Peter Fraser
Birds, Seeking the Freedom of the Sky

Leseprobe

Birds, Seeking the Freedom of the Sky
von Peter Fraser
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BIRDS
SEEKING THE FREEDOM OF THE SKY

The Bird Remedies have rapidly become a significant part of practice. The general picture of the Bird Remedy may be relatively clear but the differences between the different species can be subtle and hard to pin down precisely.

This book brings together information on forty different remedies, much of it not readily available elsewhere. It gives a general outline of the features important to birds and how these features are expressed in the Bird Remedies. It then looks at the individual remedies and details the way that particular issues are important in one remedy and less so in others. It also looks at the emerging relationships between bird families and such things as the relationship between predator and prey.

Transformation between the Realms

The remedies that move between the Realms of Sea, Earth, Sky and Underworld have a particular dynamic relationship to that transformation. Understanding this dynamic helps to understand the group as a whole and to find the subtle difference between its members. Groups include the Insects, the Birds, the Spiders, the Snakes, the Lacs, the Drugs and the Trees.

"Peter's series of books has been a revelation. The discrimination between insects and birds is so succinct it is hard to believe it is so true. I can think of no homœopathic books available which give so much wisdom for such a small cost! They have inspired my practice, and benefited my patients."
Geoff Johnson

"Peter brings a fine focus that penetrates the outer veils to reveal the simpler and truer nature of things. This leads to brevity of expression as well as concentration of the material: an aqua vitae from which we may sip and understand. The information given is really useful in practice, helping me to recognize similima. I have been eagerly awaiting this book." *Misha Norland*

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PETER FRASER

WINTER PRESS

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TRANSFORMATION BETWEEN THE REALMS

CONTENTS

Acknowledgement . . . 1
Transformation Between the Realms . . . 2
Birds - Seeking the Freedom of the Sky . . . 5
Birds in General . . . 18
The Bird Family Tree . . . 36
Families . . . 37
Repertorizing . . . 38

GALLOANSERAE . . . 39
ANSERIFORMES . . . 40
Anas platyrhynchos; Mallard . . . 41
Cairina moschata, Anas barbariae (Oscillococcinum); Barbary or Muscovy Duck . . . 44
Anser anser; Greylag Goose . . . 46
Branta canadensis; Canada Goose . . . 49
Cygnus cygnus; Whooper Swan . . . 54
Cygnus bewickii; Bewick's Swan . . . 59
Cygnus olor; Mute Swan . . . 63
GALLIFORMES . . . 65
Bonasa umbellus; Ruffed Grouse . . . 65
Pavo cristatus; Peacock . . . 68
Gallus gallus domesticus; Domestic Fowl . . . 73
Meleagris gallopavo; Wild Turkey . . . 79

NEOAVES . . . 81
PELECANIFORMES . . . 82
Pelecanus occidentalis; Brown Pelican . . . 82
CICONIIFORMES . . . 87
Threskiornis aethiopicus; Sacred Ibis . . . 87
Ardea herodias; Great Blue Heron . . . 91
CHARADRIIFORMES . . . 96
Larus argentatus; Herring Gull . . . 96
FALCONIFORMES . . . 99
Falco peregrinus; Peregrine Falcon . . . 99
Falco cherrug; Saker Falcon . . . 109
Buteo jamaicensis; Red-tailed Hawk . . . 112
Haliaeetus leucocephalus; Bald Eagle . . . 117
NEW WORLD VULTURES . . . 125
Vultur gryphus; Andean Condor . . . 125
Cathartes aura; Turkey Vulture . . . 129
PROCELLARIFORMES . . . 134
Diomedea exulans; Wandering Albatross . . . 134
GAVIFORMES . . . 137
Gavia immer; Common Loon . . . 137
SPHENICIFORMES . . . 143
Spheniscus humboldti; Humboldt Penguin . . . 143
STRIGIFORMES . . . 146
Bubo virginianus; Great Horned Owl . . . 147
Tyto alba; Barn Owl . . . 149
APODIFORMES . . . 154
Aerodramus fuciphagus, Nidus edulis; Edible-nest Swiftlet . . . 154
Calypte anna; Anna's Hummingbird . . . 156
COLUMBIFORMES . . . 161
Columba palumbus; Wood Pigeon (Dove) . . . 161
Columba livia; Rock Pigeon . . . 165
PSITTACIFORMES . . . 169
Ara macao; Scarlet Macaw . . . 169
CUCULIFORMES . . . 173
Geococcyx californianus; Greater Roadrunner . . . 173
TROGONIFORMES . . . 178
Pharomachrus mocinno; Resplendent Quetzal . . . 178

