The Notebook of Lambspring

The 1556 edition of *The Book of Lambspring* was written in Early New High German. Images from the *Compendium Naturalis* website were uploaded to Gemini to decipher the text, translate the text to modern German, and then do a literal word-by-word translation to English. From that translation, Random Acts of Karma composed rhyming couplets to imitate the style of the 1556 edition.

Preface



In November in the year 1553 of our Lord and Savior Christ, the venerable and pious Mr. Hermann Marsow, Superintendent of the Church of Dorpat, shared the mystery of the hidden philosophy with me. In remembrance of his passing, in the year 1556.

I am called Lambspring and this is my shield.
With the rights of free lineage, its honor I wield.
The philosophy of the masters, I read and heard,
wisdom and understanding divinely conferred.
So those of wealth and poverty
may understand, this fraternity
welcomed me as a cleric of worth.
One does not find its equal on earth.
I do not forget my God above
through whom I comprehend Truth and Love.
These contents should be oft reviewed
If wisdom is the goal pursued.
In silence, labor and receive
God's gift to share and virtue achieve.
O God Father, beginning and end,
we pray through Jesus Christ, true friend,
to illuminate our minds that we may be
successful in the Great Work of the Trinity.
By Your will, we praise and serve;
by Your mercy, we are preserved.
With God's help and nothing concealed
the truth of the art, I will reveal.
If your perception is true and right,
you'll travel unerring, guided by insight.

All is One and within One contains
all that exists, occult and mundane.
Do not despair over extended nascence,
the venture requires both time and patience.
If you would taste the noble fruit,
in your labor, be resolute.
Coction of Prima Materia you seek,
and time it takes, days and weeks.
This seed of metal, oft ignored,
is what the scholars labor toward.
Devoted students of Art renowned
find the origin easily found.
But share it not with simpletons
who'll only mock what you have done.
God shares this gift with discretion.
When it is in your possession,
do not worry, stay satisfied.
Silence is virtue, vaunting is pride.
With that, the Preface is at rest.
Describing the Art is best expressed
with rhymes and figures for clarity.
We thank the Creator with sincerity.
First Figure follows for you to see
the stages of the Art with verity.

The First Figure

Mark and understand rightly
how go the two fishes in our sea.



The sea is Body, the two fishes are Spirit and Soul.

Philosophers say generally:
the two fish swimming in our sea
do not have flesh and bone.
Cook them in their water alone
creating the greatest sea,
full of power, released gently.
The philosophers' opinion,
the fish are three and two and one:
Anima and Corpus, with the Spiritus.
These three you cook together thus,
The greatest sea, your creation,
flourishing in multiplication.
Therefore cook sulfur with sulfur
and let your mind not stir.
Pious silence opens to inspiration.
Make no outcries with illumination.
Take care your business is not turned
by those who would have you believe them learned.

The Second Figure

Here you should quickly notice
the black beast of the forest.



Putrefactio.

At this time, the philosophers state,
the black beast you must decapitate.
And when successful in your fight,
the black beast loses, becomes snow white.
To ensure you truly comprehend,
this is Caput Corvi, the Raven's Head.
The blackness vanishes in a mist
and only the true color does persist.
With this insight, philosophers rejoice;
with whom they share, though, a careful choice.
Children receive some; fools receive none.
God chooses to whom He grants wisdom.
What God has chosen to keep hidden
keep silent, share not with other men.

The Third Figure

In the forest one can see
a stag and unicorn hidden without anxiety.



In the body is soul and spirit.

Philosophers strongly attest
that two beasts are in the forest:
a vibrant stag with antlers grand
in a clearing calmly stands.
The other beast, philosophers claim,
a unicorn is rightly named.
In the forest, both beasts are secluded.
Blessed is he, the Masters concluded,
who can capture and ensnare
both the beasts resting there.
The Masters make it happily clear
the forest is not true woods here.
The bottom of the truth is this:
the forest is the Body or *Corpus*.
Certainly and rightly thus,
the unicorn is *Spiritus*.
The name *Anima* the stag desires,
despite protests of deniers.
Only the master knows the Art
of leading them joined, not apart,
out of the forest and in again.
With this, the Golden Work attained,
governing the Art of making gold,
a magnificent triumph to behold.

