

# Octoín



DAVE NIcolette

# Octoin

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# About Octoin

Two million years after the last human passed from the world, the Octoin inhabit the seas. Theirs is a harmonious life, ordained and set in order by God's own intention, guided by His messengers, and cradled in His eight arms.

Each has a place, knows that place, and keeps it.

In principle.

Curiosity and the disciplined pursuit of scientific inquiry lead one young scholar to question the unquestionable, and the ink of doubt obscures the waters of righteousness.

When he learns he is not the first to question the ordained structure and order of things, or to discover forbidden knowledge, he runs afoul of the theocratic authorities.

# 1 | Eight Are the Arms of God

One is the singular truth,  
the light,  
that there may be unity.

Two are the currents of the mind,  
the righteous,  
the unrighteous,  
that there may be intention.

Three are the tiers of the world,  
the tier above, where the water ends,  
the middle tier, where dwell the Octoin,  
the tier below, of death and renewal,  
that there may be structure.

Four are the challenges,  
the congruence of word and deed,  
the subjugation of self-interest,  
the acceptance of guidance,  
the application of righteous intention,  
that there may be harmony.

Five are the places of the Octoin,  
the fifth place, where the unrighteous do penance,  
the fourth place, where the laborers toil,  
the third place, where the skilled ply the crafts,  
the second place, where the learned administer the world,  
the first place, where the messengers guide the spirit,  
that there may be order.

Six are the deviations,

the disobedience of the messengers,  
the elevation of the self,  
the questioning of the unquestionable,  
the pursuit of forbidden knowledge,  
the creation of disharmony,  
the breaking of structure,  
that righteousness may be upheld.

Seven are the hues of the body,  
the violet of mindfulness,  
the blue of reflection,  
the green of will,  
the yellow of perseverance,  
the orange of purpose,  
the red of awakening,  
that the truth may be proclaimed.

Eight are the arms of God,  
the arm of unity,  
the arm of intention,  
the arm of structure,  
the arm of harmony,  
the arm of order,  
the arm of righteousness,  
the arm of guidance,  
the arm of light,  
that there may be life.

## 2 | She Is Cradled in the Cooling Waters of Harmony

Seven dance in perfect synchrony through an orderly sequence of movements, their skins displaying shifting patterns in unison. The colors flow through the red of awakening, the orange of purpose, the yellow of perseverance, the green of will, the blue of reflection, and the violet of mindfulness, to end in the harmonious unity of camouflage, symbolizing the unseeable skin of God.

But harmony is interrupted by a lone Octoin who swims through the midst of the group, flashing disharmonious colors and patterns and disrupting the structure.

“I elevate the self,” he states in bold colors. “I refer to the self in the first person. I move as I please, and display what colors and patterns please me.”

The harmonious group is broken up, and individuals drift apart in all directions, their skins now flashing disparate patterns and colors.

Without structure there is no order. Without order there is no harmony. Without harmony there is no unity. Without unity the Octoin cannot find the righteous current.

Chaos descends upon the Octoin. They move through the water without direction, without purpose, without identity, no better than the fish and the crustaceans, no better than the sea urchins and the tube worms.

And then the messengers arrive, the messengers of the First Place, illuminating the truth by the light from the tier above. They embrace the Octoin in the eight arms of God and guide them to the righteous current.

The seven resume their dance. Structure is restored, order is regained, harmony is realized, and unity is achieved.

The errant one is sent to the Fifth Place and is penitent, and through his penance aligns his intention with the righteous current.

He returns to the fold renewed in spirit and joins in the dance, now in harmony with all. And there are eight.

So ends the performance.

One who had observed approached an artist and spoke with her.

*affection → desire → shyness*

“The messengers guide us, She Is Cradled in the Cooling Waters of Harmony.”

*pleasant surprise → happiness → calm*

“The righteous current carries us, When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal.”

*uncertainty → shyness*

“One...one wishes to say the performance was stunning.”

*gratitude → pride → self-correction → humility*

“One is grateful on behalf of all.”

*nervousness → hesitation*

“It is a powerful piece.”

*pride → self-correction*

“It is a favorite of many.”

*affection → shyness*

“Most instructive.”

*satisfaction → pleasure*

“The depiction of the intrusion of unrighteous intention is most dramatic. Some find it disturbing. One hopes it was not overwhelming.”

