LoveStorying guide some processes included in the book, highlighting my need for support in navigating

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.animas.org/glossary-to-language-of-soul-canyon/#Dark%20Muse-Beloved>

<sup>4</sup> This convention for Active Imagination was suggested by Ken James, PhD., a Jungian Analyst associated with Jung Platform <https://jungplatform.com/>

these waters. These recorded sessions were transcribed using [Descript.com](https://descript.com) which does use Artificial Intelligence to identify words, and to remove extra filler words.

You don't need psychedelics for the places I visited. No mind altering substances were used for dreams or in creating the contents of this book, except where indicated.

However, I notice that my dreams are clearest and most vivid during extended stays in wild places, while sleeping either in a tent or under the open sky. In the year 2022, in which I recorded many impactful dreams, I spent half of that year in the wild. You could say that I was under the influence of nature.

The type of dreamwork I practice is called "soulcentric dreamwork," which I learned from Animas guides, and is one in which the dream informs the dreamer from the inside by re-experiencing the dream during waking times, with the support of an experienced guide. As I gained some experience in this type of dreamwork, and began experiencing boulders, trees and rivers as being alive, I could get their support as guides or participants in the embodiment of my dreams. This evolving relationship with natural beings supported the cultivation of my deep imagination and an experience of everything being alive, like Rumi's worm in THE WORM'S WAKING of the epigraph.

This type of dreamwork does not use sources external to the dream for understanding (i.e. don't reference the web, tarot cards, or your ego in trying to interpret a dream); after spending time and conscious effort in embodying dream images, the ego is eventually called upon to help integrate the experiences into meaning (i.e. after the inner dream images have been given enough air time).

Dreamwork on a particular dream is never really done. Dreams reveal different layers of meaning over time, like they are alive in some way. So, the dreamwork in this book will never really be complete.

I strongly recommend this book be read slowly, out loud, and over time, allowing for the imagination to dance closely with the thinking mind, while tuned into and allowing feelings to arise. I find it helpful to read one poem a day in the morning, after re-reading the dream that is associated with it – allowing for your imagination to mingle with the images over the day. The gift of poetry, which often hides behind or between words, is found after it is read at least twice. Inhabiting Rumi's field "beyond ideas of rightdoing and wrongdoing," as encouraged in the practice of Nonviolent Communication, NVC ([CNVC.org](http://CNVC.org)) allows for a deeper listening.

In this book, I follow each dream with a "Reflection", where I describe my current understanding of the dream after considerable dreamwork.

This book does not describe a traditional therapeutic path; it is provided as a sample of going deeper into knowing oneself while waking up to the Muse-Beloved archetype as a guide to Soul, through the lineage of Carl Jung's depth psychology. Experienced guides and Jungian therapists should accompany any effort at personal growth, dreamwork and soul explorations.

Dreamwork and a connection to nature guided me toward a consciousness that knows me better than anyone, that wants to express itself through poetry, music, and art, and is inviting me to guide souls onto water, the element of the deep imagination. This book is one attempt at embodying the invitation<sup>5</sup> while taking on a form to be brought back to the Village.

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<sup>5</sup> Animas guides call this an "Experimental Threshold Crossing" or ETC.

While Western culture has generally lost a sense of “village,” the term is used here as the human element of a local and the greater Earth community. Similarly, the term “elder” is used for someone who has traversed a journey of Soul, and is a caregiver for the Soul of the world, supporting the younger generation in their personal and cultural evolution, while helping to manifest strategies that consider the needs of all beings.

Proceeds from the sale of this book go to the “[Wild Connection Development Program](#),” providing scholarships to NVC and Wild Mind practitioners encouraging cross-pollination.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.wildconnectiondevelopment.org/>

## MYTHOPOETIC OVERVIEW

This section gives a mythopoetic overview of the journey of modern Westerners through healing, and cultivating wholeness as a preparation for nature-based soul initiation.

It's as if life starts with a seed planted by one's parents in inherited soil, not knowing its kind yet.

The family cares for the sapling until one wakes up to care for its health and wellbeing, watching it grow to full size.

Then, once mature enough to bear fruit, Soul whispers a call to an epic adventure, even conspiring against the comfortable inertia of the "default" culture.

Some follow the ravine descending into a canyon, where the mature tree is cut down, hollowing its trunk for a journey toward one's true essence inhabiting the emergent boat guided by water of soul.

INNER JOURNEY TO WHOLENESS (MAY 8, 2025, REVISED  
Nov 26, 2025)

Much of my time growing up was focused  
on the impact of others.

Encouraged by the spiritual life of Cece,  
my mother the Gardener,  
and the many books she gave me,  
I was lucky to have found an inner life,  
a whole universe within and several windows of knowing to explore it.

