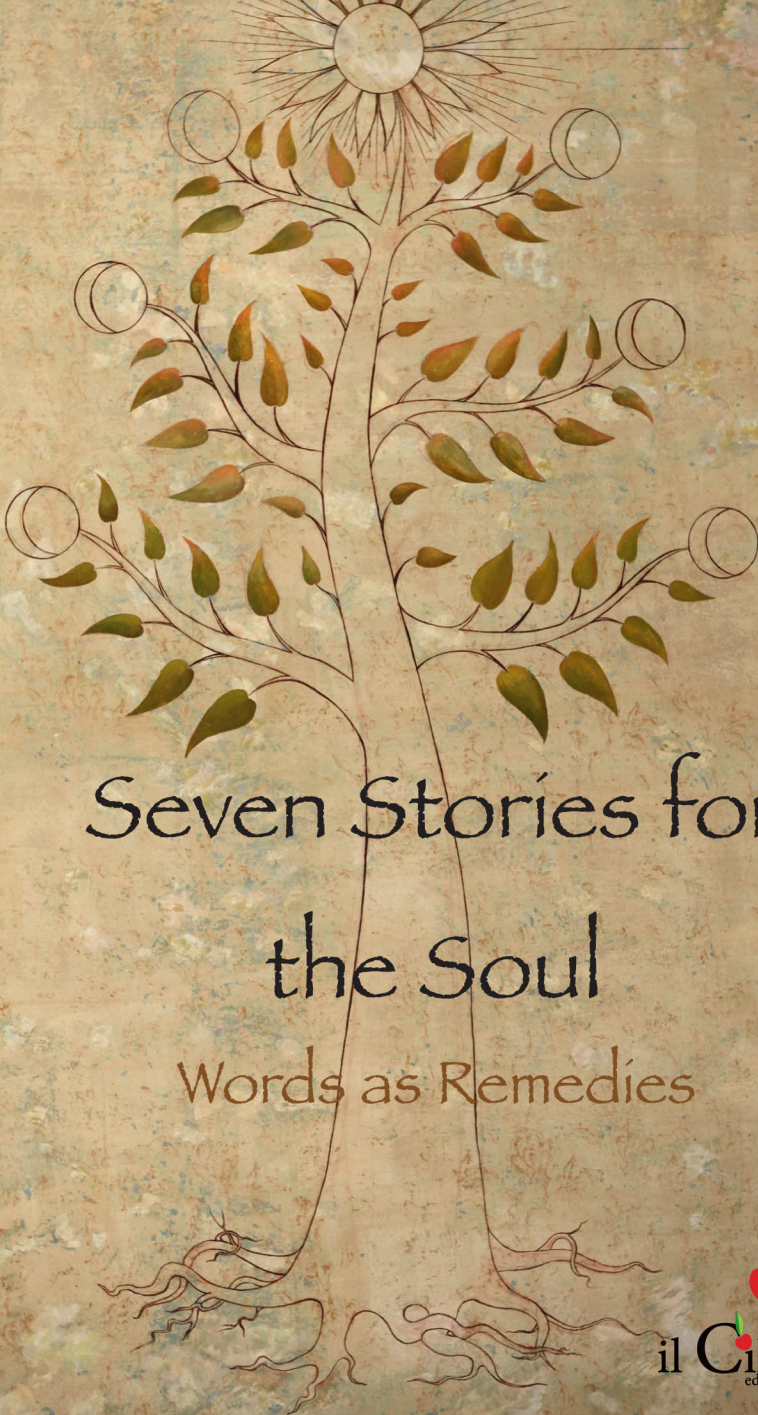


Costanza Savini



Seven Stories for  
the Soul

Words as Remedies

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Words as Remedies

Translated by Catherine Mackenzie



Special thanks to Professor Gianfranco Di Nino, lecturer in Anaesthesia, Resuscitation and Pain Management. A man and physician with a subtle sense of “feeling” who passionately strove for the international revival of this book.