PASSERIFORMES . . . 181
Corvids . . . 181
Corvus splendens; House Crow . . . 182
Corvus corax; Raven . . . 186
Songbirds . . . 191
Erithacus rubecula; European Robin . . . 191
Gracula religiosa; Java Hill Mynah . . . 194
Passer domesticus; Sparrow . . . 197

Guano australis; Bird Droppings . . . 202
Tuberculinum aviare; Bird TB . . . 203

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . 204
Bird Remedies . . . 205
Specific Birds and Bird Remedies . . . 206

TRANSFORMATION BETWEEN THE REALMS

There are two types of symptom in any case. Most symptoms make up what can be seen as the background of the case. These are stable and distinctive and they will lead the prescriber to a group of remedies. Examples of the background are the Miasms, the Botanical and Zoological Families, the Periodic Table, the Realms and the Kingdoms.

It is sometimes possible to find the indicated remedy by cross referencing the various background features of the case. This approach has great appeal as it appears to be ordered and systematic and does not require a detailed knowledge of the remedies. In fact a completely unknown remedy can be prescribed purely on its relationship to other known remedies. However, this approach is not as easy to work with as it seems as the slightest misunderstanding in classifying the case will invariably lead to the wrong remedy.

The background in the case will usually lead to a group of remedies and it is differentiating within the group and finding the specific group member indicated in the case that is the most difficult part of remedy selection. Although other backgrounds do differentiate somewhat, there is usually a correspondence between different backgrounds. Many remedies that are of the Sea Realm are also Phlegmatic in nature and so knowing that a case is both of the Sea and Phlegmatic is not very helpful.

The foreground is the place in a case where there is dynamic energy and movement. It is the place where the patient becomes animated and where the symptoms are changing and contradictory. This is the place that restricts, that prevents the patient from moving on and growing but it is also the place through which they will move and grow. This is perhaps the most distinctive feature of the foreground of the case; it is as positive as it is negative and it is as healing as it is destructive. It is also

unusual, individualistic and characteristic. No one else expresses it in quite the same way and for no one else would it quite make sense in the way it does for the patient. It is also something that appears in different aspects of the case but with the same distinct character. The foreground is what Hahnemann refers to as the totality of the characteristic symptoms.

Finding the foreground in a case gives you a deep insight into the patient and without understanding this aspect of their life it is very difficult to understand the case and to discover what it is that is to be cured.

Finding the foreground features in a case requires attention to the patient's way of expressing him or herself and of describing his or her symptoms. The key indicators are animation and contradiction and wherever either of these appear in a case they need to be pursued because here will be found the information that allows an accurate differentiation between the group of background remedies. Animation is important because it indicates that the things under discussion are dynamic and alive for the patient. Contradiction is important because the path to illness and the path to healing are the same, just as the symptoms of the disease and of its cure are the same.

The same process that is involved in finding the foreground features of a case is involved in finding the foreground features of a remedy. Again, animation and contradiction are the key indicators of foreground symptoms. This is why it is important to study remedies from the provings as all too often these are lost in secondary materia medica.

In some classes of remedy there is at least one point of dynamism and change that is the same for all the group but which the individual remedies each handle in slightly different ways. Each remedy has different issues that dominate the same dynamic process. One of the clearest points of this dynamis is when there is movement from one Realm to another. The Birds, Trees and Insects all involve movement from the Earth to the Sky. The Snakes and Drugs move between the Earth and ...

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BIRDS - SEEKING THE FREEDOM OF THE SKY

The birds are an amazing group of animals. They represent the evolutionary summit of the enormous reptilian branch of the tree of life that includes, or included, all the reptiles and the dinosaurs. The mammalian branch that culminates in the great apes is minute in comparison. The birds have adapted not only to using the Realm of the Sky but they have made it their home and they are completely comfortable in a place that was not originally theirs.

