One night I dreamed

Development of an
Ecological Villa in Puerto Rico
by

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The job

For some reason the alarm clock went off at the wrong time, it was 6:50 am instead of 5:30 am. My wife told me: "I have to leave in 10 minutes", so I took care of the children, I set the therapy to the little one, and I dressed the other one. I got them in the car almost without breakfast. The traffic was hefty, so I arrived late for a meeting. Imagine, one hr. 20 min traffic; Surely got to my nerves, accumulated tiredness, and fatigue. All worsened when the meeting wasn't successful, as we could not accomplish the needed tasks, which delayed an entire month of work.

On the way home the traffic was easier going taking only 35 minutes to travel the 10 miles between my work, schools, and home. I prepared some fast food; I made macaroni and cheese to my children and for my wife and me, rice with corned beef. I ate, my children ate, and we sat down to do the assignments, later they bathe and were put them to sleep. At about 7:30 p.m. I see my wife's car approaching between the neighboring houses, passing the winding road and going up to our house arriving at the end of a trip around the island. Without realizing it was already 10:30, I bathed and went to bed. At 11:11, already in bed before falling asleep, I said to myself: "I will have to do this again tomorrow." I fell asleep exhausted in my bed.

The Paradise

That night I dreamed that I was in a paradise with my mind I had reached heaven. The sky was like the Earth, the climate like Puerto Rico, tropical; I walked, but I did not know where I was. There were fruit trees of all kinds, full of fruit, over 30 mangoes varieties. I harvested a large mango the size of my son's mini-football ball. I took the fruit it must have weighed more than five pounds, I smelled it, and I opened it taking out its perfectly ripen skin. I brought it to my lips and felt its distinctive aroma, like something I had never smelled before, just an exquisite, excellent fruit. I kissed the fruit and ate it. I sensed the delicious taste with all my senses. Someone had planted a paradise in that place. The mango was so big and so much abundance in that place that I just tossed away and ran to another tree; this one was full of oranges. There must have been more orange varieties, lemons, and fruits than anywhere else I have seen and being, it was utterly fantastic. The trees were not planted in rows as in commercial production but were spread throughout the farm, occupying not only horizontal space but vertically integrated. There were almost no to few weeds; yet, creeping covering plants grew with yellow flowers and succulent plants that retained a lot of water in the soil.

I opened an orange, and to my surprise, it was red inside, each segment was huge. I removed the 'well-skin' that covers each segment and exposed the pulp and juice sacs. Each juice sac looked like living and radiant 'cells.' I took the segment and turned it over to remove its skin and exposed it indirectly to the sun; it had a brilliant, shiny, radiant red color. As I thought about eating it, I felt I was going to fill my body with the sun, air, water, and minerals. I took it in my hand and placed it slowly in my mouth. Wow, it was the freshest flavor as each of the juice sacs 'exploded' in my mouth. As I was biting its taste, spread my whole body and its essence reached my brain. It was like those fruits, growing in this paradise, had something I could not describe, a flash, something indescribable to my senses.

This place was so big that I walked lost for several hours and everywhere there were fruit trees, some that I had never seen before, some sour and others that when eating them changed the taste of other fruits. I found many vegetables but they were not planted in lines or on benches with plastic as I had always seen them, but they were all sizes everywhere. It was as if seeds had fallen there, which germinated by themselves.

This paradise had some excellent roads, which ran across the contour of the land, were not mud like the roads of our farms, but were covered by plants. I found one of these creeping plants and had a very deep root, you could tell these have been stepped, on many times, but they were very resistant. As I followed a road, I had a feeling that where I had 'materialized' in that dream was the center of an immense farm. I walked towards a

hill, wanting to reach a high point vista to see what I could appreciate the place.

As I walked, I passed under small bridges where water ran very slowly; it moved around the contour slowly reaching lakes, which I think were planned and excavated in the place. When I approached one of these lakes, I saw how the fish were jumping. The water was so clear you could see thousands of fish swimming. I entered the water to swim a little; then a fish jumped in my hands; it was as if they were not afraid of me. It looked at me with its big eyes and then bounced back into the water. Then I laughed, laughed and laughed, as the fish were stroking my chest and legs. I came out of the water with a big smile. Then I saw a giant tree it was a Guayacán, it was magnificent and majestic; it had to be there for thousands of years planted in this place. I hugged his strong and thick woods, but I could not close my arms and hands around its big trunk. Some branches produced amber-colored resins; it seems that people accumulated these resins in beautiful bottles that were hanging on the tree. After drying myself in the sun, with a gentle fresh breeze, I fell asleep on a carpet of green grass in front of the majestic Guayacán.