*shyness → uncertainty*

“Stimulating and enlightening. In the end, all find the righteous current.”

*awareness → mild worry*

“As it must be in life as in art.”

*doubt → shyness*

“He who performed the intruder appeared to deviate, in the breaking of structure and the creation of disharmony.”

*pride → self-correction → humility*

“As it was done for the purpose of instruction, there was no deviation. This is normal in the work of artists of the Third Place. One need not be alarmed.”

*distractedness → hesitation*

“One is not alarmed, but rather impressed by the realism of the performance.”

*pride → self-correction → humility*

“One is grateful on behalf of all. So it is that we of the Third Place serve the Octoin.”

*shyness → uncertainty*

“The service is most appreciated. One would be reminded of the title of the piece.”

*mild surprise → judgment → self-correction*

“The title is, *Through the Guidance of the Messengers Is Chaos Averted.*”

*distraction → nervousness → avoidance*

“Of course. One should remember it. It is a classic work.”

*awareness → affection → mild worry*

“There is no deviation in forgetfulness. May one inquire without offense, When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal?”

*affection → guardedness*

“Certainly.”

*affection → openness*

“One appears distracted today. One may speak freely, if one has the need.”

*gratitude → hope → courage*

“One is grateful on behalf of all.” Pause. “One has affection for another.”

*mild surprise → openness*

“One is grateful on behalf of all, and responds in kind. Through friendship, harmony; through harmony, unity.”

*doubt → hesitation*

The formulaic reply was not hoped-for.

“One would address another in the second person.”

*surprise → flattery → self-correction*

“This would be a deviation from structure. We are of different Places.”

*courage → hope*

“We are but one Place apart. The difference is small and my affection is great.”

*flattery → temptation → hesitation → self-correction → pleasure → self-correction*

“One makes reference to the self in the first person. Is it a deviation?”

*surprise → awareness → shame → self-correction*

“One has erred. It was carelessness. And hope.”

*calmness returning*

“There is no deviation in carelessness. But *hope*? One does not mean to offer correction to another of higher Place, but do the messengers not teach us that one must not *hope* to slip into the unrighteous current?”

*recovery → self-control*

“The correction is proper, and one is grateful on behalf of all.”

Both remained still in the water for a time. Then, She Is Cradled in the Cooling Waters of Harmony communicated again.

*hesitation → risk of exposure of vulnerability*

“One does not seek to elevate the self, but one wishes to express gratitude for the friendship of another.”

*affection → openness*

“One responds in kind. One does not seek deviation from structure, but one wishes to express regret regarding the separation of the Places, in this case.”

*embarrassment → flattery → self-correction*

Regret regarding structure...it is an unusual statement, she thought. Does it border on deviation? There is a kind of excitement in this friendship. Is it a harmless thrill, or a lure into unrighteous intention?

“The friendship of When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal sometimes gives one a test of faith. One is grateful on behalf of all for the opportunity to align one’s intention with the righteous current.”

*bemusement → mild disappointment*

The formulaic reply: “The messengers guide us.”

Unexpressed: Yet one wishes She Is Cradled in the Cooling Waters of Harmony would align with oneself, though it be a deviation.

*pride → happiness → non-correction*

“One must be about one’s work. The righteous current carries us, When the Light Passes Into The Deep There Will Be Renewal.”

*affection → desire → regret*

“The messengers guide us, She Is Cradled in the Cooling Waters of Harmony.”

She Is Cradled in the Cooling Waters of Harmony took her leave, gliding gracefully through the water, around a nearby outcropping, and out of sight.

When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal thought that somewhere in the vast extent of the ocean there must

be a place where Octoin could live happily without reference to Places or deviations, and where a current was just a current.

*pride → shame → self-correction → resignation*

Not humility, but resignation.

# 6 | With Congruence of Word and Deed Righteous Intention Nourishes All (excerpt)

When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal communicated.

*uncertainty*

“May one inquire...”

*anger*

“Inquire, already!”

*uncertainty* → *worry*

“Did the messenger speak of one’s research into the nature of the light from the tier above?”

*anger* → *lingering annoyance*

“The one you mention has not yet begun his work. He has, therefore, sought nothing, forbidden or otherwise.”

*worry* → *confusion*

“Then, to what did the messenger refer?”

