



from

**Beautiful Painted Arrow**  
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***Once upon a time....***

***or how I met Joseph Rael - Beautiful Painted Arrow and experienced a Long Dance***

**by Lukas Budimir**

Once upon a time in the late 1980s, I heard about a Native American Indian called Joseph Rael, Beautiful Painted Arrow, who was giving a lecture about an hour's drive from where I lived in Germany. I went to the University where the lecture was taking place and sat somewhere in the middle of the auditorium. He started talking and I listened closely. After about 10 - 15 minutes my brain switched off and I began listening directly with my heart for an hour at least. Somehow, I knew that I had stored everything inside of me and would understand it through time. If anybody had asked me what the lecture was about, I wouldn't have known what to say, except that somehow everything was connected. That was what I wrote down before my brain switched off. But it felt like coming home and I was charged with energy. At the end of Joseph's talk we were invited to do a Long Dance a few days later and I signed in.

On site, before the dance began, we built something like a huge upside-down willow basket with a hole in the middle. We covered it with blankets and plastic and sat inside it. Glowing stones were brought in that had been heated in a fire beside it. And so, I learned what a Sweat Lodge is.

Later we were told that we would dance all night in a circle that we had marked out on the field. How do we dance and what rhythm do we use? Well that's part of the task: take one step after another; start with the first step and find your own rhythm. Whatever happens, just keep going. And so we did: about 50 strangers, in the middle of the night, moving in their own way despite the fact that people say that we Germans like to have order in things. Well there actually was an order: we all moved clockwise!



An ancient snail became a stone called Ammonite. These pictures are an attempt to illustrate my experience



Soon we forgot how strange this would look to passers-by and just danced, moved ourselves, put effort in and "just did it". It was then that I experienced that we were dancing through different times in history: there was something like an Egyptian time, an Israeli time, all kinds of times. At some point in time I heard the footsteps and we sounded like the Nazis marching in the Second World War. I still get goose bumps just thinking about it. It was scary, but I remembered that we should dance through whatever happened and so I just kept going; it was definitely not where I would want to get stuck in time. Shortly after, we changed direction and danced counter-clockwise for the rest of the night. Also shortly after, in 1989, the Berlin Wall, built between the East and the West during the cold war years, was knocked down.

Joseph told us that you can access the past and the future only by being in the here and now. That was what we obviously had done: healed the past and counter-clockwise it felt like dancing into the future. Even though it hadn't yet happened, you could change it and even though it had already happened, you could heal it.

And they lived happily ever after? We could have, but we tend to do things over and over again; we found new tasks and just continued dancing the dance of life.

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