





*'In Greece, shrines or statuettes of Hekate (hekataia) were placed at entrances and at the junctions of three roads (triodoi) to seek her protection. "Suppers" (deipna) were left for Hekate and ghosts at the junctions, especially on the night of the new moon.'*

- 'Hekate ' *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Encyclopedia.com.  
18 Oct. 2023

# FOREWORD

i.

Kings Cross, Sydney, is not a suburb, or even a postcode. Not officially anyway. Its train station is in Potts Point, as is every tobacconist, news agency and adult shop to bear its name. In so doing, each seedy enterprise becomes placed within a fictive locale, transcending actual borders by imagining their own. In reality, Kings Cross only refers to the intersection between William Street and Darlinghurst Road. Like any crossroad, its mere existence conjures an uncertain energy. Here, we find ourselves at a critical nexus point, 'betwixt and between' two directions.

An otherliness certainly lingers here - a sense that anything goes. Or at least, this used to be the case. In fact, 'The Cross', or 'KX', attained its slimy reputation during a previous lifetime, one in which it reigned as Sydney's capital of squalor. It began with sly grog, Cabaret, and razor gangs, then ended with king hits and lockout laws. This bohemian flavor of sleaze now feels outdated, belonging to a forgotten heyday. The former clubland comprises a sleepy strip littered with 24-hour gyms, fast food chains and new-build apartments. The Kings Cross hotel is owned by Solotel, and the Coca-Cola sign goes rainbow when it needs to. There's still 'cool' suburbs in Sydney, a desire to retreat westward, escaping the tyranny of over-development. Yet this is a flight-path native brand of counterculture, which prefers bridge raves to cafes, Maccas to Kashmere's. It's more safe space than red-light, with dj's outnumbering writers. In effect, The Cross was a brief anomaly in Australia. Thanks to the nearby Garden Island Naval base, a glimpse of internationalism often washed ashore here. Sailors arrived with continental habits, and transformed the area into a haven of neon-lit debauchery. Here we arrive at the significance of Kings Cross not really being a suburb. As poet Kenneth Slessor put it in his 1970 essay 'My Kings Cross'; 'Its boundaries are flexible. People who 'go to the Cross' or 'live at the Cross' may mean anywhere from Taylor Square to Wylde Street.' Even at the time of writing, his tone is nostalgic, describing a golden age which barely survived the 1920s. Yet most interestingly, Slessor defines The Cross as more of a vibe than a location. It's a vague feeling which begins to wane after Macleay St, once glazeware

becomes easier to buy than sex. On the Darlinghurst end, it withers as you hit the former 'Pink Mile' (which has since shriveled to a 'Pink Kilometer', interspersed with boarded up shop fronts). For a while, The Cross hosted a retinue of characters which continually redefined its contours. Mr. Sin (Abe Saffron) was a major player, running his one-street empire of clubs like The Roosevelt and The Carousel. The latter being a purpose-built venue for Les Girls, one of the first 'all-male' cabaret troupes. Today these buildings have been leveled to a mound of rubble, (where part of this exhibition took place). The end of Saffron's reign coincided with a string of controversies. Most notable being his connection to the disappearance/murder of Juanita Nielson, an heiress-cum-activist martyred in the pushback against gentrification. At the same time, there also lived 'The Witch of Kings Cross', Rosaleen Norton, a painter and sorceress whose life on Brougham Street became a media spectacle. We'll get to her in a moment.

ii.

Myself (1120) and fellow RTAgent 2011 moved into the area last February. At the time, it didn't feel like we were 'on The Cross' - our terrace was too near the Darlo end, girt by Amex Pride Lounges, pop-up cafes, and an art school neither of us went to. The actual Kings Cross existed in my mind as the set of Underbelly - a late-noughties haven of boozy punch-ons fabled through TV exposés. We only passed through out of necessity, unaware of any earlier incarnation. We wouldn't become aware of this until later.