*lingering annoyance*

“It is nothing to do with order or with deviations. It is a power play. This is something the student must learn about, if he is to pursue illicit studies without detection.”

*confusion* → *surprise*

“Does the mentor encourage the student to pursue such studies?”

*lingering annoyance* → *restoring calm*

“The mentor encourages the student to pursue knowledge. Where

that pursuit may lead, we cannot predict, but if one intends to pursue knowledge then one must follow where it leads.”

*uncertainty → doubt*

When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal was pensive.

With Congruence of Word and Deed Righteous Intention Nourishes All continued:

*calm → seriousness*

“Not all are suited to this work.”

*doubt → surreptitious excitement*

“Is this the norm at the institution?”

*seriousness → pride*

“No. Those few who pursue knowledge with courage must be cautious.”

*surreptitious excitement → overt excitement*

When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal had no words.

*pride → mild amusement*

“Should one wish to alter one’s learning path, there would be no offense.”

*overt excitement → naive confidence*

“One is satisfied with one’s present learning path.”

# 7 | When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal (excerpt)

When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal awoke suddenly. The water was cool and the pressure normal. He basked for a long moment before opening his eyes.

He was in a small cave with multiple openings. He swam to one of the openings, checked for danger, and emerged.

Clearly, he was back in the middle tier. That was good. But his surroundings were unfamiliar. That may be bad. On the way up and down, he must have drifted some distance laterally. He wondered whether he would be able to find the way home.

Two Octoin had seen him emerge from the cave, and now approached. One of them displayed, “Our guest is awake!”

The other replied, “Let’s see how he’s doing.”

The first, a female, communicated.

*openness → concern*

“My name is Blue Hues of Reflection. You may call me Blue. Are you feeling better?”

*surprise → confusion*

“One is known as When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal. One is grateful on behalf of all for the assistance of Blue Hues of Reflection.”

*bemusement → good humor*

“On behalf of all? Are there more of you?”

*confusion* → *uncertainty*

“No...one journeys alone.”

To her companion, Blue communicated:

*good humor* → *curiosity*

“This is a strange one.”

The second Octoin, a male, communicated.

*openness* → *good humor*

“Perhaps he is delirious. My name is Fearsome Scourge of Lobsters.”

The two flashed rapid, complicated patterns of mirth. The female communicated.

*good humor* → *friendliness*

“Pay no attention to this one, um...friend with the long name. He may well be called Shameless Glutton of Lobsters, if his name were not already Deep Waters.”

*good humor* → *friendliness*

“You may call me Deep, although some say otherwise.”

Again the two displayed mirth.

When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal suspected he was not yet fully alert. Here were Octoin who wantonly displayed unrestrained colors of mirth on the slightest pretext. They did not respect their true names. And had he seen them using first and second person pronouns? Surely not!

The male communicated.

*openness* → *curiosity*

“What did you say you were called?”

Before When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal could reply, Blue communicated.

*friendliness* → *good humor*

“He *said* he was called something long with Light in it.”

*openness → friendliness*

“Then let us call him Light.”

*friendliness → good humor*

“Or Long Name.”

When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal did not like this. His name was not Light, or Long Name. And now he was *sure* they were using personal pronouns wantonly.

*bewilderment → curiosity*

Of what Place are Blue Hues of Reflection and Deep Waters?”

Deep Waters communicated.

*openness → friendliness*

“Place? Ah. You don’t know where you are. Of course. You drifted in from somewhere.”

Blue Hues of Reflection communicated.

*openness → friendliness*

“We call this the place of the three spires, because of those rock formations just there.”

She pointed with one arm.

Deep Waters communicated.

*openness → friendliness*

“And of what place are you, Long Name?”

*confusion → uncertainty*

“One is of the Second Place.”

Blue Hues of Reflection communicated.

*friendliness → interest*

“He speaks most strangely.”

Deep Waters communicated.

*openness → friendliness*

“Octoin of other places may speak differently.”

To When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal, he communicated:

“Where is Second, friend? We will gladly help you return home, if you wish it.”

*fatigue → concern*

“One is unsure of the course. This place is unfamiliar.”

Blue Hues of Reflection communicated.

*friendliness → eagerness*

“I know someone who may know where Long Name belongs! Rest in calm waters, Long Name. I will return soon.”

