

THE MUSIC IN THE LIGHT

A BRUSH WITH DEATH REMOVES THE FEAR OF DYING

Gilles Bédard says that doctors at Sacré-Coeur hospital in Cartierville, Que., just north of Montreal, did not expect him to live. Ravaged by a severe intestinal disorder for nearly five months, the 19-year-old five-foot, eight-inch Bédard weighed just 75 lb. on Nov. 17, 1973, when he developed a 105° fever and lapsed into a coma. A priest administered last rites, and Bédard's parents were at his bedside. But he recovered, and in the months that followed he had vivid recollections of his glimpse of what he calls an afterlife. Now 38 and living in Montreal, Bédard told Deputy Chief Researcher Sharon Doyle Driedger that the experience has affected his life profoundly, leading him to his present career, as a producer of New Age music. His account of his brush with death:

All day long, I went in and out of a coma. Around 2 a.m., the doctors came and put me on my back to examine me. Then I saw a round light at the ceiling. I felt as if I were looking at the moon. Suddenly, I couldn't see any walls. Then I saw myself from the ceiling. I was nine feet higher than my body and I was looking down at the people around me. It was very strange. I had never experienced anything like it. I could see myself, the people around me, the doctors, the nurse, my family, but I felt no emotion. It was just like watching television.

In the blink of an eye, my vision expanded and I went into a place like a cosmos where there were 12 people standing in a half-circle. They were all pure white lights and they had no faces. Beyond them was a tunnel. I wasn't afraid. I somehow knew these people although they weren't family or people I could recognize. It was as if they were waiting for me. I asked them what was happening, and they told me, 'You are not going to die. You are going back to Earth. You have something to do.' I asked them what it was, and as soon as I asked it was as if I knew the answer. They said I would know what I had to do when the time came. At that moment, I could sense the future and I realized I had the choice to do what I wanted to do. I felt pure peace. What I remem-

ber most is the music I heard when I was out of my body. It was fascinating.

It was hard to tell how long the experience lasted. It could have been five seconds or half an hour. When I came back into my body, it felt very small. But it was OK. I felt very calm, very warm. When I came to, around 5 a.m., I felt ready for a party. It was as if nothing had happened to me. I didn't remember the experience at that time. But a month after I left the hospital, I had another one. During the night, I had a sensation of falling into a tunnel. Going

rock group with some friends, but after I discovered that album I turned to electronic music. Later, in 1988, I met Roach at a New Age music conference. There I found out that, as a motocross driver, he had had a near-death experience. He said that when he wrote music, he tried to re-create the music he heard when he was in the light.

I kept the experience to myself for a long time because I didn't know who to tell and I didn't want to be considered a freak. I am not afraid to talk about it now, because people have



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Bédard: 'If people don't believe me, that's OK. I'm not a salesman for the experiences.'

into it, I knew I was about to die, but just before arriving at the end of the tunnel, I woke up. It was not a dream. It was real. And it was then that I remembered the earlier experience.

After I left the hospital I felt secure, as if I were in a large protective bubble. I knew I could cross the street without looking and not be hurt. During my convalescence, I began to remember the special sound I had heard on the other side. It was slow and calm, like very deep breathing. At this period, I had a vision. I was with a sage in the mountains and we were looking into a valley and he said, 'You are going to bring this music to people.' Then one day, a few years later, I heard the special sound on an album by Steve Roach, a composer of electronic music. I had always been interested in music. I played the guitar and performed in a small

heard about near-death experiences and it isn't as shocking. It changed my life and it happened to me. If people don't believe me, that's OK. I'm not a salesman for near-death experiences.

I'm an ordinary guy. I'm into reality. The near-death experience was not a mystical experience. It was a major step that helped in my life. It opened a new dimension for me, a new way of thinking. It changed my relationships with other people, with friends, with people near me, because I realized that it's not other people who create your unhappiness. My near-death experience opened me to the possibilities of life. I know that I am going to live a long time. But I am not afraid of death now because I know what it is. People are afraid to die because they don't know what's there. But now I know that life will continue after death. □