## Asa Branca Ala Bianca

*We've been around for thousands of years in a  
multitude of forms.  
We are on a voyage. In this life we are all migrating.  
We are nomads, wanderers. Forever passing through.  
But for those who know not how to dream enough, the dangers  
are insurmountable.*

C. S.



## STEP FORWARD INTO THE SUN

Step forward into the sun! At the crossroads between the  
past and the future, between the ancient Greek  
rediscovered and modern man, yet to be invented.

Giorgio Celli from "*Copernico e le Stelle*"

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## STORIES WHICH CURE

### A SEVEN-DAY JOURNEY

In Hindu medicine, a story is told, a phrase is read, or a “curative” word is pronounced to those who suffer from an internal conflict or are afflicted with “illnesses” which defy common understanding. Meditating on this story, this phrase, or this single word allows the person to assimilate its transforming value and energy, thus helping him to overcome his emotional disorder.

Stories are commonly told by American Indians in order to “broaden the mind” and “stimulate the imagination”. So to a possessive person or one who is too attached to worldly goods, stories will be told of the contempt or ruin of mean or greedy people.

According to certain schools of metaphysical thought, the ritual repetition of words and syllables, which may have no logical sense, like a mantra, bears an intrinsic power, deriving not necessarily from the meaning of the word, but from the vibratory energy produced by its phonic and sonic content. To remain in the western cultural context, Walter Benjamin writes that “language is sacred” because it is a gift of God to mankind. Whilst in the New Testament in the letter from James, the apostle writes “Think how small a flame can set fire to a huge forest. The tongue is a flame too.” thereby attributing the word with a strength and power which goes beyond its simple meaning. Perhaps



less well known, but equally interesting, is the symbolic concept of language expressed by the Jewish mystic Abulafia for whom creation is the act of divine scripture, that is to say that God has incorporated his language, his words destined for mankind, into the world around us which we recognise with letters and names.

Perhaps we can speak of transcendence of language towards planes of speech which are higher, and certainly more “silent” and difficult to grasp, in which it is the *intimate energy of the word* which matters. This demonstrates the strength of certain tales which cannot be explained away by reason. It is a sort of shining magic which infuses the reader and those who allow themselves to be pervaded by stories able to cure through their language.

And so, let’s not forget, each narrator is inevitably a healer.

*Costanza Savini*  
16th July 2014

## THE JOURNEY

### A STORY FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

The stories presented in this volume have different meanings and different levels of depth, like the many, thin layers of an onion. At each level of meaning, both the characters and the elements of the story represent the conflicting tendencies present in each and every one of us which, if not recognised and integrated, inevitably end up “causing us trouble”.

*Seven Stories for the Soul* is a collection of short stories in which the stories and words, if read day after day following the given order and carrying out the relative exercises, help to set in motion a process of transformation which is, at the same time, a curative rite. These stories which support the emotions and sometimes also the internal organs, are divided according to the days of the week and form a “book of remedies”.



**THE INNER MAN , A BREATH OF INSPIRATION.**  
NAVAJHO ENGRAVING IN CHELLY CANYON

## PREFACE

### THOUGHTS ON SUFFERING, PAIN AND ILLNESS

Suffering can be described as the emotional reverberation caused by pain in the human being (Cattorini 2001). Physical pain is only a part of suffering, as it is the pain of the soul which regulates its perception and elaboration. Pain in the sense of a bodily wound can be influenced and modified through the use of drugs to alleviate and deaden subjective resonance, whilst suffering cannot always be modified, cannot always be cured. It is an essential part of the human condition. Indeed, someone may pass their whole life without ever experiencing an illness, but it is inconceivable that a life may be lived without ever experiencing suffering.

Sickness and health are inseparable concepts since they are complementary aspects of the same condition. The concept of health can be defined in relation to that of sickness, which, in turn, is indispensable in order to outline the type of treatment necessary. Illness should be considered as an event which is rooted in and characterised by physio pathological aspects

but which is not completely defined by these. It is also subject to influences from various other contexts (social and cultural), and especially on a personal level.