Blue Hues of Reflection took her leave, swimming fast.

The two conversed, each trying to comprehend the other’s strangeness. By the time Blue Hues of Reflection returned, accompanied by another, they had not improved their mutual understanding.

The newcomer communicated.

*curiosity → openness*

“Hello, friend. I am called Strong Current. My friend here was unable to recall your name.”

*unease → hesitation*

“One is known as When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal.”

Deep Waters communicated.

*openness → friendliness*

“He comes from a place called Second. We have not heard of it.”

Blue Hues of Reflection communicated.

*openness → friendliness*

“We hoped you might know of it, Strong Current.”

Strong Current communicated.

*openness → curiosity*

“I do not know of a place by that name. But perhaps it would save time if we allowed When the Light...When the Light Does Something Then Something Will Happen to speak for himself.”

*hesitation → confusion*

Can these truly be Octoin?

“One is of the Second Place, and one’s home is the place of the Octoin.”

The three Octoin paused.

Deep Waters may have been pondering the statement or idly waiting. He displayed no statement, but mimicked various parts of the immediate surroundings, one by one in turn. When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal was a bit taken aback by this lack of self-control. At home, one was expected to keep one’s skin quiescent unless communicating.

Blue Hues of Reflection communicated.

*confusion → curiosity*

“Is it a riddle?”

Strong Current communicated.

*openness → curiosity*

“I am sorry, friend, but those words make no sense. Actually, the words make sense, but not when strung together in that order.”

Blue Hues of Reflection and Deep Waters erupted into brightly-colored flashes of mirth.

When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal wondered whether he had not survived, after all. Perhaps this was what awaited the departed. Drifting into semiconsciousness, he reflexively displayed: “The messengers guide us.”

Blue Hues of Reflection communicated.

*openness → curiosity*

“What was that? Did he say he was a messenger of some sort?”

Strong current communicated.

*curiosity* → *interest*

“No, no. He refers to messengers...messengers of God.”

Deep Waters communicated.

*openness* → *good humor*

“Well, *that* sounds important!”

*curiosity* → *interest*

“It *is* important, in that it gives us a clue as to his home. I think I know where it is.”

# 8 | The Light From the Tier Above Guides Her

*self-assurance* → *serenity*

“And so, here is When the Light Passes Into the Deep There Will Be Renewal.”

*uncertainty* → *nervousness*

“The arms of God embrace us all, The Light From the Tier Above Guides Her.”

*serenity* → *warm concern*

“One’s colors bespeak distress.”

*nervousness*

“One is...somewhat shaken.”

*warm concern* → *self-assurance*

“It is to be expected after such an ordeal.”

*diminishing nervousness*

“One is grateful for the opportunity to feel distress.”

*self-assurance* → *kindly good humor*

“One is grateful on behalf of all to see another’s sense of humor remains intact.”

*diminishing nervousness* → *growing calm*

“The messengers guide us.”

*kindly good humor* → *self-assured seriousness*

“The messengers guide us. Yes. It seems one has a great interest in the light from the tier above.”

*growing calm* → *veiled guardedness*

“One has always found it fascinating.”

*self-assured seriousness → serenity*

“There is no deviation in seeking the light from the tier above.”

*veiled guardedness → cautious trust*

“One is relieved to know this. Curiosity sometimes feels...*close* to deviation.”

*serenity → self-assurance*

“It is not curiosity, but rather the *object* of curiosity, that may be a deviation.”

*cautious trust → interest*

“Is one to understand the light from the tier above is not forbidden knowledge?”

*self-assurance → serenity*

“It is not the knowledge, but the manner of learning that concerns.”

*interest*

With Congruence of Word and Deed Righteous Intention Nourishes All had said it *was* a deviation to seek this knowledge. Or had he meant to refer to the method of investigation? The mentor was, after all, open to unorthodox methods.

“Is it forbidden to swim toward the tier above?”

*self-assurance → serenity*

“It is not *forbidden*, but it is dangerous...and unnecessary. Knowledge of the light from the tier above is a gift from God, revealed to the Octoin through the guidance of the messengers. It is not necessary to travel there in person to understand the light from the tier above. God has given the middle tier to the Octoin, and here we live. The tier above is given to others...as one has discovered. It is not a place suited to the Octoin.”

