

## *Flaming Creatures* (2/1/89)

I was waiting for boarding, crowded into a small room. The impatience was unbearable. I made my way down the corridor, through the packed passengers. It was stifling – oppressive. Then, I realized I was without my bags.

There was a beautiful young woman and her family at the end of the hall. We talked briefly. Suddenly the stewardess was ushering me onto a tram and I was being shuttled into the city with her and her family, then into their car, streaking through the city.

Arriving at their home, as we got out of the car, I was standing next to her, looking into her eyes. I felt closeness, a deep *sympatico*, an immediate intimacy. Everything reminded me of what could have been California, of the land, the sun, the people, of everything that was right.

Suddenly, down the steep incline to my right, we saw a car burning out of control, on the road below. Leaping and sliding down the hill as fast as I could, the grass was dead and dry, but I noticed as my feet slid – the earth underneath was damp.

As I reached the car, I could see it was a family: a man, woman and several children. They were panicked, charred and burnt. Lifting the still burning body of a young child from the wreckage, I could not tell if the limp body was alive or not.

The woman, the mother – looked at me and paused, briefly but calmly as if questioning in her glance what I was looking at.... what I was doing there.

The family dog was madly running and leaping around the burning car uncontrollably, his fur and flesh blazing. When I scrambled back up the hill, the woman was again at my side, and as I glance back at the car – I saw the dog standing there, calmly looking at me – engulfed in flames.