The distinguishing feature of the birds is the ability to fly. That is not to say that all birds fly, a large number have become flightless, but in all such cases it has been an evolutionary choice to move from being able to fly to flightlessness. The many features that are characteristic of the birds as a whole have been developed in order to make flight more efficient. The fossil record of the development of birds is fairly patchy, though recent discoveries in China have been filling in many details. We do have a number of fossils of a dinosaur that, if not the actual ancestor of the birds, was very close to it. Archeopteryx was discovered in 1861 in quarries in Germany that produced extremely fine-grained limestone. So fine was it that it was the first choice of printers for lithography stones. The fineness of the grain also preserved the smallest details of the fossilized animal. Thus the form of the feathers has been preserved and their detailed structure is also visible. Archeopteryx not only had feathers, but had feathers that had been specialized for flight. They were asymmetrical and had barbules that held them together. Whether feathers, which are modified reptile scales, had originally been selected for the insulation they provide or for flight is unknown but by the time of Archeopteryx they

were clearly used to aid flight. It is unlikely that Archeopteryx could take off from the ground and it probably used its claws to climb a tree and then flew from the tree. Most of the other specializations found in birds followed at a later date. The reptilian tail was lost, the clavicles fused to form the furcula (wishbone), the sternum developed a keel or carina to anchor the large flight muscles, the toothed jaw was replaced by a beak, a gizzard developed to grind food and the bones developed hollow air spaces.

The ability to fly comes at a great cost, mostly in having to keep the weight low while at the same time having available large reserves of energy. In evolutionary terms flight must be actively selected for or it is very quickly lost. In island situations, especially where there are no resident mammals, some birds tend to lose their ability to fly and many of the necessary adaptations very quickly. This can be seen in the Cormorants of the Galapagos Islands, the birds found in Madagascar and particularly the bird life of New Zealand.

In order to fly birds must economize on anything that might increase their weight. In order to power flight a great deal of energy is needed and it must be energy that is immediately available; this in turn requires a very fast metabolism. The contradictory requirements of these needs govern much of bird physiology and behaviour. In spite of the need for food and energy the digestion of grasses and leaves requires carrying a large caecum filled with bacteria and this is usually found only in flightless ratites[1] such as the ostrich, though birds like geese and ducks do graze and eat grass like plants. They, however, also eat a variety of invertebrates and high energy grain. Flying birds tend to eat a combination of nutritious insects and animals and the high energy parts of plants, especially the seeds and fruits. Those, such as Hummingbirds, that need energy in its purest form live mainly by drinking sugar-rich flower nectars.

1 a diverse group of large, flightless birds of Gondwanan origin

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BIRDS IN GENERAL

The feature that distinguishes the birds as a group is their ability to fly. Some birds have relinquished this ability and, although when they do lose the ability they do so very quickly in evolutionary terms, they only give up flight when they no longer have a need for it. Usually flight is lost because the price paid is no longer worth paying when the advantages are reduced. This is most often when there is very little predation. In some cases the bird has developed other strategies and abilities that make the ability to fly unnecessary. Penguins and Ostriches are examples but perhaps the most interesting is one where the process is ongoing. The Roadrunner can fly but it doesn't often and doesn't seem to enjoy it. The Roadrunner finds its freedom in its ability to run and to move very fast. It is not therefore the ability to fly that is of greatest importance in the Bird remedies; rather it is the freedom that flight has given them.

Flight offers many different forms of freedom to the birds. The most important is the freedom to escape from predators. There is also a freedom to go and be wherever they want. This in turn offers freedoms around what and when they eat and where they live. There is also an indefinable quality of childish excitement and exuberance that arises from the freedom of flight and this factor, the least tangible, is perhaps the most important feature of the freedom of Birds.

Birds are creatures of the air. They grow naturally from chicks to fledged animals that take to flight by right. Unlike the Insects they do not have to work and change to become able to fly. Unlike Bats they are not exceptions to the normal pattern of their kind. They do not have to be extraordinary in order to fly, it is their natural condition.

