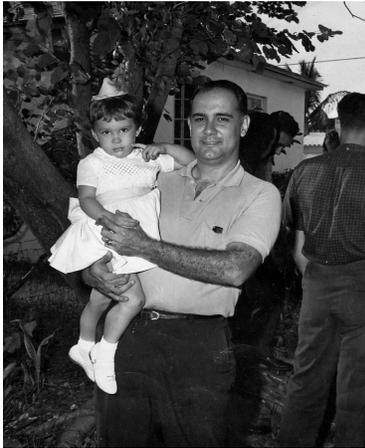


## Love's 4th Dimension

Maria Isabel Pita



When someone you love dies, wouldn't it be wonderful to still be able to see them on a regular basis? This might popularly be considered a "pipe dream" question but the actual answer is—Yes, you can, in your dreams.

The knowledge that we have 'bodies terrestrial and bodies celestial' is by no means new. One of the profound joys of lucid dreaming is the gift of directly, consciously experiencing our supra-physical body while still "muffled in flesh." Many lucid dreamers, myself included, lose their fear of death. A lucid dream is, in essence, an out of (physical) body experience. Whether it be termed a Lucid Dream or an O.B.E. the experience of transcendence, which is also vividly sensual, is a life-changing revelation. And dreams have always, without fail, let me know when someone I loved was getting ready to cross over. In the summer of 2006, I had this vivid little dream:

My father, I call him Papi, and his wife are sitting together at a small round table on an upper balcony of an outdoor restaurant. The sun is shining but they both look very sad, depressed, low energy. I walk up to them and remind Papi that we're supposed to visit the pyramids together. He tells me he doesn't think he can make it. I'm very upset and insist we have to go, reminding him he promised me we would.

A few days later, I received an email from my father informing me that he had been diagnosed with Leukemia. In the following months we grew closer than ever as together we confronted the mystery of death, and I did my best to help him face it without fear. The pyramids of ancient Egypt are monumental expressions of an unshakable belief in immortality. Metaphorically speaking, my father and I did, indeed, visit them together. Seven months after his diagnosis, he passed away. The evening after his funeral, I was standing in the bathroom of a hotel room my husband and I were staying in on our way home, and as I brushed my hair I heard my father say joyfully, "Maria, my love!" His voice did not register in my physical eardrums but was not outside of me either; it was as clear as a bell ringing directly in my head. "You were right, Maria! You were right!" I went to bed that night determined to have a lucid dream and find him on the Other Side:

I find myself standing in a small town of sorts staring at the entrance to a theater, and at once I become lucid. I concentrate on the open door through which people are streaming out onto the street,

absolutely determined my father will be one of them... and there he is! At once we're embracing, but I notice he looks a bit groggy and confused. He warns me in the way he always did when he was worried about me—You have to be careful here, Maria. Even as I keep my eyes on his face I realize it has changed and I am hugging a man with a similar build and complexion who isn't my father anymore. Abruptly he collapses at my feet as though shot through the heart at the same time I notice another man standing nearby. The stranger's intensely focused eyes stare directly into mine and his smile is so chilling, I realize it is imperative I get away from there as fast as possible. I launch myself into the sky and fly away...

I believe this man was one of my Guides protecting me from the dangers of a "place" on the Other Side I was not prepared for, but to which the force of my grief and love propelled me, hence my father's warning.

I had the following dream about a year ago:

I'm working late at night in my study, writing about lucid dreaming. As I finish a chapter and sit back contentedly, Papi walks in. The sense of him is utterly real, totally present, his white dress shirt luminous in the darkness. Smiling down at me, he rests his hand on the back of my chair and says—This is the future. I understand he means we're already living in the future by being together in my lucid dreams.

Not long ago, I had one of the most special dreams of my life to date:

I'm driving alone at night and turn left into the driveway of my childhood home. I think of parking on the grass to the right of the driveway, but that isn't necessary; I can park in the official spot because I'm in charge of the place now that no one is living in it anymore. The inside of the house is the deepest, darkest black imaginable. I experience a faint tinge of anxiety about entering it and staying there for a while, but I know there aren't any intruders lying in wait for me or any other hostile forces I need fear. But as I approach the front door a car pulls up and parks in the grass in front of the house. I'm very happy my family has arrived and I need not wait for them inside all alone. I'm so happy Papi is in the back seat! As he leans forward, he says something to me...