*interest → increasing calm*

“One is grateful on behalf of all for the correction. One is fortunate not to have been killed.”

*serenity → authority*

“Fortune is an illusion. The Octoin are cradled within the Eight

Arms of God. One must interpret such an experience first as a lesson and second as an indication that God has a task or purpose in mind that requires one's continued presence in this world.”

*uncertainty → self-doubt*

“One did not seek such a lesson. One wished to learn of the nature of the light from the tier above.”

*authority → sympathy*

“God does not wait to be sought out, when he has a plan. When he is ready to make it clear, one will know it. As for the other matter: There is no deviation in the desire to know of the light from the tier above. It is a gift from God, *for* the Octoin.”

*self-doubt → curiosity*

“Then perhaps the messenger will offer guidance.”

*sympathy → openness*

“What guidance one may offer will be given freely.”

*curiosity → trust*

“One is grateful on behalf of all. The light from the tier above illuminates the spirit.”

*openness*

“It is so.”

*curiosity → trust*

“Therefore, it must be of a spiritual nature.”

*openness*

“This is a logical conclusion.”

*curiosity → trust*

“And the light from the tier above illuminates the mundane world.”

*openness*

“It is so.”

*curiosity → trust*

“Therefore, it must be of a mundane nature.”

*openness*

“This, too, is a logical conclusion.”

*curiosity → trust*

“Is this not a contradiction? One is confused.”

*openness → authority*

“Must it be a contradiction? Perhaps a thing can be of both realities.”

*curiosity → trust*

“One had not considered this.”

*openness → authority*

“The light from the tier above is a thing of God, and God is the author of the spiritual and the mundane. Far from a contradiction, it is perfectly natural that the light from the tier above would be a thing both spiritual and mundane.”

*curiosity → trust*

“One understands the teaching, and is grateful on behalf of all.”

From The Beak Of God Flows The Righteous Current arrived and joined in the discussion.

*arrogance → morbid curiosity*

“Ah, so this is the errant one. Let me have a look at that arm. Is there much pain?”

*surprise → consternation → hesitancy*

When The Light Passes Into The Deep There Will Be Renewal extended the injured arm for From The Beak Of God Flows The Righteous Current to inspect. He was at a loss. Should he reply or not? Should he display the formulaic greeting, or wait for The Light From the Tier Above Guides Her to speak first.

From The Beak Of God Flows The Righteous Current had ignored the formulaic greetings. Now he had asked a question, and protocol required When The Light Passes Into The Deep There Will Be Renewal to reply. But another of the First Place was present, and had not yet greeted the new arrival. By *that* protocol, it was not

proper for When The Light Passes Into The Deep There Will Be Renewal to communicate. Nor could he offer correction to one of a higher Place...especially not a messenger!

The Light From The Tier Above Guides Her rescued him from embarrassment, or worse: deviation.

*calm → respect*

“The current of righteousness carries all, From The Beak Of God Flows The Righteous Current.”

From The Beak Of God Flows The Righteous Current roused himself from his examination of the injured arm, drifted back a bit from When The Light Passes Into The Deep There Will Be Renewal, composed himself, and replied.

*forced self-control*

“The arms of God embrace us all, The Light From The Tier Above Guides Her.”

When The Light Passes Into The Deep There Will Be Renewal then communicated.

*unguarded relief*

“The messengers guide us, From The Beak Of God Flows The Righteous Current.”

*arrogance → cynical superiority*

“But with insufficient clarity, it seems.”

The Light From The Tier Above Guides Her communicated.

*calm → reassurance*

“All are grateful on behalf of one who has returned safely home. When The Light Passes Into The Deep There Will Be Renewal has not deviated. Infused with the spirit of God, he sought the light from the tier above, as do all Octoin whose intention is aligned with the righteous current.”

The twist on the formulaic statement of gratitude was not lost on When The Light Passes Into The Deep There Will Be Renewal or

on From The Beak Of God Flows The Righteous Current. Their reactions to it were very different.

*gratitude → humility*

“The messengers guide us, The Light From The Tier Above Guides Her.”

From The Beak Of God Flows The Righteous Current spoke to The Light From The Tier Above Guides Her but glared pointedly at When The Light Passes Into The Deep There Will Be Renewal.