In October, 2011 and I held our last transmission, the 'Salon of the Rose + Cross 2022', opening on Halloween night. As RTA's first IRL show, its intentions became muddied, restaging our private ceremony as a public spectacle. If anything, this show was the parting word on a distinctly 'post-lockdown' flavor of mysticism. Its name honored an event once held annually in fin de siècle Paris by the Occultist Joséphin Péladan, which exalted the cultic piety of his own age. On the morning of the opening, I collected offerings from one of the artists involved; Ebony Munro, a jeweler/perfumer. At the time, she was living in Kings Cross proper - down Roslyn Gardens just off the strip. Her work

testifies to this; spanning from Pawn Shop bijoux engraved with cursive promises, to eau-de-absinthe, starry lockets etc. Hitching a lift to the gallery in her Safari-fit-out 4x4 we began to talk about the Cross. My silent reverence for the area exceeded personal experience. To be honest it still does. Here began a series of chance encounters - their importance yet to be realized. Most notable would be her initial mention of Rosaleen Norton, cited almost as a trivial fact. Of course I knew Rosaleen, vaguely recalling the name along with other early 20th-century Thelemites, mystics, and oddities - of note if only for having lived in Sydney. I was yet to understand that in her, myself and 2011 would find the HeKXte of this project. The night after the opening, I spoke to 2011 about Rosaleen, particularly about her fixture of rouge exhibits at a Kings Cross cafe. Yet as we discussed, she could feel the watchful glint of some presence through the dim light of my bedroom window, making out the figment of her caricature-like features smeared in the glass. What happened felt less like a visitation than an attack. Something was listening.

The next morning we minded the gallery together, quietly conscious that the rhythm of our day had been unsettled. Soon after arriving, 2011 inexplicably lost a tooth. Her visions persisted too, with strangers morphing into faint apparitions of arch-browed beldams. Explaining any of this felt like a game, and I attempted to resist connections. What had felt like an un-sacramental opening seemed to have begun the most intense phase of RTAngelological operations to date. Our research into Rosaleen Norton was becoming diagnostic rather than curious. To even pry further felt risky. At this time, 2011 was becoming severely ill.

Our initial realizations were the following:

1. Rosaleen had died in a hospice beside our house (and her ashes supposedly spread across the Kings Cross intersection.)
2. She had spent the end of her life in Roslyn Gardens - the street where Ebony first mentioned her that morning.
3. The Irish origins of her name translate to 'Little Rose'.

Our uncertainties about the Salon had seemingly been answered. At the start, this entire project was weighted by a pseudo-Rosicrucian flavor,

bereft of any obvious role within our present. Yet the 'cross' of our title soon found itself within The Cross - Kings Cross - just as the 'rose' had blossomed in the unlikeliest bud; Rosaleen. Our haunting anticipated an odd kinship.

The typical response to all this would be an exhibition, a gesture articulated publicly. Yet as further ties drew themselves together, its stakes became personal. Our priorities shifted. It was no longer so much about performing, or monumentalising, but cleansing. The flinch instinct was to banish any lingering aftertaste of the previous century. In hindsight we'd decide this to be immature. In the end, the proper thing to do was seek protection. We could never despise Kings Cross, even if we feared it. Its wounds were yet to heal - its edges still roughened by tragedy. Surfaces appeared stained under crimson light. Even the lane running behind our sharehouse was the site of a prostitute's murder during the 80's. What we required was in fact transmutation, via demarcation. An act which re-defined these relationships within the site itself, and for itself.

New truths were revealed tentatively over the summer. I should probably note the most confusing one first. It relates to a glyph I made before the Salon in October, born through a monogram of R-T-A. These letters became tangled into a sigillic abstraction - suggesting a robed ankh, or perhaps that flower which springs from the rood. The result was not a logo, but an RTA cross. It had been realized rather than designed; a cruciform crowned by a halo, descending into three vertical axes cut by a horizon. Even after the show, the purpose of this symbol remained vague. What we realized eventually was that its random lines matched near perfectly with the Kings Cross intersection. Even the upper ring aligned the round pedestrian platform on the top of William St.

iii.

By December, 2011 was especially unwell. She made a tactical retreat to her parents in Queensland over the summer. This is when everything paused. As if Kings Cross couldn't speak without both of us present. I'd lost my job at the pub, and our kitchen had a rat problem.

During this intermission I met up with the artist Frankie Bonano to

plan the current show. His eventual tidings of copper leafed tracery were not yet hinted at. We talked about how he used to work at KX Oporto, and my more recent situation with Rosaleen. At this time, Frankie was about to start a 4-day week art handling gig. In the following month, one of his first jobs was for a (here-unnamed) TV anchor in Bellevue Hill. By surprise, it involved packing a familiar work; 'Black Magic', one of the most famous paintings by Rosaleen Norton. The scene depicts a pale, hooved woman of a certain semblance, bundled up in the arms of a panther-like figure. The pair are framed by a cast of fork-tongued voyeurs. The signs were beginning to appear again. Then they faded, and the show once more became a hazy suggestion. When 2011 arrived back in Sydney, her passion for The Cross overtook my own. Of course, her fascination centered around our protagonist; Rosaleen. For me, curation required impulse. The initial desire for self-protection had fizzled, and the situation became less dire. Work trickled in slowly, yet the consequences no longer felt so real. Any act now would be out of adoration instead of terror.

iv.

