

How the Story of our Universe Evolving Snagged Me

I started writing folk music on the east coast in the early 70's with the intent of gaining notoriety as a singer songwriter performer. Through many albums and performances, and a few years of immersion in the world of classical guitar, there was a gnawing at my insides that began growing. A tangible question finally surfaced around wondering what this music and interest in sound was all about. By the mid 80's there was a distinct feeling of emptiness, even though I had finished a new guitar piece based on James Lovelock's work articulating the Gaia hypothesis. I shared this ennui, mostly with a female dancer friend as we discussed working together artistically. She could relate. I could always get jazzed writing another solo guitar composition or a new song on piano, but began recognizing that motivation as springing from a self perspective, with little context for how it connected to everything else in the world.

One day in 1986 a woman, Laura, who I would end up married to for a few years, popped a tape into the cassette deck as we were driving down the coast towards Santa Cruz. It was a recording of a talk by a woman, Miriam Teresa MacGillis, called The Fate of the Earth. I was mesmerized, and then in the days afterwards, overwhelmed. The seeds of a container for all the music were planted. Upon arriving home the typewriter began clicking, transcribing Miriam's talk word for word. For the next year it was my spiritual reference guide for interpreting events around me.

A year later Laura and I found our way to Saline Valley, deep in the California desert. By the middle of the trip I was miserable with poison oak. With desert exploring not an option, I ended up reading the rest of the trip. A book was within easy reach, brought by a friend of Laura's. It was The Universe is a Green Dragon by Brian Swimme. Poison oak faded far into the background, as the world began to shimmer with a kind of spiritual blur.

Upon arriving home, my dancer friend and I began hatching the first of what would be many artistic forays into articulating this new vision of the human, and our relationship to the great surround. The first was a week long run in San Francisco(1990) of a theatrical show, The Understory, messages from the living earth.. We interviewed Miriam, Matthew Fox and Brian for a section called Voices of Hope. My old guitar and piano pieces were reformed and retitled to explore all the intricacies of this heartstopping perspective. I began to periodically contribute music for retreats lead by Brian and Thomas Berry, also getting to create a performance with Miriam for spoken word, dance and guitar.

A couple years later I crashed. Significant headaches from the mid-afternoon until falling to sleep. This went on almost every day for a year. This plays tricks with the mind. I came to believe that I had placed all my eggs in one basket for understanding how we would end up transforming the mess we were in, to a sustainable path. The eggs and the basket were the universe story. I realized that one of the core teachings of the universe was differentiation. There could never be a single umbrella perspective that would end up as the answer to our ills.

One perspective could not actually attract the diversity of human experience. My scope of understanding seemed to shake loose, with a period of intensive study of the dharma (teachings of the Buddha) helping to personalize insight. For a short time there was a sense of pushing away the new cosmology, fed by the readings of James Hillman, who stated that it was too big, it just did not touch most people where they lived – in the immediate day to day journey of life.

Then a slow process of incorporation began. Ken Wilber identifies the concept of “transcend and include” as something that evolution naturally engages in. So, for me, the epic of evolution is now woven together with the dharma and the perspective & activism of the Bioneers into a seamless whole, providing a broad fabric of faith upon which to wrap myself in health and sickness.

It had finally become clear what the music was about. It was all about being in service. Music could be a language for change, a language of spirit.

A not-for-profit [Octave Alliance.org](http://OctaveAlliance.org) was launched in 2000, to explore the concept of bringing music to the center of social change efforts. Our first product was finished in time for release at Earth Spirit Rising 2001, [10,000 Thunderstorms – *the spirit of evolution*](#).