I don't remember the transition but now it's a lovely sunny day and I'm walking toward a long white structure. The single story building is surrounded by a white stone walkway punctuated with matching benches looking out on lush grass and flowering trees. I follow the walkway until I come upon Papi sitting on one of the benches. I ask him if I can sit with him and he promptly moves over as he apologizes—Sorry, but here we tend to sit in the center just because we can. I reach for his hand and cling to it. In the peaceful silence, I become acutely aware of being there with him. I look around us, and the lucid sense of being fully present in the moment intensifies as I say—You know, we're sitting here now in reality, but we could also already be sitting together on the Other Side, with nothing to fear, not ever... To which Papi replies—I feel we could be, because of the sun.

Minutes after waking from this dream, I walked outside with my dog and a fine mountain mist enabled me to look directly at the rising sun. There it was in all its orange-gold splendor, the solar disc as clearly visible to my naked eye as the full moon. The vision felt like a blessing, like a gift from my father telling me we truly had been together in my dream.

In our recreation room there is a very comfortable queen size guest bed that folds down from the wall. A few months ago, I decided to make this room my official lucid dreaming space on two nights a week.

At the very least, I would be guaranteed sleep uninterrupted by my husband tugging on the sheets or the cat jumping on the bed, and I also felt it might help concentrate my intent to become lucid on an even more regular basis. On my first night sleeping in my new space, I had this dream:

May 2, 2013

I believe I'm awake and lying in my new lucid dreaming bed in the rec room when my husband suddenly walks in with our dog, who he mischievously drops on the bed. I demand—What are you doing here? You know I'm trying to sleep and have a lucid dream! It's extremely unlikely he is really there and I wonder—Am I dreaming this? I'm not sure if I wake for a few moments after this and go back to sleep, or whether the false awakening continues, but now I'm alone facing the wall at the foot of the bed and a door that is not there in waking reality. The door is open and I recognize my parents' old bedroom, the one they shared when I was a child. I get the strong sense of Papi, but of course he won't be in there anymore... Feeling just a little unnerved, I close the door. I would rather fly through the window, but when I plant my hands against it I'm disappointed it feels perfectly real and solid... Waking, I open my eyes to the star-like waning moon shining down on my face. I lay there absorbing its light feeling it can help me lucid dream...

I believe I'm awake lying on my left side facing the dark room, the glass doors behind me. In the dream the flat screen TV runs parallel to the top of my head whereas in reality it forms a right angle with my head. I tense when I hear a quiet yet distinct, absolutely real voice. There is someone in the room with me, I have no doubt about that, but I'm not as scared as I should be because it sounded just like Papi who spoke a single word in Spanish—Porfavor. (Please.) I find the courage to ask—Que? (What?) He answers—Ven aqui. (Come here.) That seems like too much to ask because this is really creepy. I protest—Pero tengo miedo, Papi! (But I'm afraid!) His reply translates to—Move now. Don't wait. I struggle to sit up; it's difficult to move and not just because I'm scared; I have a hard time coordinating my limbs. Managing a sitting position, I know for a fact I'm dreaming when I see my father sitting in front of the bay windows, his sky-blue sweat pants distinctly visible in the darkness. My fear mostly evaporates then and I approach him. I'm not surprised Papi is here; it feels right and natural, like the next step in our nocturnal relationship. He gestures apologetically and I notice that in the dream space there are no other chairs. I say quickly—That's okay, I'll just sit here. I perch on a child-size circular table in front of him, the sort kids sit around to draw and have fun. Papi is smiling at me but I'm a little concerned he is as thin now as he was before he died. He begins speaking in Spanish—You know, when you're rupturing inside... The details escape me but I understand he's talking about the last few hours of his life and the nightmare ride in the ambulance in the middle of the night. I sense he needs to share this with me, for both our sakes, but am distracted by how oddly high-pitched and reedy his voice is becoming. I say—Papi, you sound funny... and you don't really look like yourself. His smiling response is perfectly eloquent. Of course, on the Other Side no one has a fixed form. As I study his face, familiar yet slightly different, I phase out of the dream.