A couple months ago, I began a full time stint reading electricity meters. It's base-rate, but I don't have to deal with anyone and get master-key access to most of Sydney. The week before we installed this current exhibition, I downloaded my job-list as usual. By total chance, I'd been assigned to work in Kings Cross for that entire week. They could've put me on anywhere from Edgecliff to Dulwich Hill. Scanning the addresses, I noticed somewhere familiar. It was the (former) terrace of Rosaleen Norton. 2011 and I had visited here before of course, when we were both out of work and everything had just begun. We'd scrawled an RTA cross in chalk onto a gum tree right outside. It's still there now. My handheld unit became a scrying glass, spewing out a mandatory pilgrimage each morning. In that week, I'd gone from being 'on The Cross', to sinking into the pit of its gut. The area consumed me. Each day felt like being pulled to somewhere unexpected; from the first safe injection center in Australia, to the derelict innards of Porky's Nite Spot. At one point I accidentally ended up in the control room of the Coke Sign, seven stories up.

Before all of this, I hadn't been so sure that the Cross needed us there. She'd been yet to open up - hesitant somehow for us to ever get beneath her skin. Beyond feeling like a gift, this access was heartbreaking. I toured through the ruins of something that will never exist again. There were still decade-old job notes lingering in our system for restaurants, cabaret clubs, and strip joints, all long since demolished. Rosaleen Norton's tenement is now a middle market block of flats. More painful than this absence is the presence of what remains. There are alleyways you can only really access via a sex shop, and neon signs that cease to flicker. You can peer through the windows of a vacant hostel from inside the station, and glimpse yellow tiles beneath chipped paint on the platform. On one of my routes, I spoke to an older resident in the last council block off the strip. She told me it was her final week in the Cross after three decades and, as expected, they'd found her new digs in Redfern. This was hardly surprising. For years, every inch of public housing this close to the harbor had been slowly decanted out west, leaving behind demolition bait for inner city developers. That's not the only thing that's killed The Cross of course - the nightlife went first. But it definitely hasn't helped.

v.

2011's birthday was coming up soon. She didn't know it at the time, but I'd scored her a reprint of The Art of Rosaleen Norton from an antiquarian in the U.S. When this text was first published by Rosaleen and her estranged Melbournite loverboy Gavin Greenlees, it stirred up a flurry of obscenity charges that begun her tabloid fame. After the trial, each hide-bound folio was quickly blacklisted. It's only been reprinted once, and even these are a hard find. When 2011's gift arrived, it came with a randomly selected full-colour postcard of 'Black Magic' - the exact painting by Rosaleen Norton that Frankie had installed many months prior.

It's October again now, almost a year since our last RTA project. 2011 has moved to Erskineville. The Coke sign flashes on and off every night in a checkerboard pattern. One afternoon before she went away, I found myself pausing on Darlinghurst Road to glimpse a plaque beneath my

feet. There's plenty of these on the strip; each embossed with fragments of local lore, like schizoid Boulevard stars. There's even one for Rosaleen near the Kebab shop. This particular quote read as follows: *'Kings Cross was a wonderful place. Nothing since then; London, Paris, Hollywood or New York, has been quite so wonderful. And although I lived on the edge of destitution, I had never been happier in my life.'*

Whilst the words belonged to a New Hollywood heartthrob, that didn't really matter. I choked on them as I read, and began to cry for a moment outside of a vapery. The sun around me bleached the terraces in a pale haze, and the strip felt strangely alive again - even for a Weekday. A chapter was finally closing, and none of this would be here forever. Even now it's memory has curdled into a dream.



'Font', 2023, by Harry de Vries. PLA plastic, sandstone.

