

Tales From Joy, #1, 2024

Hello again, dear readers.

It's been an extraordinarily long time since the last installment, hasn't it?



This is because I dropped the ball last year, after about four Tales... I was pretending that no one really had time to read them, and that I was just too busy to write them.

However, an astounding number of you have mentioned to me, without rancor but with an irrefutable intensity, that you do indeed WAIT to hear the next installment.

My apologies to those of you who relate to that. An additional excuse for my lapse is the ever-quirky and intermittent access to the internet, here in the Third World. I cannot even add photos to the Tales without wifi....And in my right-brain universe, it is the photos that drive the Tales...



This first Tale is actually a lifetime in the making, its origins stretching back before my own memories:

But it apparently begins with a Wattle Hollow Songwriters' Creativity weekend. This fluid mix of creative folks, some familiar and some not, has met dozens of times now.... But it's always new, and always a little scary, with the child's thrill of breaking some rules, and daring to

dare...

One of my self-chosen dares this time was to completely abstain from ALL of the thrilling pastries that our talented chef Tuesday offers, with every meal.



As my time on the planet becomes shorter, and evermore precious, I choose to make wiser metabolic choices.

And the data is in (damn!):

this particular body doesn't thrive on sugar or flour.

My own greed is vast: I prefer to be dancing, singing, adventuring and working hard for a few more decades, if I get a choice..

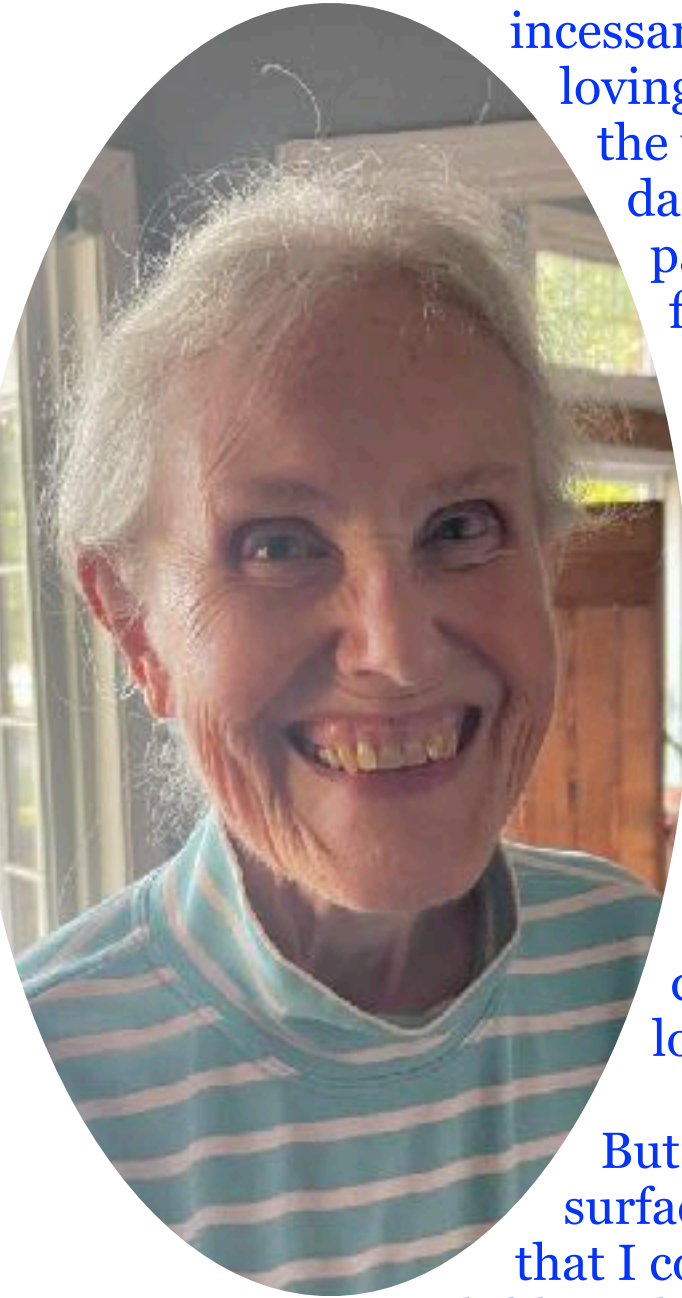
The mission was accomplished that weekend.

(In full disclosure: I confess that the mind-monkeys have jumped me a couple times since then.)

I was the first to leave our magical Songwriters' weekend, on Sunday at noon, with the intention to meet with my teacher Anna Cox in Little Rock while she was available.

