

Tales From Joy #7, 2022

Greetings, dear readers.... From 30,000 feet up in the air!

I realized, in the middle of this 11-hour flight, that there is another Tale to be told, between the Baja and Thailand (where I'll be, in eighteen more hours en sh'allah). And this is my only chance to write it.



Maria, wife of Odin, at the bird sanctuary



I said goodbye to my sacred spots, took a couple outings with my host family, and taught a few more yoga classes to my “roomies” at the hacienda, After one final sunrise meditation, Maria drove me to the bus station. And later at noon I took a plane to San Diego.

When I arrived at the San Diego airport, I slipped from my dreamy state of ease and equanimity. (Yes, my “splat factor” - the distance from which one can fall, was vast). “Mex” was the car rental agency I had chosen, cause it was the cheapest car available.

Whoops! They were off campus. WAY off campus. I finally found an almost hidden small sign that said,

Mex rentals. Call us.

They didn't answer the phone, repeatedly. Eventually, I walked into the nearby Avis rental office and procured a car, for a fortune!

Soon after arriving “home” at my place in Solana Beach, my beloved friend Nawng-Joy called me from Thailand.

She had been doing all the research into how I gain entrance into Thailand. It was absurdly complicated and expensive. And Spirit was very clear,

Yes. You WILL do all of this.



February, 2020, before Thailand locked down

So at four in the afternoon, I gulped and began the application process for my *Thailand Pass*, as it's called. It involved:

special medical insurance, two hotel reservations in Bangkok, COVID testing before departure, another immediately after arrival, descriptions of every vaccination in detail, plus many jpg of every document.

Coyote Trickster was intent on gobbling my every effort. The entire form kept vanishing before my eyes. I started completely over TEN times, assuming that the problem was somehow due to my own tragic incompetence.

Eleven hours later, I finished.

I discovered the next day that the Internet had been extremely haywire all that day and night, and even techies were pulling their hair out.

Eight hours later, I called the hotel manager in Bangkok (at midnight), trying to figure out how to make a jpg. of my reservation. that I could drag onto the form..

This Thailand Pass might have been simple for some of you readers, especially the millennials . But as a technophobe, terror and adrenaline accompanied me throughout the night.

It was the hardest thing I've ever done in my life



At 3 a.m. I had scaled every mountain, multiple times, and completed the application. Half an hour later, I got my acceptance from the Thai government. It was 1 p.m. there.

My sister Leslie, whom I've talked and laughed with every day since her stroke, was an incredible cheerleader the first five hours, before she went to bed. The next morning, when I announced my successful completion, she said

This is a watershed moment for you...

Correct. Leslie has watched me recoil and retreat from technological glitches for half a century. I told her:

Being with the whales had something to do with it.

Isn't life fascinating?

Then I sent two large boxes of "stuff" (Baja clothing, plus half the clothes I'd planned to take to Thailand) back to Fayetteville... making a lovely new friend at the UPS store along the way.

The next day, I was up at 4 a.m. and on a plane to Los Angeles. The crowds at the airport, both in San Diego and at LAX were surreal.

After waiting at the Japan airlines check-in for hours, I discovered that my COVID results had NOT arrived in time, and I was barred from the flight. The results that I thought I had received were actually from 2021!

My adrenaline/cortisol went through the roof.
Hmmm...Where did my months of meditative equanimity go?

I stumbled around the airport terminals and finally arrived at a medical testing station, which guaranteed results (for another small fortune) in 3-5 hours.

In other words, in time to get on a flight the next day. I found a nearby hotel and booked a room, still in shock.

I clutched over every task all the rest of the day...even trying to wrest a candy bar from the ancient hotel's ancient vending machine was traumatic. Finally I had the candy in my trembling hand.

Sugar Monster definitely won that round.

I got up at 3 a.m. this morning, and reviewed all the necessary paperwork for the Thailand Pass and printed it out, double-checking every form, in preparation for Check-in Combat.

I was standing at the Japan Air Counter at 6:30 a.m., hours before any staff showed up.

An hour before they opened, though, a sweet young employee showed mercy and surveyed my new air ticket, in response to my plea. He came back twenty minutes later to report that I had TWO tickets on that flight. Thanks to his diligence, I cleaned up that mess, too.

Having been sufficiently humbled by Coyote Trickster, the rest of the this day has been sublime. Suddenly I had energy to do yoga in the flight lounge, and to chat with some young G.I.'s.

So here I am, at 30,000 feet, ...in business class (!) I've acquired enough air miles, from my annual pilgrimages to Thailand.

And I soon discovered why I'd been flipped from my plane ride yesterday:



My pod neighbor was a 24-year old young man from L.A., named Chris.

We immediately launched into a profound conversation, and seemed to understand each other perfectly. We laughed about how much trouble Spirit had to go through to create this confluence of energy.

Chris and I spent hours discussing life, meditation techniques and yoga. He gave up smoking today, and is on his way to a yoga retreat in Bali...though has never

done yoga.

He had many questions for me, and said he
wanted to remember the answers forever.

A beautiful old soul in a young body. We both felt profoundly blessed.

Thank you , Coyote Trickster...Thank you, Spirit.

Only ninety more minutes before we land in Tokyo. I have much more energy than when I awoke at 3 this morning.



It's later now, dear readers... I arrived in Bangkok at midnight, was taken for another PCP Covid -19 test, and then placed in isolation at this hotel, pending results.



First day in Thailand. I got my result just now: negative.

And my Asian adventure will begin soon, when Nawng Joy gets here.

I've been able to meditate, do yoga and write this Tale.

Feels great and complete! The ability to speak Thai language is streaming back into my mind and out my mouth!