📍 -33.87205838149137, 151.22240473707433

**Butler Stairs**; 103 yellowblock steps constructed in 1867 to link Woolloomooloo with the neighbouring Potts Point.









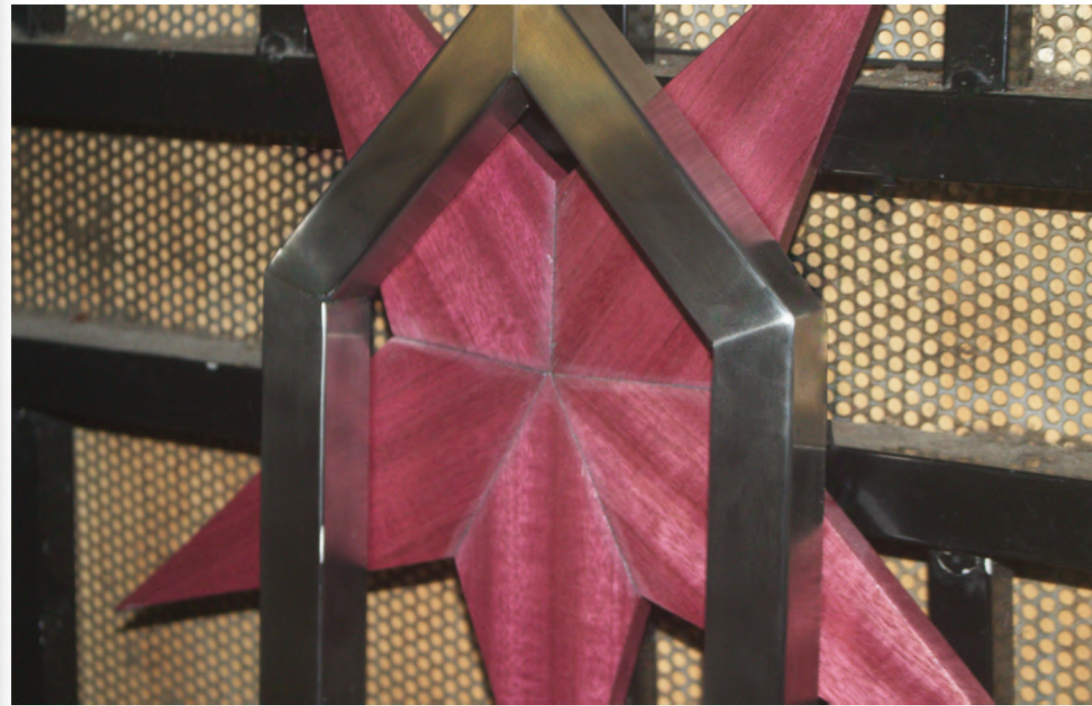
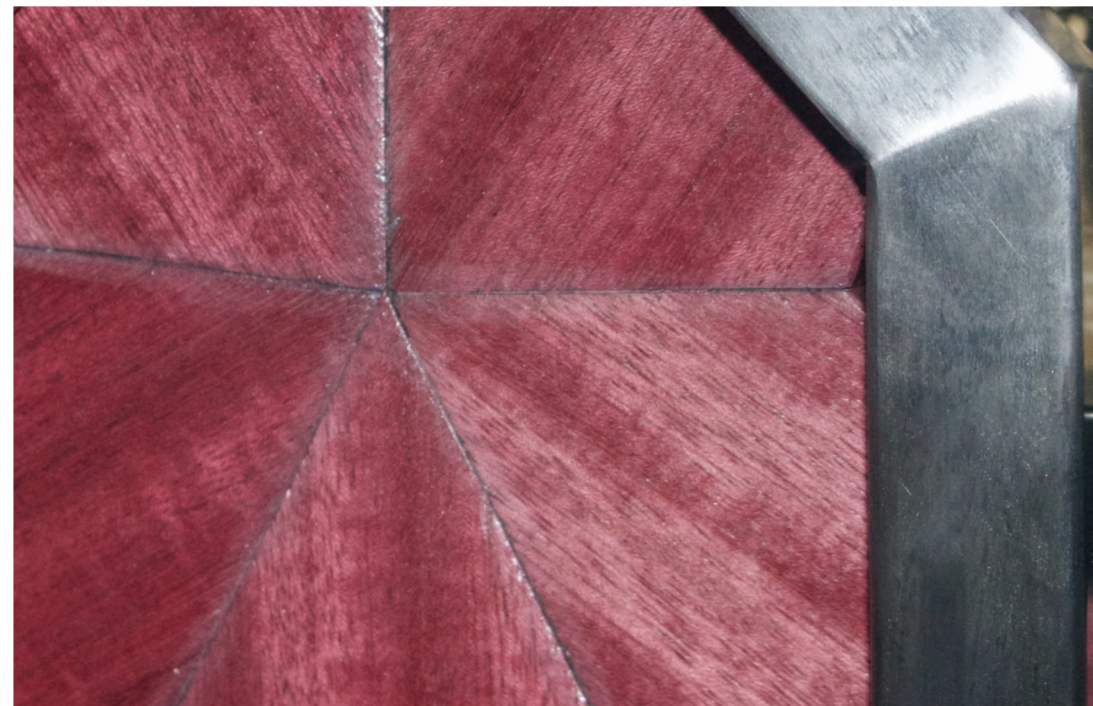
Porky's nite spot 