*cynicism → suspicion*

“One is uncertain what guidance has been offered this day. One perceives a deviation in the attempt to reach the tier above. One perceives a deviation in the attempt to learn the nature of the light from the tier above by means other than the guidance of the messengers.”

The Light From The Tier Above Guides Her communicated.

*calm → reassurance*

“If memory serves, then swimming in any particular direction is not among the Six Deviations. Seeking unity with the light from the tier above surely is the opposite of deviation, is it not?”

*suspicion → veiled anger*

“Philosophical word-play aside, one hopes the lessons of the day have been learned properly.”

When The Light Passes Into The Deep There Will Be Renewal communicated.

*uncertainty → fear*

“One assures the messenger the lessons of the day have been learned properly.”

*veiled anger → arrogance*

“One will look for stronger evidence of learning than mere assurances. And one will look diligently. Perhaps the pain of the injury will serve as a reminder of that which must be learned.”

From The Beak Of God Flows The Righteous Current began a swooping, dramatic exit, remembered protocol at the last moment, and turned to face The Light From The Tier Above Guides Her.

*self-correction*

“The arms of God embrace us all, The Light From The Tier Above Guides Her.”

“The light from the tier above illuminates the spirit, From The Beak Of God Flows The Righteous Current.”

With his departure, the pressure of the water seemed to lighten.

*fear → relief*

“He seems very angry.”

*calm → reassurance*

“No doubt he is concerned for one’s well-being.”

When The Light Passes Into The Deep There Will Be Renewal thought, No doubt indeed...but *which* one’s well-being?

# 15 | The Yellow Hue of Perseverance And The Orange Hue Of Purpose

*cheerful arrogance*

“The light from the tier above illuminates the spirit, The Yellow Hue of Perseverance And The Orange Hue Of Purpose.”

*sense of acceptance → satisfaction*

“The righteous current carries all, Let the Singular Truth Be Proclaimed. One is appreciative of the messenger’s visit.”

*cheerful arrogance → mild suspicion and curiosity*

“Is that so? One wonders at the reason, as one has not yet announced one’s purpose in visiting the academy.”

*satisfaction → eagerness to please*

“Is the purpose of the messengers not consistent? To bring the light of God to the Octoin? To illuminate the righteous current?”

*mild suspicion and curiosity → lessened suspicion*

“Indeed. One is grateful on behalf of all to know the mentors of the academy appreciate the messenger’s mission.”

*eagerness to please*

“That mission is most sincerely appreciated, messenger.”

*lessened suspicion → veiled condescension*

“In that case, one’s purpose in visiting will not be considered...how may one put it? Burdensome.”

*eagerness to please → curiosity*

“Burdensome? To serve the instruments of God in bringing the light to the Octoin? To the contrary, it would be an honor. A privilege.”

*veiled condescension → surprise*

“Well. One had not expected such a cooperative attitude on the part of the mentors. One is grateful on behalf of all.”

*curiosity → eagerness to please*

Conspiratorially: “One understands well the situation to which the messenger alludes. The problem lies not with all the mentors. There are those who have lost sight of the righteous current in their quest for mundane knowledge. They have forgotten that the purpose of learning is to glorify God. Some even appear to believe God is just another subject of study, no more important than any other.”

*surprise → condescension → arrogance*

So, this one would gladly clean the parasites from around a messenger’s beak. He may prove useful.

“Is one to understand The Yellow Hue of Perseverance And The Orange Hue Of Purpose has *not* lost sight of the righteous current?”

*eagerness to please*

“Indeed not, messenger! How may one be of service to the Octoin?”

*comfortable arrogance*

“One is grateful on behalf of all for the mentor’s righteous intention.”

*eagerness to please → overt happiness*

“The messengers guide us, Let the Singular Truth Be Proclaimed.”

*comfortable arrogance*

“Yes. About that. It seems not all the mentors are equally open to the messenger’s guidance. Some, one has learned, openly breach protocol, ignore the formulaic responses, and swim dangerously close to deviation.”

*overt happiness → eagerness to please*

“Sadly, it is so, messenger. It is so. With increasing frequency, one is disturbed by this. One mentor in particular has been known to encourage students to take a very liberal interpretation of the messengers’ guidance.”

*comfortable arrogance → anticipation*

“Indeed, this has come to the attention of the messengers. It is a reason for one’s visit today. But not the only reason.”