There are many symptoms in the Bird remedies that are associated with a sense of flying and floating. Dreams and delusions of such sensations are common. There are also symptoms that can accompany such feelings, especially vertigo and nausea. However, the pathological state, and so the one that is of most importance in prescribing, is a feeling of heaviness and an inability to take to the skies. Heaviness and constriction are therefore the most important sensations and they are found in dreams and delusions but more importantly in the physical symptoms and they can be expressed in any part of the body from the head through the lungs to the lower limbs.

Freedom is, by its nature, indefinable. Any definition or description of what freedom is, or what freedom does, is a limitation of that freedom. True freedom has no boundaries and no conditions placed upon it. It is defined by a negative: the complete absence of limitation.

The most important symptom in people who need Bird remedies is the feeling that something is preventing them from attaining true freedom. What it is that thwarts or prevents their freedom is the key to differentiating between the different Bird remedies. Understanding this is important not only in understanding the remedies but in knowing how to ascertain the patient's feelings and needs. If a patient talks about freedom we are likely to want to know more about what freedom means to them but this is likely to be a fruitless line of questioning that will create more confusion than clarity. Likewise if a patient says they feel trapped and need to escape this would seem to be a promising line of enquiry. However, the thing that the patient needs to escape from is not necessarily of importance. It can throw some light on what is thwarting them but more often than not it is little more than a manifestation of the need for freedom.

The line of questioning that will be most helpful is one that concerns the means to achieve freedom and the things that thwart or stymie the reaching of freedom. In reality these will be the same thing. It is when it becomes clear that the path to freedom and the thing that prevents the attainment of freedom are similar that you know you have found the important

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REPERTORIZING

Very few of the Bird remedies have been absorbed into the repertories at this time. Some of the materia medica programmes can be searched but they will generally find indications for a general Bird remedy, rather than for any specific Bird.

There is one Bird remedy that is well represented in the repertory and will often appear in repertorization. This is Falco peregrinus, the Peregrine Falcon. That it is strongly represented is a matter of chance, it was an early Bird proving and it was a reasonably large one that produced a strong clear picture. At the time there was no indication that much of this is the general Bird picture and much less of it is specific to the Falcon.

This mere coincidence is not, however, the whole story in that there is something about Falco that makes it a type for the Birds in the same way that Tarentula is the type for the Spiders and Lachesis for the Snakes. Most of the Bird remedies have a particular issue that both facilitates or thwarts their freedom. In Falco there does not seem to be any particular issue; rather it is about freedom and restriction in its purest form.

Any repertorization that brings up Falco strongly (and to a lesser extent Haliaeetus leucocephalus, the Bald Eagle, another strong early proving) should be seen as a possible indication for a Bird remedy and not necessarily one just for Falco.

GALLOANSERAE

The Galloanserae are the more primitive birds with the modern palate. They are therefore more advanced than the Ostriches and Kiwis, which have the ancient palate, but they are more primitive than the majority of birds, the Neoaves. There are two orders of Galloanserae: the Anseriformes, waterfowl, and the Galliformes, fowl.

The feature that seems most apparent in these animals is a susceptibility to domestication. The Ducks, Geese and Hens of the barnyard, the Peacocks and Swans that decorate the lawns and ponds of stately homes and the Ducks, Partridges, Grouse and Pheasants that are bred to be shot by the wealthy all come from these two orders. Other birds such as Parrots and Canaries might be kept in cages but they are never domesticated in the way a Hen is.

Some of these birds do not seem to have quite the same degree of intelligence and the sense of freedom and joy in life that are characteristic of the Birds but much of this has been bred out of them rather than not being part of their natural character. In Wild Swans, for example, the features that we associate with Birds are apparent in a majestic and beautiful form.

Almost all of these birds are flocking birds at some time in their lifecycle. Some, like Swans, pair off and some, like the Rooster with his harem of hens, form polygynous relationships but in all of them the relationship with a wider group is very important.

