It begins always in my blood – a faint stirring at first, and then a quickening as the recalling of that time comes out of the life body of the earth and into my being, my feelings and thinking. And so the memories come to consciousness: first the sounds, the voices and then the words as our story comes slowly to life.
It was late afternoon in the Autumn when I returned to the Kalahari. I had walked for many days. One soul coming to understand more of the reason for being human.
or seven years, I lived with the First People, they who come from the ancient race. Four of those years were lived with different tribes – //Xo/xei, Jun/uase, /Aiiekwe – and three with the last band of wild /Gwikwe on the great sand face, #Gwam/tge, the Earth, immersed in the lifestream in which we lived as humans.

It is now 28 years later now; four cycles of seven have passed, and I know more than ever that I must bring forward, in a right way, the story of that which was before us. From this impulse, I have written my book: The Bushman Winter Has Come – and it is just the beginning.

As a gift, I remember that time with the Bushmen, the /Gwikwe. /Gwi in their language means “bush”, and kwe means “people” – and so this is the name by which they call themselves.

I am asked to remember what stands out as significant in my memory of this time, and I can think of nothing that was more important than anything else; no moment that was greater than any other. Perhaps this is how it should be.

There were the men, hunters, lean-limbed and silent. I remember how we lived in the world together: bound one to the other by the thoughts within us, and bound to the world around us as a living Being who offered all that we needed; ours was to seek, and find.

We hunted long days and many miles across the great sand face of our Kalahari world: we and the animals, joined by threads of destiny that would unravel through our days. Animals that would die so that we could live, and all preordained to be this way because this is how the Great God has made it.

I remember the endless miles walked through heat and dryness, some hunts as far as 60 miles away, and the silence of knowing that this was life – our life – and so there was no wanting for what was not there, only the sharing of what was given. It is difficult for the disconnected human of today to see it this way. One must look within to see how one stands in relation to the world: to see what is given as yours, and to know that it is enough.

Through those years, we lived within the kingdoms of nature: the mineral, the plant, the animal and the human – each in sacrifice to the other, and redeemed only by our knowledge and reverence of that truth. We lived, impelled by forces of both Heaven and Earth.

Modern humanity has forgotten to remember how completely we are part of the world, natural and spiritual, and the tragedy of this separation weighs heavily on our souls; somewhere within we still know this must surely change if we are to continue.

And so we men lived and hunted in the world ‘out there’, and in this way, too, in the world within ourselves.

And the women – the gatherers – I remember well. Mothers to the children, they brought a softness and joy into our lives in the way that women do. I remember always their voices, lilting, up and down, soft in the space between the shelters, soft in our hearts, and then punctuated with exclamations, shrieks and laughter at the simple joy of life lived in freedom. Theirs is a world of feeling and touch, of spontaneous laughter and love given into the lives of the children and so returned to life.
Many days we walked together, gathering from this place and that – so many slow, wandering conversations we shared as we wound our way through miles of Kalahari in search of what the Earth would offer as sustenance. Sisters and mothers they were for me, granting me an access to the world of women, which I will not forget.

Bearing the weight of carry bags filled with what the Earth had given, we would go back to the shelters, from where the voices of family and friends would reach out to guide us home before dark.

And a thousand nights around fires that burnt light in the darkness filled with stars and moon, a constellation of cosmic bodies in movement which had everything to do with our lives of stories and songs sung with voices that reached beyond what we could see into that place of dreams and revelations.

The Spirit world always so close, we lived on the threshold between the physical and the spiritual. For us there was no separation – it was one world, which included that which we did not know and could not see.

There was a child, little Seka, who chose to fall asleep with me whenever he could. His mother was very close to me and I to her. It was a love shared only in the world of spirit, and never consecrated in the flesh; because of his closeness to his mother, little Seka responded to me with the same love.

His mother told me that when I went away, he would stand every morning upon a little rise of sand and, looking to the south, he would ask: “Mah Paulau?” “Where is Paul? When is he coming?”

When I am reminded of how all things are joined in this way, I see many other things that have come and gone in my life, so many things that might have been more if I had known them then – but that is the way of things with all of us.

I think always of the old man, Dzero O, and my journeys into the invisible world to understand that what you cannot see is also true. In all the years since that time, I have endeavoured to see into this ethereal world, and so to read the life body of the Earth. And I remember how it was with the old man, joined with the archetypal memory of the ancient race that came before us – a memory that sleeps in the modern human, a memory we must take forward in wide-awake consciousness.

And I remember standing upon a living mineral earth, choreographed in space with other celestial beings called Sun and Moon and the inner planets, each with the forces it brings to life in this cosmos we call home. And were it not for this Earth and all that lives upon its body, we would not be here – and this we forget.

I remember my animal brothers and sisters. They were always there as sounds in the air, filling our lives with their song-voices. They were there as footprints in the sand, telling the story of all their

We hunted long days and many miles across the great sand face of our Kalahari world: we and the animals, joined by threads of destiny that would unravel through our days. Animals that would die so that we could live.
The /Gwi women are extremely able plant ecologists, an old knowledge carried in their blood.