

# Still Travels

## Contemplative Poems

William Irwin Thompson

**W**hen I was a graduate student of literature at Cornell in the early nineteen-sixties, I became interested in the genre of Romantic poems of description and meditation and wrote my Master's Essay on this form. Also while I was at Cornell, my first published poem, "Sunset at Point Lobos," appeared in the literary quarterly *Epoch*, and this work expressed my own first steps to follow in the tracks of Coleridge and Yeats, and, closer to home, Kenneth Rexroth.

*Still Travels* expresses an effort to move inside and track the interior landscapes of the mind in meditation: from the waking mind to the hypnagogic, from the hypnagogic to the dreaming mind, from the dreaming mind to the parallel life of the psychic being, the *Doppelgänger*, whose world is on the other side of dreams. The psychic world is, of course, a rich world of archetypal images, but there is a higher world of cosmic music and sound that is more like Bach than Jung, and when the psychic being rests, the spirit soars into this universe of Seraphs and cognitive bliss. The world above this universe of sound is harder to remember, as one is no longer present there as a personality with a memory held together by merely one incarnation's identity. But what I can recall is a world of pure divine light beyond imagery or sound that makes one think of all the words the Inuit are said to have for snow. I never knew there could be so many iridescent forms of white: purple-white, magenta-white, violet-white, mauve-white, scarlet-white, blue-white, turquoise-white, and on, and on, in a field of white light in which each snowflake is an n-dimensional crystal of colors from a transcendent spectrum. Each night, in the practice of *yoga-nidra*, the yoga of sleep, I try to make my way back to this world, hoping that one night, I will not need to come back, but may leave my body to its last sleep in the chair in my Sangre de Cristo mountain cabin in Crestone.