The concept of health cannot be reduced to physical efficiency, but must, realistically take into account aspects of limitation and suffering imposed by life itself. Indeed, suffering is so much a part of man's existence that although we must try to defeat it, it must, at the same time be elaborated.

Health as a dimension of the complete well-being of a person, also entails the acquisition of a realistic and positive attitude towards suffering (I think pink).

The undeniable progress made in medicine does not the imply the elimination of all diseases: The evolution of society in itself determines the emergence of new pathological processes with new types of treatment and therapy. Nevertheless, personal elaboration of suffering remains the keystone of the cure; so each individual, by not giving up his personal role in the management of his illness derives a life force in order to live his illness not only as a test, but as a stimulus to gain personal maturity and a true capacity to give.

The fight against illness and suffering is an

ethical imperative. They are an integral part of human experience and so to “resist” them we must also be prepared to “give in” to them, that is, to use them as an opportunity to dig deeper into the meaning of life.

As far as therapy is concerned, attention must be paid to the subject in his unique and non-objective reality. The condition of separation, implicit in suffering, cannot be overcome by a contrived identification, but requires respect of reserve and the willingness to accept.

A strong, silent sense of solidarity may be of great comfort in the face of the potency of an illness and the inevitable suffering which derives from this.

#### **THE HISTORICAL, SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ILLNESS.**

For a long time, it was thought that illness was caused by violation of a taboo or of a pre-established order and that it was a punishment sent to determine the re-establishment of the pre-existing order.

In the scriptures and in the Old Testament there are many examples of moral suffering. If in Greek philosophy, pain is inseparable from life, so man becomes heroic when he dominates suffering, in Hebrew-Christian tradition,

suffering is associated with guilt, whilst salvation is a life free from pain. In Chinese medicine, illness is a consequence of the inability to forgive oneself. In modern times, there has been a radical change of attitude: illness is a direct consequence of alterations in biophysical processes, which can be repaired using science. This may be so, but the personal involvement, evident in feelings of fear and guilt is not obliterated by this.

#### THE THERAPIST'S SUFFERING

The personality of the doctor influences that of the patient (Kandel, 1999). It influences the compliance and the placebo and nocebo factors (Barsky, Jama 2002) and it influences the response to treatment (Henry, 1994).

It is impossible that the person who tries to comfort the patient goes through this experience without suffering, rocked by persuasive and often beneficial words. His daily commitment comes hand in hand with responsibility, some joy, and a lot of sadness. It is only as a result of this that he is able to find the right words. We are reminded of Seneca's words "In every station of life you will find amusements, relaxations, enjoyments; that is, provided you be willing to make light of evils rather than to hate them."

## CONCLUSIONS

In the light of these brief thoughts on suffering, pain and illness, it is absolutely necessary that we understand what role artistic expression may play in their relief.

It cannot be denied, and is well-documented that the written word, music, the sight of pictorial art and sculpture influence our attitude towards pain. In particular, the way in which art can modulate the physiological biochemistry of the human body brings evident comfort to the immeasurable pain of the soul.

From this point of view, Costanza Savini's work exerts all its therapeutic power between dreams and reality.

*Gianfranco Di Nino,*

Lecturer in Anaesthesia and Resuscitation,  
University of Bologna

Men, events and other factors may influence us from a distance, thanks to a secret empathy which exists between beings.

C.S.

# 1 MONDAY

## IMMOBILITY - POSTURE

The vibration of words is more important than their meaning. That is to say that at times, it is not so much what we say that counts but rather the vibration, the bodily energy which we attribute to what we say. Even if the words are few or single, these become precious gems depending on the energy with which we mould them as we pronounce them.

Let us imagine now the words we want to say to a loved one. Let us imagine them like fireflies flitting in the air, which, gradually, become shining words. As they leave our mouth and the opening of our navel, they reach the person we are speaking to, they reach his ears and his navel which, in a certain sense, is nothing more than a volcano folded into our body.