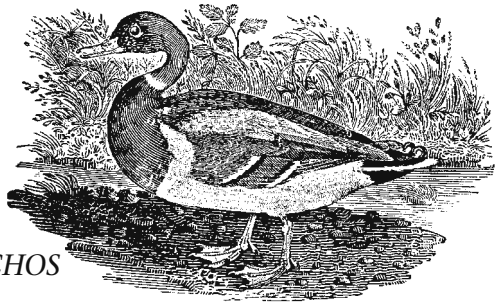
ANSERIFORMES

The Anseriformes are the waterfowl, the Geese, Ducks and Swans. They are all water birds but some of them are fairly at home on the land. They tend to be more substantial than many birds and include the largest extant birds that can fly.

In the Ducks and the Geese there is a tendency to the martial, and a concern with the contrary principals of aggression and discipline.

All the Anseriformes seem to have an issue with believing that they are ugly. They have a particular connection to their legs and can feel sensitive about the way in which they walk, often that it is in a peculiar manner. There is a feeling that the feet have become flat and there is often a desire to run.

There is a desire to have fun, to dance, sing and tell jokes. This is cruder and more childlike than it is in many of the other Birds.



ANAS PLATYRHYNCHOS
MALLARD

The Mallard is one of the best known of the Ducks. It is often seen in an ornamental setting but it is also bred for shooting and found in a domesticated situation. It is thought to be the ancestor of most other species of domestic Duck.

It pairs in the breeding season when the Drake's iridescent plumage becomes much brighter. Males who do not find a partner can join together to chase, pester and gang rape any unpaired females. The male stays with the female only till the eggs are laid when he leaves her to look after them. The chicks are precocial and can swim and feed themselves as soon as they hatch, though they stay near the mother for protection. Outside the breeding season they form large sords (flocks). The Mallard lives in wetlands and ponds where it dabbles for weeds and small fish and animals. It will eat small frogs and will also graze and eat insects and slugs.

A remedy of the whole egg, without the shell, of the Indian subspecies was conducted by Dr Chetna Shukla in Mumbai. The first thing noticed about the proving was that it was fast. The symptoms appeared quickly after taking the remedy and the proving was over quickly, barely extending into a third week. Symptoms also had a quality of speed coming and going quickly and especially changing rapidly. There was also a desire or a need to move fast and do things quickly. Both in reality and in dreams walking felt wrong and there was a compulsion to run. Generally there was an amelioration from activity, from

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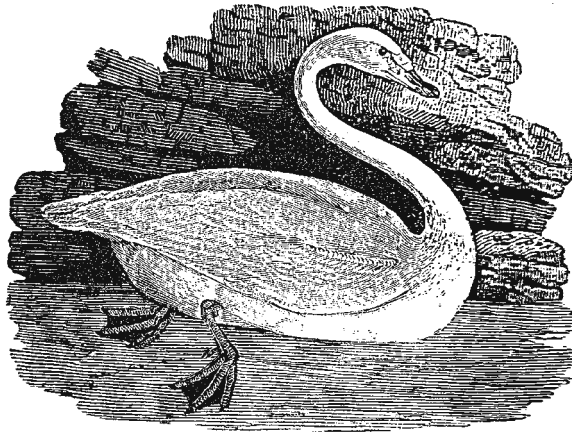
CYGNUS

There are three different remedies from the genus Cygnus: C. cygnus, C. bewickii, C. olor. Though they have some similarities they have quite different pictures and can be closer to other Geese or Ducks than to other Swans. Whether this is a feature of the remedies or the result of inadequate provings is hard to tell at this time.

The Swan is a byword for beauty and particularly for elegance. It is also known for its aggression and for its sexual energy. The Myth of Leda has Jupiter taking the form of a Swan to seduce Leda. One of the issues of this union is Helen, the most beautiful of mortal women.



CYGNUS CYGNUS
WHOOPER SWAN

The Whooper Swan is a large migratory Swan. It breeds in Iceland and Finland and winters in Germany, Denmark, the UK and Ireland. It is one of the largest of the flying birds, the closely related North American Trumpeter Swan is a little larger. Like many other Anseriformes it generally mates for life. Its diet consists of small fish, invertebrates and various water weeds. It is protective of the young cygnets and adolescents in their first year – unpaired juveniles often stay with their parents to help with the next brood. They tend to spend much of the time on the water as their legs cannot support their body weight for long.