I woke too soon to hear everything he had to say, but my father apparently wanted to share the last moments of his life with me, when he was confronting the ultimate fear. The more I thought about it, the more this dream seemed to embody the question—Are you ready to rise above your fears? I may have passed an important test by conquering my dread and getting up to speak with him. The child's drawing table was a very positive symbol of beginning something, of creatively learning and growing. "Move now, don't wait," Papi said, words I don't believe are meant to be taken only literally. It is significant that the first night I slept in my new dream space my father came to me so vividly. I believe he is encouraging me to do everything I can to strengthen and fully develop my natural lucid dreaming abilities, urging me to "move now" with my dreams. The door to his old bedroom appeared at the foot

of my bed, opening onto the past and our physical life together, then he greeted me with the word “Please” from the opposite side of the room... Please let us continue growing together in this lucid 4th Dimension bridging physical reality and the Other Side?

Three months later, there is no doubt in my heart that Papi helped baptize my new lucid dreaming space. So far, every time I move to the rec room at around 3:00 in the morning, during my Wake Back to Bed ritual which includes thoughtfully reviewing my feelings and intents, I have at least one, and frequently three or more lucid dreams. Most nights my dreams begin in the rec room and, recognizing it, I immediately become lucid.

My father’s love and presence are as much a part of my life now as before he crossed over, and in a profound sense I feel closer to him than ever before. Perhaps because I wholeheartedly believe an ongoing relationship with deceased loved ones is possible, is one reason I remain accessible to them in dreams, my love and faith akin to a bonfire burning in the darkness of Mystery.

## EPILOGUE

I now know one of the reasons Papi came to me in the rec room that night.

I sent his wife, Adela, a printed copy of Love's 4th Dimension. She just called me and spoke to me for a long time. She confessed that she had never told me the full story of my father's last day. When she called me from the hospital at 5:00 in the morning to tell me Papi had died, I assumed they had just taken an ambulance there, because the last I had heard he was at home. In truth, the previous morning, Papi had begun coughing up blood. He didn't want to go the hospital but Adela finally persuaded him to and so at around 10:00 the ambulance came and took them. He went first to the emergency room but his doctor managed to put him in his old ocean facing room, where he remained. During that time, many friends and loved ones came to see him, as did their priest, and Adela said he was calm and at peace. He firmly refused another blood transfusion, which his doctor kept trying to persuade him to get. He simply said to her every time she insisted, “Let's wait until tomorrow.” He knew there would be no tomorrow. He reassured Adela that he knew he was going to a better place and wasn't afraid anymore. When night fell and everyone else left, she stayed with him on a cot placed next to his bed, although she didn't sleep but mostly sat watching him. She was there when she heard the machine helping him breathe stop, which meant he had passed. The nurses later assured her he hadn't been in any serious pain for he only pressed the medication button three times time during his stay.

I knew in the dream Papi had been speaking to me about the last hours of his life when he was “rupturing inside” but because I didn't know the full story, I assumed he was referring to an ambulance ride in the middle of the night. As Adela was telling me what actually happened, a light seemed to fill my heart and I understood that Papi had arranged for this conversation between us. I felt, I *knew*, Papi wanted me to know how he had *really* spent the last day of his life. He wanted me to know he had been at peace, that he had realized he was living his last day and that he wasn't afraid or in pain. He wanted me to stop thinking about the last hours of his life as a “nightmare ambulance ride in the middle of the night”. In truth, he spent the day looking out at the ocean surrounded by loved ones, Adela's extended family, who all lived in Miami, unlike his three children who lived in different States and wouldn't have been able to make it there in time. I only wish he had called me that last day so I could have spoken to him, as I did everyday. In the more than seven years since his passing, Adela had never told me what really happened. It seems Papi understood he had to get her to do so, hence my dream and the ensuing article, which I sent her. Now the dream feels complete and makes perfect sense to me. As Adela spoke, I felt I was hearing everything Papi had said to me in the dream.