*eagerness to please → curiosity*

“How may one serve the Octoin?”

*anticipation*

“This institution is in possession of many orbs.”

*curiosity*

“It is so.”

*anticipation → arrogance*

“And many of these orbs contain information of a questionable nature.”

*curiosity → displeasure*

“One must admit it is so.”

*arrogance*

Let the Singular Truth Be Proclaimed decided to state his purpose bluntly and observe The Yellow Hue of Perseverance And The Orange Hue Of Purpose’s reaction. If the mentor seemed shocked, or protested the proposed action, then he would know this would not be a suitable mole. On the other sucker...

“It is the decision of the messengers that orbs which do not promote the light of God must be destroyed.”

*displeasure → approval*

“One is grateful on behalf of all for the messenger’s decision. The purpose of this institution is to serve as an instrument of the messengers. Over time, some have forgotten this and pursued mundane knowledge for its own sake. Students are confused by the many points of view represented in the orbs.”

*arrogance → satisfaction*

“This is in accord with the thinking of the messengers. The Octoin have grown spiritually lazy. They are at risk of slipping into the

unrighteous current without realizing what is happening. The open use of personal pronouns by workers of the Fourth Place. The free-minded performances of artists of the Third Place. The questionable research of certain mentors of the Second Place. Even the tolerance offered by some of the messengers of the First Place. All these are not fitting for times like the present, when the Octoin have lost the righteous current.”

*approval → eagerness to please*

“Not fitting, no, not fitting. The messenger may be pleased to learn that one has begun to catalog the many orbs in the academy’s collection, and to categorize them. One may begin the selective destruction of orbs even this very day.”

*satisfaction → surprise → condescension → arrogance*

This one is almost *too* eager to serve. He will require careful handling to ensure he does not make his service to the messengers too obvious to his colleagues.

“One is grateful on behalf of all for the mentor’s proactive service to the Octoin. One had not expected this.”

*eagerness to please*

“The messengers guide us. One may expect righteous intention from certain mentors. Sadly, not from all.”

*arrogance*

“Indeed. And that brings us to another purpose in this visit.”

*eagerness to please → curiosity*

“How may one serve the Octoin?”

*arrogance*

“Those mentors who swim near to the unrighteous current are most careful whenever a messenger is present. Now, if one of their own were to keep an eye open for questionable behavior...”

*curiosity → \_eagerness to please*

“One would be honored to serve the messengers.”

*arrogance → disdain*

Beakless toady. Too good to be true? Time would tell.

“One is grateful on behalf of all for the mentor’s willingness to serve. Continue with the review of the orbs. Begin destroying questionable ones discreetly. Should the errant mentors discover the destruction, they will doubtless try to preserve as many as possible.”

*eagerness to please*

“One is grateful on behalf of all for the opportunity to serve.”

*disdain → arrogance*

“The arms of God embrace us all. One more thing.”

*eagerness to please*

“Yes, messenger.”

*arrogance*

“Keep an eye open for questionable behavior. Questionable talk. Report what you see. Discreetly.”

*eagerness to please*

“Discreetly, of course, messenger.”

*arrogance*

“The messengers have cleansed the Fourth Place, and are now cleansing the Third. The time to cleanse the Second Place is coming. When it comes, the messengers would know who among the mentors requires correction.”

*eagerness to please*

“Understood, messenger.”

*arrogance*

“One is sure of that. And now one must attend to other business. The light from the tier above illuminates the spirit, The Yellow Hue of Perseverance And The Orange Hue Of Purpose.”

*eagerness to please → sense of importance*

“The messengers guide us, Let the Singular Truth Be Proclaimed.”

The messenger departed. The Yellow Hue of Perseverance And The Orange Hue Of Purpose felt giddy with excitement. He was to fulfill an important function on behalf of the messengers. No: Two important functions. He would help identify errant mentors, and he would help destroy orbs containing questionable information.

*sense of importance → self-correction → humility*

But it would not do to become carried away with his assignment. He must be wary of the deviation of elevation of the self. His tasks were important, but he himself was not. He must keep that in mind at all times, lest he become unworthy of the messengers' trust.

*humility → tentative self-importance*

The Yellow Hue of Perseverance And The Orange Hue Of Purpose did not find it so easy to divest himself of a sense of self-importance, despite the risk to his soul.