

Bán



Sometimes I astrally travel at night. Everybody does. Often I meet other souls who are also astrally travelling, and we get to talk. Early this morning I had such a chat. The other soul said, “I am currently occupying the body of a seven-year-old Irish boy. He’s sweet. Right now he is dreaming.” I said, “Please excuse me if this seems rude, but would you mind if I had a peek at his dream?” The other soul said, “Not at all, be my guest.” So I dialed into the child’s frequency and watched his dream unfold. Here’s what it looked like:

“I’m writing this essay because our second grade teacher, Miss Murphy, said we should write a true story about our family. Well, here’s the story I need to tell:

“One morning about four years ago, my dad said to me that my mom had to go away for a few days, but not to worry, she’d come back with a gift for me. I knew I was going to miss her but the promise of a gift made it all seem worthwhile. I asked him, “What kind of gift is she bringing back?” He said, “It’s a surprise!” Now, I like surprises, but I prefer surprises that I like; so I said, “Could she bring me back a white swan?” I always wanted to have a white swan. My dad smiled and said, “We’ll see what we can do.”

“A few days later my mother came back with a bundle tightly wrapped in a pink blanket. This seemed like a strange way to carry a white swan but, hey, I’ll take a white swan no matter how strangely it’s gift-wrapped. I rushed out to meet her, jumping up and down excitedly to get my first peek. “Is that my white swan?” I asked. They both smiled and my mother said, “I’m afraid they were all out of white swans, so we got a baby instead.” “A baby?” I asked incredulously. “A baby? Gross! What am I going to

do with a baby?" I thought about it for a few seconds and then asked, "Is it a boy baby or a girl baby?" "A girl baby." "A girl baby? Oh, *really* gross!!" It was bad enough not getting my white swan but at least I could have played football or cops and robbers with a boy baby. But a girl baby? What an absolutely useless gift. I said, "Maybe we could return her in a few days, when they get a new consignment of white swans?" My mother rocked the bundle gently and said, "Why don't we see how the baby fits in first."

"What were all of my classmates going to say when they heard that instead of my white swan, my parents had given me a gift of a baby - and a girl baby at that! I'd be the laughing stock of the whole school. It was really distressing to me, so I ran outside to tell my friend Patrick. We'd both been eagerly awaiting this white swan of mine. I was really embarrassed but I felt I must share my pain with somebody. He was deeply sympathetic. To make matters worse, he confided in me that a cousin of his had told him that his family had recently gotten a girl baby and she turned out to be absolutely useless. It was one of the toughest days of my life.

"A few days later my parents told me that they'd named her, "Bán" and said that it rhymed with my name, "Seán." This was the final insult. "Bán," in Irish means, "White." White swans are white. Did they really think they could fool me into accepting her by simply calling her "Bán"? Sometimes I despair of ever educating my parents.

"Occasionally, I'd see her in her crib with her big, pink mouth wide open, screaming silently. She reminded me of the nest of baby robins I'd discovered last year. She couldn't even *talk*, for God's sake. As gifts go, this one was the pits!

"I had to take matters into my own hands. One afternoon as my mother was having a nap, I put the baby in my backpack, with her head sticking out the top and walked to the pet store. The man was very nice. He asked, "Well young fella what can I do for *you*?" I said, "My mother was supposed to get me a white swan, but you were all out of white swans, so you gave her this baby girl instead. I'm wondering if you got any white swans in yet. I'll trade the baby for one." The man tapped his bottom lip thoughtfully with his right index finger and said, "Hmmm, the problem is you'd have to pay an extra 25 Euros as well as returning the baby. You see the price of white swans has gone through the roof in the last couple of months; everybody seems to want one." This was devastating news; all I possessed was 40 cents. I had to think what my

options were. I hated to compromise and I definitely was not prepared to *totally* relinquish my need to own a white swan, but anything would be an improvement on the baby girl. So I said to the man, “How about a goldfish?” He said, “I’ve got a better idea, why don’t I give you a lollipop and we can walk back to your house, and chat about white swans on the way?” I reluctantly agreed to this arrangement. The lollipop tasted great and the man was so knowledgeable about white swans that I really enjoyed the walk home. He assured me that he would definitely keep a white swan for me as soon as I’d saved up 25 Euros. I thanked him and put the backpack on the floor in the kitchen. Sometime later I heard my mother screaming, “Who put the baby in the backpack!!!!!!???????”

“It was coming up to Christmas, which gave me another idea. I decided to write to Santa Claus. So I did.

Here’s what I wrote:

"Dear Santa,

Hi.

My name is Seán.

A few months ago my parents gave me a gift of a baby girl, but quite honestly, it was the most useless gift I ever got. What I really wanted was a white swan. So can you please, please, please, please bring me a white swan for Christmas.

We live at number 9. Please don't deliver it to the wrong house. We share a chimney with the people at number 10; their chute is at the back of the chimneystack; ours is at the front of it. Please don't come down the wrong chute. Try not to get any soot on him. The people in number 10 don't have any children.

Sometimes I see pictures of you in which you're wearing glasses. Can you please make sure you've got your glasses on when you land on our roof?

I've been really good this year. Ask anybody.

Signed, Seán

PS - If anybody is writing to you asking for a baby girl, you can have my one.

Just then my companion soul realized that the young boy was about to wake up.
My friend said, "Gotta fly!"

I was about to wake up, myself, so my soul said to some other souls, "He's about to wake up; gotta fly!"

So I woke up, went into my office and recorded what had happened. Here 'tis.

Namasté,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Seán". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Tír na nÓg
December 2012