

# COLLISIONS AND TRANSITIONS

*Festschrift in Honour of*

## JAN VALENTIN SAETHER

*on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday on March 18 2014*

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## FOREWORD

This is a labor of love! On the occasion of Jan's 70th birthday, it seemed high time to publish a volume in celebration of this artist, teacher, priest and mystic who has been deeply instrumental in the lives of so many people. Privileged to know all sides of Jan's activities, as well as his friends, colleagues and environments both in Norway and California, we resolved to embrace the challenge of bringing as many of them together in one volume as possible.

As Jan's close family, perhaps we are not the ideal stewards of this territory, as it is typical, in the scholarly sense, to avoid mixing personal and professional matters. But Jan is not a traditional scholar; he is an artist and a Gnostic, both of which have always made it their business to break rules and test limits. Besides, after post-modernism, does anyone truly believe there is such a thing as unbiased research and documentation?

We are reminded that our time on earth is short; several of Jan's dear friends and colleagues, whose participation we would very much have loved to include in this celebration, are already gone. This adds a greater sense of urgency to collect and systematize the fragments while the "primary sources" (as those with first hand knowledge are often referred to) are still alive and kicking. We would especially like to mention: *Tor Kaare Kvaal*, *Rev. Michael Lafferty*, *Prof. Charles Vernoff*, and *Philip A. Shelton*, each of them an invaluable colleague, brilliant professional and beloved friend; all of whom we are quite certain would have been thrilled to contribute to this collection. They are deeply missed.

So, we scrap the conventional way of doing it: Solveig is Jan's oldest daughter, and Hanne his third wife. We have been first-hand witnesses to much of his labor. Hanne is also Jan's collaborator in the project of restoring an old French farm – a project Nils Ole Oftebro has referred to as "buying the cat in the bag". This is a Norwegian expression meaning something akin to having purchased a bag of magic beans from a crooked old man on the way to market.

We are happy to relay that Jan is deeply moved by all these contributions, and by the thought of the big celebration set to take place in France in June. Jan

is a warm, wonderful professional, friend and family member. He is caring, intelligent, kind, and has a deep knowledge of the alchemy of art and the esoteric. Those of us who know Jan realize and forgive the fact that “I’ll be there in 5-10-15 minutes” is a meaningless statement should something on the canvas catch his eye, suddenly demanding his immediate attention. He will be lost in his painting until the daylight slips away from him.

We would like to sincerely thank each and every one of the authors for their marvelous contributions to this Festschrift. The stories, artwork and poems together give a unique glimpse into Jan and his cosmology. We have friends and stories reaching from the early 1960s until the present day; stories about Gnosis, about art, about craftsmanship, caring and nurturing, and about realizing the world and one’s dreams therein.

We would also like to thank all friends, family, and colleagues who have signed the Tabula Gratulatoria, or list of congratulators in this publication.

*Truth did not come naked into this world,  
but it came in types and images.*  
– The Gospel of Philip

With much love and gratitude!

Oslo  
Costa Mesa  
May 2014

Hanne Storm Ofteland  
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