'Intersection', 2023, by Jennifer Mathews. Stainless steel, purple heart wood.

📍 -33.873873149600946, 151.22313221822202

Former venue of the Porky's Nite Spot, (1984-2018), and Dreamgirls, (2007-2018.)





'Untitled (Talisman)', 2023, by Franki Bonanno. Copper leaf on ceramic.

📍 -33.87342739827534, 151.22485425752143  
Former venue of the Les Girls drag troupe, (1963-94), and  
The Bourbon & Beefsteak, (1967-2010.)



*'A space subdivided  
One fourth in each corner  
One space baring a holy icon  
Association with each space  
A time  
A place  
A glimmering object  
A state  
Alchemical copper sacrifice  
Blessed'*

- text by the artist





*Ἐἴνοδῖν Ἐκάτην κλήζω, τριοδίτιν, ἔραννήν,  
οὐρανίην, χθονίαν τε, καὶ εἰναλίην κροκόπεπλον,  
τυμβιδίην, ψυχαῖς νεκύων μέτα βακχεύουσαν,  
Πέρσειαν, φιλέρημον, ἀγαλλομένην ἐλάφοισιν,  
νυκτερίην, σκυλακίτιν, ἀμαιμάκετον βασίλειαν,  
ταυροπόλον, παντὸς κόσμου κληιδουῆχον ἄνασσαν,  
ἡγεμόνην, νύμφην, κουροτρόφον, οὐρεσιφοῖτιν,  
λισσόμενοις κούρην τελεταῖς ὁσίαισι παρεῖναι  
βουκόλω εὐμενέουσαν ἀεὶ κεχαρηότι θυμῷ.'*

*'I call Ækátī of the Crossroads, worshipped at the meeting of  
three paths, oh lovely one.*

*In the sky, earth, and sea, you are venerated in your  
saffron-colored robes.*

*Funereal Daimôn, celebrating among the souls of those who  
have passed.*

*Persian, fond of deserted places, you delight in deer.*

*Goddess of night, protectress of dogs, invincible Queen.*

*Drawn by a yoke of bulls, you are the queen who holds the keys  
to all the Kósmos.*

*Commander, Nýmphi, nurturer of children, you who haunt  
the mountains.*

*Pray, Maiden, attend our hallowed rituals;*

*Be forever gracious to your mystic herdsman and rejoice in our  
gifts of incense.'*

*- 'Orpháēohs Argonaftiká', 4th century BC.*

# AFTERWORD





On October 31st 2022, 1120 and I crafted the keys which would open the door to the Hekxatia; the archetypal presence which Kings Cross takes form as. The Hekxatia is a poignant spirit, now burrowed deep into the retreat of its self-sigilising crossroads. It is a home to the threshold and all those which cross there. What characterises the Hekxatia is its transmutative essence, to encounter it is to be changed. But this essence must have a momentum to do so, it must be inhabited by those pure of heart, those which pedal the currents of its life force. As it appears, it has been decades since the likes of such spirited people have pedalled together here. Its transmutative force has slowed to a stop, and a collection of dense, untransmuted energy has amassed like sediment deep in its underbelly.

What I have learnt from my time living in the Cross, is that it yearns for its resurrection. What I know is that it has the metaphysical blueprint to be a distinctive magickal space in Sydney. This is not a new idea, for the last 100 years, any academic journal, documentary, or book about Kings Cross will curiously acknowledge its mysteriously mystical character. 1120 and I have undoubtedly experienced this. As mentioned by 1120 earlier, it all started with a rather intrusive visitation. I remember the shift in energy in the room on that first night, it was as 1120 and I were talking about the potential future of Kings Cross through the transmutative force of art. Suddenly, I was face to face with the woman we had been talking about, Rosaleen Norton, 'the witch of Kings Cross'. It was as though she had projected herself into my mind, I had no control over the fact that I could see her. I buried my head into my hands silently before telling 1120. We struggled to find a room that felt far away enough from that moment. I saw her again, in the window near our back door, as though she were moments from walking inside. It terrified us and we ran upstairs to my room. What followed was, in hindsight, a very intense introduction to the Hekxatian spirit which we invoked on the night of the Salon of the Rose Cross.

