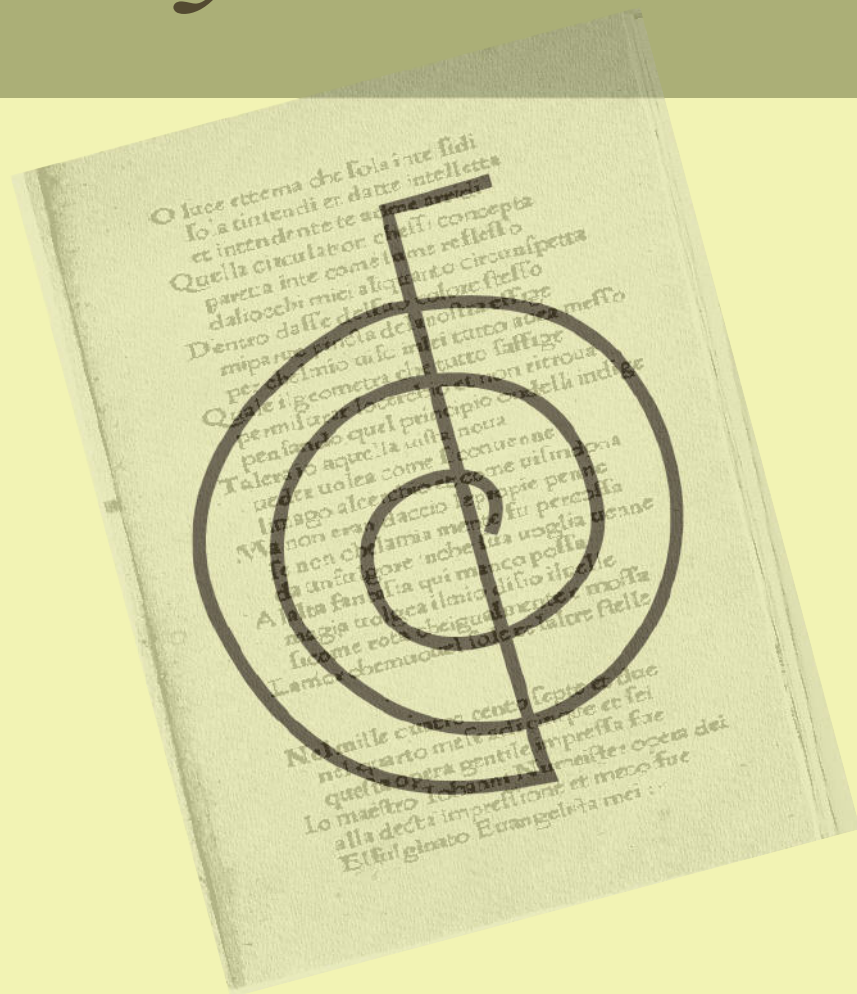


On Poetry, The Mysterious Art



Essays by A. S. Maulucci

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Poetry books by A. S. Maulucci

100 Love Sonnets

The Morning Light

All for Love

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Finding Your Voice as a Poet

The place to look for your own poetic voice is not in the world outside, but within yourself, in the deepest, darkest, most mysterious inner dwelling place of your soul. The place you go to when you close your eyes and float away, or should I say sink into as if you were submerging yourself in some inner sea of remembering. Remembering what? Sensations, fragments, dreams, faces, sounds, voices, an embrace, a touch, a kiss. These are the root experiences that are stored away in your subconscious mind. They feed the vital web of living tissue that connects you to greater truths and can nourish your fuller being. Poetry has the potential to unlock the portals of higher consciousness that open the pathway to a profound understanding of the human experience. Poetry is the means whereby we appropriate the wisdom of the child, where we can regain that power for a while and become as we were once in our intuitive understanding of life.

The understanding of the child. Poetry holds that realm of purity within itself. The life of the child is enfolded inside our poetic language. Art is the only way our sense of wonder can spring back to life out of the frozen wasteland to which years of conditioning by our rational education has consigned it. The visionary power of childhood is not dead. It resides within each of us, buried in our subconscious, waiting for the moment it can spring back to life, and for the poet that moment comes when he lays himself open, like a plowed field, to the sacred seeds of inspiration.

All children are pagans in the best sense. They seek pleasure and are subject to spontaneous joy. They live directly in the immediacy of the moment and do not question the rightness their actions, being guided through life only by what they feel is good for them, and having perhaps an instinctive aversion to harming others. For most children, life is both sacred and terrifying, but real and true in the most vital sense.

Poetry is the gateway to our wonder-full past, the past that still nurtures the creative imagination. Poetry is the most reliable way we can travel into that dangerous territory known as the subconscious. Why does the pleasure-seeking and life-affirming spontaneous joy come upon us when we let go of our self control? Because that sense of freedom is so

empowering, and because it holds the keys to our identity. We must know where we came from in order to know who we are. And our psychological-emotional origins lie in the childhood of our development. Only by returning to the origins of life can we hope to find the sacred truths that were given to us at birth. And every true poet of worth and substance must make the journey there if he hopes to create anything of lasting value. It is there that he finds his voice, as if it were a lyre hanging from a tree, his tree, the only tree in the forest with his name on it. So the poet who looks within and responds to the music of that lyre is really hearing his true poetic voice for the first time. He is receiving the call to become a poet. This is what we mean when we say poetry is a vocation, a calling.

So the poet who responds to the call goes in search of the tree where his lyre is dangling. But in order to discover it we must be willing to risk our own psychological disintegration. Let me explain. The metaphor of the dark forest is very valuable here. It appears and reappears in folk and fairy tales for a very good reason. Yes, it represents our fears of the unknown. But it also contains the hidden treasures of childhood wisdom. And we all know they are there, guarded by an demon who is ready to kill us if we should prove false. In the same way, writing from the soul involves the inherent danger of discovering that we are not what we thought we were. That we are indeed the genuine article or merely an empty copy. We must risk that danger so that we can find out if we are still in possession of a pure poetic voice. And to be able to recognize it as our own we must first clear away all the clutter that has accumulated since our earliest childhood impressions. The fear of death and disintegration will do that work for us. Here's where the role of the spirit of the child is so important. Figuratively speaking, this spirit guides us on our journey to the moment of birth when we were in possession of a purer form of life. But going back there brings us into very close contact with death, with our disintegration into the pre-birth state. But there is no other way to find that lyre that dangles from the tree belonging to us and no one else. Our unique poetic voice.