

THE PROSE POEM: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Volume 4 | 1995

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Mark Cunningham

THE PINEAL GLAND

Rene Descartes packs the soul, like a parachute, into the pineal gland; Rudolf Steiner claims that the pineal gland and its functions are what myths of the Holy Grail symbolize; others talk of a third eye in the middle of the forehead, a cosmic eye for spiritual sight. Grace and ecstasy are in short stint these days, though. All I hope for is a good night's sleep. There, again, is the pineal gland: it releases the melatonin that raises and lowers the body's hormone level to establish its day and night rhythms. Even this has gotten confused. My grandfather got up at dawn; my father gets up at seven; I drag out of bed around nine-thirty. "For a long time I used to go to bed early," Proust writes of his childhood. And when he stopped? Insomnia, an incessant going over of the past, his mammoth novel the creation of what had already taken place. Perhaps the Maker is not dead, but like Proust. Perhaps cycles derail and story lines tangle because we distract the universal Mind with our gunfire and loud radios. Events become confused, which leads to more gunfire, more racket. One must become like a small child to enter the Kingdom. For the next two or three months, then, I'm going to bed a minute earlier than the night before. As I lean back to my pillow, I'll whisper, so as not to make a big noise, "Now I lay me down to sleep. . . ."