

### *Paling of Ancestors*

I had never before looked on the blinding world in this trusting manner—through an eye I shared only with the soul, the soul and mother of the universe. Across the crowded creation of the invisible savannahs the newborn wind of spirit blew the sun making light of everything, curious hands and feet, neck, shoulder, forehead, material twin shutter and eye. They drifted, half-finished sketches in the air, until they were filled suddenly from within to become living and alive. I saw the tree in the distance wave its arms and walk when I looked at it through the spiritual eye of the soul. First it shed its leaves sudden and swift as if the gust of the wind that blew had ripped it almost bare. The bark and wood turned to lightning flesh and the sun which had been suspended from its head rippled and broke into stars that stood where the shattered leaves had been in the living wake of the storm. The enormous starry dress it now wore spread itself all around into a full majestic gown from which emerged the intimate column of a musing neck, face and hands, and twinkling feet. The stars became peacocks' eyes, and the great tree of flesh and blood swirled into another stream that sparkled with divine feathers where the neck and the hands and the feet had been nailed.

This was the palace of the universe and the windows of the soul looked out and in. The living eyes

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in the crested head were free to observe the twinkling stars and eyes and windows on the rest of the body and the wings. Every cruel mark and stripe and ladder had vanished. I saw a face at one of the other constructions and windows from my observation tower. It was the face of one of the dreaming crew that had died. Carroll, I said, nudging my shoulder, as one would address an oracle for confirmation. Carroll was whistling. A solemn and beautiful cry—unlike a whistle I reflected—deeper and mature. Nevertheless his lips were framed to whistle and I could only explain the difference by assuming the sound from his lips was changed when it struck the window and issued into the world. It was an organ cry almost and yet quite different I reflected again. It seemed to break and mend itself always—tremulous, forlorn, distant, triumphant, the echo of sound so pure and outlined in space it broke again into a mass of music. It was the cry of the peacock and yet I reflected far different. I stared at the whistling lips and wondered if the change was in me or in them. I had never witnessed and heard such sad and such glorious music. I saw a movement and flutter at another window in the corner of my eye like a feather. It was Schomburgh's white head. He too was listening rapt and intent. And I knew now that the music was not an hallucination. He listened too, like me. I saw he was free to listen and to hear