The Fourth Figure

A great wonder is thereby done:
the two lions become one.



Spirit and Soul must be united and returned to the Body.

Philosophers do teach with faith
how these two strong lions pace.
In a cruel dark valley, the Master finds
the Lord and Lady, whom he must bind.
Though they are fast and fierce and wild,
with wisdom and diligence, they're reconciled
by the Master, who knows he must
drive them joined into the forest.
The Throne of Honor is his prize,
and deserved praise from the wise.

The Fifth Figure

A wolf and dog are in a house and changed
and in the end, one thing remained.



Mortification and imbibition and whitening of the Body,
conjoined with Soul and Spirit.

The master writes openly and freely
the dog and wolf in the house are really
from the same primeval source;
one is fixed, the other a volatile force.
From the sunrise, the wolf emerges.
The dog guards sunset, where the wolf submerges.
Full of rage and sorrow, they separate.
They kill one another in this miserable state.
From them the greatest poison springs,
but transformation later brings
the greatest antidote on Earth,
a gift they give at their rebirth.
Extolling God, the wise rejoice,
thanking him in praiseful voice.

The Sixth Figure

In the dragon, a great wonder is seen.
He contains venom and highest medicine.



Mercury is precipitated, sublimated, dissolved in its distillate, and then coagulated again.

In the forest dwells a dragon,
who possesses the best poison.
When seeing the Sun's splendor and bright fire,
he pours out poison, flying ever higher.
Before him, no beast survives at all.
The basilisk is not his equal.
When one kills the dragon, it is agreed
That from all troubles, one will be freed.
When the dragon in the end does die,
all veins and colors multiply.
He consumes his tail, full of poison,
which has become highest medicine.
When he accomplishes this himself,
the balm of life restores him to health.
Virtue, the result of this choice,
causes the wise to rejoice.

The Seventh Figure

With two birds in the forest, we've begun
to understand they are really one.



The light sublimated mercury is fixed so that it can no longer escape and fly away. This process must be repeated until fixation occurs.

The Birds of Hermes can be found
nesting in a tree, above the ground.
One wishes to fly ever higher,
to stay in the nest, the other's desire.
Though for different things they crave,
with one another they lovingly stay,
as a husband with his wife
in a blissful married life.
We have the noble birds preserved,
with thanks to God, well-deserved.

The Eighth Figure

Two noble birds, their struggle resumed.
The body and spirit, one another consume.



The raven returns once again for digestion in horse manure or a water bath. The Spirit is extracted from the Body and coagulates as the work tends towards perfection.
Thus is prepared the Philosopher's Stone.

A beautiful forest in India is found
with two birds that are together bound.
One is snow white, the other one red.
They bite each other until both are dead.
Completely consuming each other
and transforming to a white color,
the dove remaining after the attack
loses the stench of death and black.
As the Phoenix, it is reborn.
With health and wealth, it does adorn
true philosophers with great wonders
as it steps before princes and emperors.

The Ninth Figure

The Hunter does now a kingdom possess.
Out of the worst has come the best.



If Fortune wills it, the Rhetor becomes a Consul. If the same Fortune wills it, the Consul becomes a Rhetor.
Understand that the Prince, the Tincture, appeared on this day.