The remedy was proved by Jeremy Sherr at the Dynamis School. The proving is an extensive one. It almost feels as if there is too much information in the proving and it is quite hard to winnow.

Some of the symptoms that you might expect from the signature include a fascination with the colour white or with white and black. There are many symptoms in the region of the neck with spasms, stiffness and pain, sensations of constriction or restriction and sensations of a lump in the throat. Generally the throat is sore or raw and the voice hoarse or lost.

There is the heaviness and the desire to fly. There is a love of water, a desire to go swimming and the use of water metaphors and imagery. As in Branta there is a sensation of having feathers, particularly on the face.

The Swan has a very long syrinx not only because of its long neck but it is also looped into the abdomen. It can be very loud when vocalising, particularly when threatened, though it does also hiss loudly. When dying the air is slowly released from the body as it collapses, making a long sound which is mistaken for a song. This dying expression is called the swan-song and represents the final work of an artist. The Swan has therefore been associated with the poignant beauty of death, nowhere more so than in the ballet dance of the Dying Swan by Anna Pavlova. Death is very important in the Whooper Swan. There are thoughts about death and also about birth. A concern with the completion of things and also for the beginnings of new things.

The grief they feel is very strong. It is usually for a certain person such as the father and it is something that they are

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PAVO CRISTATUS
PEACOCK

The Peacock is one of the most extraordinary animals. Its tail is supremely beautiful but represents an enormous liability. The bird stands as a complete antithesis to the idea of evolution. An evolutionary process should never tolerate an adaptation that is costly, inconvenient and totally useless, however beautiful it might be. Yet the Peacock has evolved and maintained itself over millennia. In order to explain this discrepancy Darwin proposed the theory of sexual selection: that secondary characteristics can be selected for because they are markers of good health and breeding ability. However, recent studies have shown that females select on the male's vocal ability much more than they do on the magnificence of the tail, and that there is very little correlation between that magnificence and the bird's actual breeding success. Evolution is ruthless and pays no heed to myths so the tail must have some great value to the Peacock. Perhaps there is an enormous and real value in beauty and creative expression.

The Peacock, by its unusual and characteristic nature, will always have great symbolic importance. Its symbolic nature is very different in its native India to how it is seen and understood in the West and particularly in Mediterranean Europe. In the East it is seen as a bird of great power and importance with many positive and spiritual qualities. In the West it is seen as a symbol of pride and, as bearer of not one but a hundred examples of the evil eye, as very unlucky or even evil. There have been two provings of the peacock. One was in Europe but conducted by Dr Shukla, an Indian; the other was conducted by myself, a Westerner, but took place in Nepal. The picture that has emerged owes much more to the Eastern symbology of the bird than to the Western.

The picture that has emerged from the provings shows the Peacock to be much more sophisticated than any of the other Galloanserae. The Bird issues of spirituality and of fairness or rightness are much more important than they are in the other Fowl remedies. On the other hand there are fewer of the earthy aspects of the Birds, with no sexual symptoms, male or female, in either proving, and an increased appetite was not a major concern; indeed provers felt fat even though they were eating less, the reverse of the usual Bird picture.

This distancing themselves from the earthy elements could be expressed in the feeling of being restless on the ground but calm and centred when upstairs. The bird itself tends to spend the day wandering on the ground and the night roosting in a tree. In a contrary to this, although the Peacock will fly to avoid danger and to roost, it does not generally like to fly and prefers to walk on the ground. The idea of the importance of contact with the Earth was notable in both provings. It was expressed in a number of symptoms in the soles of the feet and in a preoccupation with shoes; with dreams of shoes and a desire to walk barefoot. One of the legends of the bird is that it cries when it looks at its feet and realises how ugly they are in comparison to the rest of its body.

The idea of the contrary and of almost Manichaean division is to be found throughout the Peacock imagery. The images of Peacocks are often to be found in pairs, one facing the other, especially when associated with thrones and other icons of power. In these images one represents the good and one the bad, or one the spiritual and one the material.

The remedy picture has a similar focus on this type of split. There is a split between the material: being more involved in business, making many plans, anxiety about money, status and power; and the spiritual, "I want to be a spiritual person

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Peter Fraser

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