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1120 and I had many plans for the RTA in 2023, however, we spent most of this year immersed in the Hekxatian spirit and developing our relationship with this space. We found ourselves in between the reality we used to know and the potential realities which surrounded it. What also developed was my relationship to Rosaleen, which is very dear to me now. She is to me a kindred spirit with an incredibly intricate understanding of the interdimensional nature of the Cross, the universe, and her experiences within it. An excerpt of her magickal philosophy is as follows below:

*'I have spoken of an individual mind working upon and moulding plasmic material. Consider the power, then, of this unconscious mass-concentration of human beings, throughout the ages, upon certain idealisations of forms – the God-forms (a generic name for all such forms, including Demons, Faery creatures, 'angels' etc.). This unconscious creative thought concentration has built up images in the aether, moulding raw plasmic matter to the form of these images, and providing vehicles for other intelligences to manifest through, relative to humanity. I do not mean that these intelligences are either confined to any or all of these forms, or that they are the product of human thought, conscious or otherwise. The vehicles, or God-forms, yes, or largely so, but not the intelligences themselves. These vehicles, however, form a useful medium of communication, but naturally their visual form is, to a certain extent, anthropomorphic...'*

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Unknowingly, 1120 and I have had many paralleling experiences to Rosaleen, most notably, our introductions to Greek deities Hecate and Pan (whom we were yet to realise were the two primary deities Rosaleen would work with). Hecate is characterised by her broad range of timê over the three spheres of the cosmos, and is commonly referred to as the goddess of night, darkness, transitions and crossroads - crossroads being in turn considered supernatural places and associated with magic and spirits.

'Ækátî is associated with the Middle Sky, the area which extends from just above the sea and the land up to just below the moon. This is the place where the souls dwell, the souls of those whose mortal bodies have died and are awaiting rebirth. Ækátî likes to dwell in this region and assist the mortals and deities who reside there.'

(<https://www.hellenicgods.org/the-orphic-hymn-to-hecate-aekati---hecate>)

Rosaleen felt that Hecate 'was a more imposing deity than Pan because Hecate was known to be a dealer in death and a purveyor of curses. Hecate was often very frightening because she was a shadowy goddess flanked by cohorts of ghouls and nightforms. She maintained that Hecate could also be a protector. If ever Rosaleen was required to curse people with her 'witch current' in order to redress what she believed to be an unfair 'balance of events', she called on Hecate's hexing powers and believed this was a legitimate use of the magical art.'

In an autobiographical article published in Australian Post in January 1957, Rosaleen provided this account of Pan:

'Some occult theories hold the stars and planets to be the bodies of great beings and so do I. I think the God Pan is the spirit whose body – or such of it as can be seen in these four dimensions (the fourth being time) – is the planet Earth, and who, therefore, in a very real sense, is the ruler and god of this world. Perhaps that is why he was given the name 'Pan', which in Greek means 'All', for he is the totality of lives, elements and forms of being – organic, 'inorganic' and otherwise, comprising the planet as a whole: much as an animal body is a totality of myriads of cells, bacteria etc, in which ordered whole these live and function, having their own forms of "intelligence" and perception, according to type. Such a body would be the "world" to any of its micro-organisms, and the integrated consciousness of the body's owner would exist in another "world", and on a different plane from theirs.'

'...If a man could communicate with any of his body cells on its own plane, it would perceive its 'god' in terms fitted to its understanding. To see him as he is to himself, ie. as a man, the cell consciousness would have to unite with and 'become' that of the man, in a world outside anything conceivable in its entire experience. Of course, this is only a parallel, and shouldn't be regarded as exact: a god, for one thing, is a very different form of life, involving other laws and dimensions, and could (as far as I

know) manifest simultaneously in any number of places and shapes, to those who form part of him, or others, without disturbing any plane of his multiple consciousness and activities elsewhere.'

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The Cross has been dormant, but not for long - it is alive beneath its crossroads.

On behalf of the Ritual Transmission Agency, we hope this transmission finds you well.

- 2011