The Girl

I opened my eyes quietly to a new fresh day. I could not recall how long I slept there; sleeping in a dream was magnificent. Thousands and thousands of birds woke me up as they chirped and sang from a nearby wooded area. It was like a coordinated bird concert. I looked out over the tree line and saw, for the first time, a family walking away, they were far, a mile or two. I started calling them, but with the wind towards me and the trees swaying back and forth, they could not hear my call. I quickly began to walk towards that family. I wanted to know, where I was, who had planned and planted this beautiful paradise. After walking for about half an hour, I started walking the path the family had passed. I climbed a small hill and saw a large stone where I sat down to admire the landscape. I saw a series of houses, maybe about 26 from what I could see. The ample space between them, two or three acres, didn't allow me to count them all. These houses had green walls, green roofs, and colorful vegetable gardens. There was also the main building from where exquisite music strings played to all over the area. As I approached the village, I saw a girl, about four years old, dressed simply in white clothes and with fresh tropical sandals, her hair was long and black and played well with a kind of spinning top. It was very peculiar because with a cord the girl rotated a wheel and then magically balanced the spinning top on a hanging rope. When angling the cord the spinning top kept horizontally as if flying. When the spinning top stopped, I went to the girl and asked her "Hello girl, what's your name and what's this town called?" However, the girl did not look at me, it seemed she could not hear me, so I stood in front of her I asked once again, but could not get any answer from her. I thought the girl was so focused on her game that she had not seen me, not even heard me, so I went a little closer and beckoned her, however, the girl continued her play as if I were a ghost. I said goodbye to the girl without understanding why she did not answer me and I kept walking towards the center where the music came from, it was as if there was a party or something like that.

The house

When walking, I found a house more closely; the property divided by green walls, plants, the house was built as a mixture of cement, mud and dry leaves. The roof was green; the water percolated from it and fell on channels that came to some tanks like brick. I went to the front door and knocked, but nobody answered, the door was open, I got curious and went in, with a sense of respect and a little anxiety because I was entering a property that was not mine. The house was relatively small, but perfectly designed, there were many books everywhere, with symbols and in a language, I could not understand. I saw a kind of door as if it were a refrigerator, but you could not see it plugged into anything, but it integrated into the house. As I turned to the door to exit the house, I saw a huge window placed just east of the house. There was a vast lake, a landscape of trees and flowers that I had never seen before. I sat on a piece of furniture made of beautiful wood and imagined for a moment that I lived there and that I would like to observe the sunrise that lake every morning providing its first light rays this home. My anxiety dissipated, the aroma of the house was one of flowers, the air flowed amazingly through holes in the floor and ground, there was peace in that place, and the design was incredibly perfect for such a small space.

After admiring the landscape, I decided to look for someone to help me find out where I was; definitely, if I had just died I felt in paradise, but if not I just wanted to know how to return to this place. So I continued on my way to the center. When I left towards the main road, I saw that there were chickens in large pens, where they seemed to rotate between the corrals, planted over these were some trees that provided fruits to the hens as they felt and there were many, many eggs. I walked I saw a place of compost, worms, and some containers full of fruit preserves. There were also medicinal plants, some of which I had never seen before, of varied colors, I passed my hand over them, and the aromas were many, one in particular, stank. When I left the road, I looked back and saw all the fruit plants I had seen in other places and many more. I thought about this kind of life, so I want to live! In harmony with nature, in peace and tranquility. That traffic of one hour and 20 minutes it is not very attractive.

Between here and there

I kept my way determined to know where I was and how I could acquire a home in that paradise. I walked towards the center; the townspeople were having a kind of meeting. An old man was speaking, judging by his appearance he had to be at least 90 years old, a boy and a girl replied to the old man. I did not understand what they were saying, but after each person spoke, people laughed. The people felt alive, radiant. I then remembered the traffic jam seeing people sitting at the opposite direction, one after the other, rich or poor they had bitter faces, looking sad, with the cell phone stuck to their head, solving problems or talking over. On the other hand, these people were agile, vibrant, radiating an aura of health and happiness that was palpable in the environment, it seemed that they always ate those little orange juice sacs when I started my journey through this unknown place. I approached a lady and said: "Good afternoon, could you tell me ..." without me finishing my question, the woman moved back and sat down in an armchair. Just as the white dressed girl, the lady could not see me, I was a ghost that no one could see. I stood in front of the platform, I screamed, I called everyone, but it was as if I was not there, as if everyone collectively ignored me. I did not know what to do, lost in a paradise, there but without being there. All of the sudden I noticed a wooden table that was full of fruits and foods of many colors, an abundance I had never seen before. I quickly walked towards the table; I wanted to see more closely what it was then. At 5:30 am in the 'real world' my alarm clock sounded loud. I hit the snooze bottom thinking I was turning it off trying to return to paradise. I arrived there quickly, I was on the ground, and some of the people around me looked at me, it seems that I was no longer a ghost, the old man who had been talking when I came in, calmly tried to communicate something, but I did not understand. At that moment the alarm goes off once again and I quickly snooze it hoping to return. There I was lying on the floor, and people seemed to be doing something to my body, something like artificial respiration to 'revive me.' They did it with a lot of love and respect as if they were not afraid if they 'died,' the old man would repeat something to me, but I could not recall what he was saying. In a second I was floating over my body, I saw myself lying there and watched as that group of people joined their hands making a circle around me, as if they were praying in silence, the old man whispered something in my ear. That minute the alarm went off again, I snoozed it, but this time I had already woken up. I realized that the alarm clock had been reset to make it sound every minute. I stayed in bed, I looked at the ceiling, I looked at my wife sleeping next to me, I thought about the traffic jam, I thought, about the food that I would eat that afternoon and that night. I thought about the old man, and I was curious to know what was he whispering in my ear. I imagined awake what had happened to me and visualized the old man talking to me. I tried to remember what he was saying; it seems that it was something significant which he and the other people wanted me to know. For the moment and out of nowhere my brain thought the word, Rodina, Rodina, Rodina. It is as if that word had been transcribed and transported from that other world to ours through me.

