

It has been exciting to see the number of contemporaries who have pushed beyond their comfort zones and into unknown territory. A lot of that work has appeared in *Caliban* and *Calibanonline*. But these explorations are not without danger. When the surrealists pursued automatic writing, trances, and other psychic experiments, they scared the hell out of themselves. Even though his reading of Freud set Breton on the path to Surrealism, his goal was the opposite of Freud's: Breton wanted to erase the line between ego and id. The surrealist goal of finding the Supreme Point and thereby merging the dream world and the waking world, the unconscious and the rational mind, is a shorthand definition of schizophrenia. Any artist or writer who walks through that door wants to make very sure

The surrealists loved alchemy, because it represented the power of transformation to them. Think of Melquiades in the opening chapter of Gabriel Garcia Marquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude*: "A heavy gypsy with an untamed beard and sparrow hands, who introduced himself as Melquíades, put on a bold demonstration of what he himself called the eighth wonder of the learned alchemists of Macedonia. He went from house to house

dragging two metal ingots and everybody was amazed to see pots, pans, tongs, and braziers tumble down from their places and beams creak from the desperation of nails and screws trying to emerge, and even objects that had been lost for a long time appeared from where they had been searched for most and went dragging along in turbulent confusion behind Melquíades' magical irons. 'Things have a life of their own,' the gypsy proclaimed with a harsh accent. 'It's simply a

The philosopher's stone to many alchemists (and the surrealists and magic realists as well) was not an object that could turn dross into gold; it was a metaphor for the revelation of the Marvelous, the achievement of a state of consciousness that reintegrated the powers that had been lost in civilized societies. The search for the philosopher's stone goes on.



Janet Kauffman at the Global Warming March, Washington, DC, February 17, 2013

Congratulations to Ricardo Avila! He has been awarded Costa Rica's National Painting Prize for 2012. The prize was based on his highly successful show entitled "Ciudades." Some pieces from that show were featured in Calibanonline #9. The show can be viewed in full at the following link:
http://issuu.com/luquiva/docs/avila_ciudades_2012