Now, from the words, especially if they require a state of presence and an awareness of what we are trying to convey, we pass to the position which our body can assume before we begin to act, or even more so, when we are speaking and want to instil in our words a particular vibration and intensity.

“The complete immobility” of this posture is like being suspended in a vacuum, but a vacuum which already potentially contains all the possible forms that



we will assume in our actions and in our speech.

Physically speaking, we stand with our legs slightly apart, so that our feet are set at shoulder width, our knees are slightly bent and our feet are firmly rooted on the ground, since they are our energy. Our head is bent slightly forwards towards our chest. We visualise our feet as roots which wend their way stronger and stronger into the earth, thus establishing our contact with the basic reality of existence. Feeling the earth beneath our feet, we increase our sense of assurance, as we feel a part of reality. Our posture corresponds to a stance of “non action” and “non speech” which, however embodies a multitude of possibilities and a full opening of our mind towards all things. It is “simply being”: it is the beginning, it is where everything is still possible. Indeed, from this physical and verbal attitude of “complete immobility” or of “charged silence” come forth all the other positions and forms that our body can assume, as well as all of our words and all of our speech.

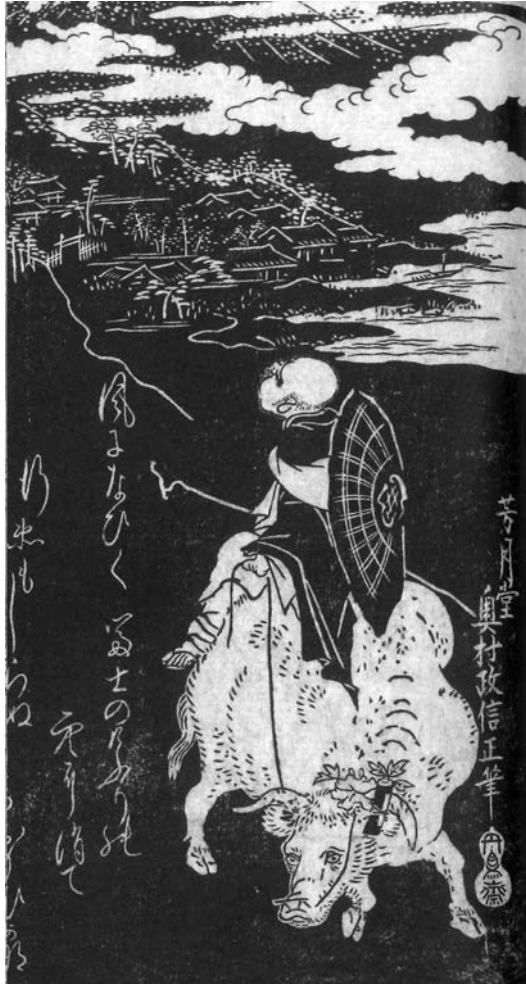
This position of solidity in the potentiality of forms may correspond to that of the image of dancing Shiva.

To sustain a certain physical stability, that is to say a position and solidity in space, implies a solidity in word also. So, if we think of a single word which, perhaps, in itself does not mean much, for example “sky”, “cherry” “always”, we realise that, if we think about it, in each one resides an energy, a complexity of feelings and of emotions. So it is therefore the feeling and the contact which we place in pronouncing the

word which embodies the term itself with power, whatever the word may be.

When the time comes to come out into the open, because sooner or later that time will come around\*, then we breathe in, then breathe out, and if we need to act we will do so with a simple movement of our body. Or if we need to speak we will pronounce the words one after the other. In that moment, we will feel that that simple gesture, or those words which leave our body, such as, (to use the example above) “sky”, “cherry” “always”, have acquired a deeper intensity.

\*As Giorgio Celli wrote “Life doesn’t forget to come and seek you out.”



HEAVENLY TRUNKS AND EARTHLY BRANCHES