Own responsibility

Upon awakening, I stretched, lifted my self out of bed, bathed, took my children to school and went to work. This time the traffic jam was not so bad, only 45 minutes, as usual. At about 12 o'clock I see an old man through

my window's office, and I remembered the dream I had had and the word Rodina, so I decided to Google it.

"Rodina (Russian **родина**) is a transliteration of a generic Russian word meaning place of birth. When capitalized, it's used to describe the whole country, particularly in political speech. The Russian language assigns arbitrary genders to nouns. The word "Rodina" is feminine and "usually" translated to English as motherland as opposed to otchizna - fatherland."

Hum, **why** that word, 'motherland. It seems that for these people it was imperative that I understood that. Sitting in front of my computer I turned off the monitor and thought that we rarely have time to see where we are going, we spend all day working on the system so that the system works, but we do not think that maybe the system has already given the best of itself. In the economic situation where we are, its collapse could happen, and maybe we should think that if that happens, we will reinvent ourselves. Maybe it will be difficult, but then we will make a better system. It is possible that this is a new system, a different one, is abundant. Where resources are renewed and permanent, where we can develop critical thinking, educate our children appropriately, have a dense and nutritious diet, that keep us healthy, and that allows us to think to continue being human. Dreams are our responsibility to make them true; it is our reason for being! Humans create what we want; we concentrate our thoughts to make things material. If we dedicate our lives to ask ourselves why another, those or the government has not done it, we will always be saying that we will concentrate our energies on the incorrect path. We worry, instead of focusing on writing, describing and concentrating the creation of the new world. With this dream I have materialized my future, he will come in some way or another because it is my full responsibility. Time will be irrelevant, and this dream is material, if you print it, you will see it physically, and when you plant your first tree in paradise, you will see how the thought materializes from a dream. Dream and live, there is no better time than today! I am in this paradise, and you? ... Remember, it is your responsibility and nobody else's.

Summary of the author's life:

My name is Joaquín Andrés Chong Núñez, I was born in Quito, Ecuador. When I was two years old, my family immigrated to Puerto Rico. My father, originally from China, died when he was young and my mother is from Ecuador. I have two brothers who live in New York. I studied my first years in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. I lived in Austria as an intercultural exchange student, lived in Florida, and moved back to Puerto Rico to study Horticulture at the University of Puerto Rico. I then moved to Michigan and graduated with a Master's degree in Floriculture from Michigan State University. I got married and moved to Chicago, where I worked at Ball Seed, where I learned project- and product-management. Then I moved to South Carolina, where I finished a PhD in plant physiology from Clemson University. In 2006 I started working at UPR Agricultural Experimental Station. I have been a UPRM Senator, member of the Fertilizer Board, editor of the compost regulation in PR and member of the Board of Directors of the Puerto Rico Recycling Coalition, among others. My work focuses on sustainable food production, with an emphasis on compost, nutrient balance, and soil protection. I have a page at youtube.com/compostapr with more than 260,000 followers and millions of views, where I post presentations and teach how to make gardens. I aspire to personal development, unity with being, social development, sustainable methodologies, coexistence, low consumerism, social changes among others. I have three children and I live with my partner between Lares and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The evolution of this story

I wrote this story for 2011 between asleep, awake, between dreams, truths and illusions. It was like I had to get all this information out of my head that somehow reached me. Inspired by the Anastasia books by Vladimir Megre, this story was reconciled with my life and way of thinking, it very relevance some years and a little less in others. The development of an **Ecological Village in Puerto Rico** where professionals from different areas come together became my life mission. One night I dreamed describes a place established with permaculture planning which was developed for sustainable, appropriate and caring living for all the inhabitants. In PR as well as in other parts of the world this transition is happening, although sometimes not as planned or without guidance. I am a believer in living in our system and in transitioning it, not eliminating it, at the convenience of the population. One night I dreamed is not an invention, we already have methodologies that allow us an appropriate sustainable transition, but we have not implemented them. The story moves to its creation with the acquisition of La Finca de Compostapr in Vega Baja, PR for 2021 and its publication of a video in 2023 (https://youtu.be/ovkIvaeTk5k) and subsequent informative videos about the project.

Pages of interest:

www.linkedin.com/in/joaquinandreschong

www.youtube.com/compostapr

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