



2012: The Return of Quetzalcoatl

By Daniel Pinchbeck

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Cross James Merrill, H. P. Lovecraft, and Carlos Castaneda -each imbued with a twenty-first-century aptitude for quantum theory and existential psychology-and you get the voice of Daniel Pinchbeck. And yet, nothing quite prepares us for the lucidity, rationale, and informed audacity of this seeker, skeptic, and cartographer of hidden realms.

Throughout the 1990s, Pinchbeck had been a member of New York's literary select. He wrote for publications such as *The New York Times Magazine*, *Esquire*, and *Harper's Bazaar*. His first book, *Breaking Open the Head*, was heralded as the most significant on psychedelic experimentation since the work of Terence McKenna.

But slowly something happened: Rather than writing from a journalistic remove, Pinchbeck-his literary powers at their peak-began to participate in the shamanic and metaphysical belief systems he was encountering. As his psyche and body opened to new experience, disparate threads and occurrences made sense like never before: Humanity, every sign pointed, is precariously balanced between greater self-potential and environmental disaster. The Mayan calendar's "end date" of 2012 seems to define our present age: It heralds the end of one way of existence and the return of another, in which the serpent god Quetzalcoatl reigns anew, bringing with him an unimaginably ancient-yet, to us, wholly new-way of living.

A result not just of study but also of participation, *2012* tells the tale of a single man in whose trials we ultimately recognize our own hopes and anxieties about modern life.

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