View of the outside is shaped by inner perspectives formed as children,  
influenced by inherited archetypes.

Archetypes of wholeness highlight natural resources of aliveness  
and interdependent connection which healthy cultures  
embody in formative years.

Sadly,  
the culture in which I grew up focused on domination,  
leading to survival through protective hiding, appeasement,  
submission, escape, wounding,  
while denying the repression of powers the world really needs.

Western elders  
Carl Jung, James Hillman, Stephen Gallegos,  
inspired by indigenous peoples,  
supported the emergence of Bill Plotkin's *Wild Mind*, a field guide to  
the human psyche.

As he listened to the times of day,  
seasons, directions, and archetypal expressions,

nature guided the formation of a map  
organizing our natural resources into four facets of the Self  
mapped to cardinal directions  
helping us find our way back to wholeness.

We look up to Sky to honor our shared Spirit,  
the energy where we are all One.

As we look to the ground, and the underworld of Soul,  
we honor Mother Earth.

Looking across to each other in the middle-world of conscious  
awareness, we also acknowledge the rotation of the Earth,  
and the resulting magnetic field informing us of the four directions.

As we look and sense the East, especially at dawn when Sun is rising,  
we acknowledge the wholeness archetypes of  
the Innocent, Sage, Trickster, and Sacred Fool as our guides to Spirit.

As we embody our feelings in the South, at noon when Sun is highest,  
we acknowledge the archetype of  
the Wild Indigenous One as a guide to our Earthen Body.

As we imagine what's West, and the why behind all feelings at sunset,  
the time between day and night, we acknowledge the archetype of  
the Dark Muse-Beloved as our guide to Soul.

As our heart shapes our thinking, generating compassionate strategies  
that consider the needs of all beings, we engage our North at midnight  
when it is darkest, when we rely on our village elders while most  
sleep, we acknowledge the archetype of  
the Nurturing Generative Adult as our guide to the Mind.

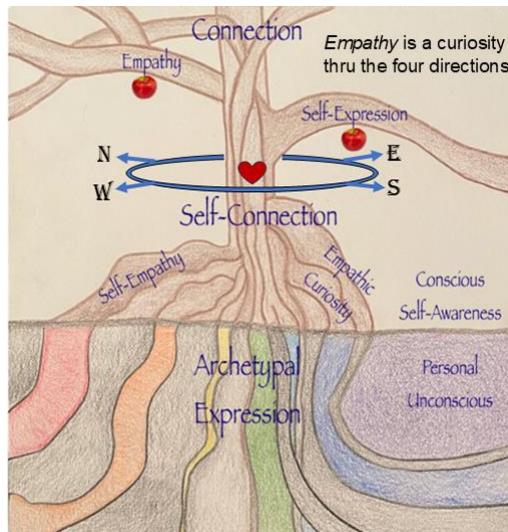
By honoring and following  
 the *Ceiba Connection Tree of Life*,  
 we cultivate wholeness and self-healing  
 in the roots of self-connection,  
 strengthening the trunk  
 while holding up the crown of connection  
 to all beings.

May we find the inspiration  
 to follow the poetry of our peers,  
 an honoring of ancestors, and  
 the guidance of elders  
 in cultivating our inner-compass,  
 healing and finding ourselves,  
 and our own song along the way  
 as we grow the world we yearn for.

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Caption: Vision on 4/5/2022 ~ 3 AM at Aravaipa Canyon, AZ
 Venn diagram showing four aspects of psyche revealing an
Ichthys fish covering the intersection's center,
 swimming from Spirit toward Soul



Caption: Vision on 4/5/2022 at Aravaipa Canyon, AZ, resulting in the *Ceiba Connection Tree of Life* as a relational metaphor integrating the Archetypal Expression of Plotkin's *Wild Mind* with Connection of *Nonviolent Communication* (NVC) by Marshall Rosenberg, PhD.

THE VOICE THAT KNOWS MY SONG (MAY 9, 2025)

I've woken up to a longing
for deeper meaning.

A subtle voice was around before I was born,
knows who I am,
why I'm here —
my place in the Village
within the forest on the territory
that my heart inhabits.

My ego identity,
whose valiant efforts found safety
and a persona for belonging,
must retire so the voice
that knows my song
can be heard.

Like the shell of an egg,
a sacred container of nourishment, safety, and growth,
my ego must die psycho-spiritually for my Soul to emerge
like a feisty bird
spreading her wings
escaping the grasp of the Warden.

This never-before-seen bird,
perched on a branch of the *Tree of Life*
sings words of poetry
from the heart
of me.