Listen to me as I regale
a truly great and wonderous tale.
The King asserts sovereignty.
Now hear him relay his history:
My enemies are in defeat,
the dragon trampled under feet.
I am King on Earth, both high and rich.
None born before me are my equal, which
were made by art or by nature
or by any living creature.
I grant long-lived health and power,
stones and pearls and gold and silver.
Medicines, both small and great,
whatever I touch, I elevate.
I was not high born at the start;
rather, of ignoble art.
Through gifts of God and Nature given,
to this height, I have risen.
With Cosmic Order, I am aligned.
Within the worst, the best you find.
Herme's High One, granted sovereignty,
dwelling now in the highest city.

The Tenth Figure

The salamander lives in fire;
among all creatures, there is none finer.
Because the salamander is pure,
he has turned into the best color.



The reiteration, gradation, and improvement of the tincture or the Philosopher's Stone.

In all the legends, it is stated
in the fire, the salamander is created.
In the fire, it finds life and food
which is the character Nature imbued.
In the mountain, the salamander lives.
Coals are prepared for the flames they give.
The second fire, greater than the first,
is where the salamander is immersed.
The third is even greater still
And causes the salamander to swell.
It must be caught and pierced to die,
slagging off dregs to purify,
blooming into life eternal.
Its blood is medicine for all,
Driving sickness away from metals
And bodies, both human and animal.
This gift of God, the stone of the wise,
for it we are grateful always.

The Eleventh Figure

The father, son, and guide hold hands.
Through them, Body, Soul, and Spirit we understand.



The father is joyful; he has a son.
And now his next task, he has begun.
The father now carefully provides
his son with a spiritual guide.
Before the son chooses their destination,
the guide starts their conversation:
Come here, that I may be your guide.
Upon mountain's peak, we will stand beside
each other. And from this lofty height,
you will behold the fullness of the light
and know the world's wisdom and state.
Then rejoice as I lead you to the gates
of heaven. The son consented
and, harmoniously, they ascended.
The throne of heaven, they beheld,
its magnificence unparalleled.
After learning and contemplation,
the son completed his initiation.
Memories of his father began to return
and about his well-being, he had concerns.
His father's immense misery
inspired compassion and mercy.
He and his guide left the high place
so the son could return to the father's embrace.

The Twelfth Figure

In India, on top of the mountain,
are the Spirit and Soul, the Guide and Son.
Wonders are seen.



The son now speaks to the guide:
From my father, I don't wish to hide.
Without me he neither thrives nor lives,
always calling for what I give.
The guide responds to the son:
I will not let you go alone.
I have led you from your father's bosom.
Therefore, I will bring you back to him.
With your virtue and strength, he will delight,
As we build his house to a great height.
The father, who was filled with yearning,
called out when he saw his son returning.

The Thirteenth Figure

The father consumes the son entirely;
the soul and spirit burst out forcefully.



My son, I was dead in your absence,
but I shall live again with your presence.
The son entered his father's house.
His own joy, the father pronounced
and wrapped his arms around his son
and swallowed him with greeting done.

The Fourteenth Figure

From immense power, sweat pours from the Father,
the oil and true tincture of the philosophers.



To God, who created and ordered all things,
the father a heartfelt prayer does bring.
As he sweats for his son,
he knows his efforts are not done.
He asks his son out of him be poured
so that his son may be reborn.
God hears his prayer of the faith he keeps.
He makes the father fall asleep.
While he was asleep, God does send
a silver rain, through the stars descend.
The father's body made soft and moist.
In the Lord God's grace, we do rejoice.

The Fifteenth Figure

As one, the Son and Guide and Father
remain together for eternal hours.



Right now, a transformation occurs:
The father is changed into clear water.
And from the clear water, good earth is formed,
the father and son, both reborn.
The Father and Son always together are found,
the Son within and the Father surround.
The father and son, inseparable,
bring forth a fruit, true and venerable
which banishes illness of each and all kind
so that they will never sicken or die.
Immortality granted by God's grace.
on a seat of power, they are in place
on either side of the master beautiful.
They are now fixed and immutable.
Sitting in triumph in the mighty kingdom,
the Guide wears blood-red, full of wisdom.