

The Young Price (Program Note, 2007)

SEQ CHAPTER \h \r 1 I would have called this film poem *Visions in Meditation* except that title had already been claimed by one I openly acknowledge as “il miglior fabbro.” Its themes are immodest, but not unprecedented; indeed, they recur often in the works of those willing to embrace risk. They are: magic, sex, death and the search for God. More than anything else, this film poem is an effort to cultivate an organic form, in the sense that Denise Levertov gave to the term: a poem possesses organic form when it is a whole entity, a cross-section of time and place, a constellation that captures a definite and precise experience, a particular-in-time. The specific experiences I have tried to capture are the troubling visions that arise when meditation arouses a part of our brain that we have never used, a part of the brain where the synapses are differently designed. Their activation lets loose a maelstrom. When I had finished the film, I heard someone speak of visions in meditation, and what he said seemed particularly apposite: “Imagine a maelstrom,” he said, “made of imagination, swirling round and round and round, a maelstrom open at the top and bottom and bounded on the sides by the nothingness of the unimagined. A beggar imagines himself sitting at the edge of this maelstrom and imagines himself becoming aware that he is sitting at the edge of this maelstrom, looking inward at this vortex, observing beings – demonic forms, ghosts, animals, humans – first rising, and then falling through the vortex. These transient beings, the fleeting imaginings, he came to understand, have the character they do because of his evanescent mental states: they arise out of the flux that is what he knows of his mind. The fleeting mental states that possess him determine whether these imagined beings will elevate his perceptions/imaginings or whether these phantasms will draw him down into the abyss.”

What is seen is never made of anything but imagination. Beyond that lies nothingness.