These rare interviews always have a seismic impact on my life:

We first discussed how to function amidst the meta-tragedy of current events on planet Earth. This was the day after Hamas' massacre and the re-ignition of festering wounds. Anna never seems to diagnose the wounds; she prays incessantly for all the children, for sanity and lovingkindness.... And finally she returns to the web of LIFE that surrounds her, in her daily unceasing benediction. The analytic part of her brain functions entirely apart from these loving "washes" of the heart.



Then we looked at my apprehension regarding the health of my beloved elder siblings, both of whom have life-threatening symptoms of heart disease. Anna suggested that I travel to the dreaded place in my heart where they were both "already dead" (!).

In much less than a minute, I was sobbing uncontrollably....feeling disconsolate and very very young and lost.

But there was an adult "me" onboard, who surfaced after awhile, holding me and saying that I could cry as often and as much as the child needed to.

Something cleared...

**Next up on the wound zone: I showed Anna a photo of a previously dear friend whose sudden (inexplicable to me) shift to

profound animosity thirty years ago had left me with feelings of shame and somewhat divided our community of friends. Without any backstory, Anna “read” the photo, as only a medical intuitive could...and filled me in on the psychic details. I felt “acquitted”, after all these decades.

With resourced and rejuvenated energy, I continued driving east that afternoon... through the dreamy autumn foliage of Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia.

I noticed how I longed to hold on to the memory of those delicious colors. But I couldn't. Eventually it occurred to me:



THIS is the emptiness of all phenomenon.

I've been hearing that phrase for so many decades.. It's always escaped me, gliding past like silent silver fish. There's no holding on to “emptiness”.... It's a gracious visitor with no calling card and no discernible departure.

Yet my family visit in D.C. was tinged with hues of bliss Almost psychedelic...with far less *blabbity-blea-blah blah* internal dialogue than I'm accustomed to.





While driving home a week later, I felt a strong impulse to visit with Anna again, though never before would I have dared to impose on her again so soon, due to her fragile health.

But my need to get her perspective regarding this newfound clarified re-vision... superseded my reservations. Who else would know? Anna graciously rearranged her own plans and we met again.

We spent quite a while simply gazing....

How do I state this in an undramatic way, that doesn't challenge you, dear reader?

Anna began glowing in a manner unknown to mortals....in a pearlescent hue, her eyes unblinking.

When we finally spoke, she offered me my astral diploma, and made it clear:

This is only the beginning of a vast journey!
Describing her own experience from decades ago, she said:

One Lama told me: now practice for 80,000 hours.

And the other Lama simply said to me: Practice until you die.

Anna continued with:

You'll need a teacher.

Aren't you my teacher?, I replied.

She said

No, now we're just Dharma sisters.

Oh.

For now, we finally agreed, my teachers will be the moon, the stars and Wattle Hollow, while I scan the world and watch for clues.



Can it be my Canadian buddy Bob Maat, in Cambodia? I can already hear Bob laughing, as he shakes his head and denies it.

My cleansing journey has continued:

I had a dream, soon after returning to Fayetteville. It was set in my childhood home, upstairs, at 7101 Beechwood Drive. Those are always worthy of my attention. In the dream,

I was 18 years old and pregnant, explaining to my father Henry that we would be receiving meal supplements in the mail, to augment the baby's health.



Henry listened attentively, with full attention and eye contact and then gave me a loving embrace of full support.*

* (something that had never happened in real life)

I awoke, knowing that an obstruction had been cleared.

October and November were sprinkled with other unforeseeable, unlikely clues:

**A week later, while I was teaching Dharma Day at Wattle Hollow, a bobcat ran amongst the twenty meditators doing slow walking practice near the pond...in the early afternoon.

Impossible!

**Several days later, while returning from my friend's farm east of Fayetteville, a BLACK PANTHER ran right in front of my car. Even more impossible. I called my friend Joe Neal, who is an avid naturalist, to get affirmation. I described it as

a third bigger than the bobcat, with a thick coat like a dense new carpet, charcoal-colored, and with a 15" tail streamingtotally muscled!

Joe concurred: *There's nothing else that fits that description.*

A few days later, I met with my dear singing sisters of Harmonia for one last session before I departed. During our final song, while we were singing "I Must Not Forget", about the Great Mother... a kestrel falcon flew into the tree right above us, and just hung out..





The kestrel is a longtime ally, here featured in a painting of mine from 1986 which still lives in my bedroom.

And on we go, friends.... into Only Don't Know land!

Let me know if you'd like to unsubscribe from these Tales, which are about to begin. The next chapter will be from here in Baja Sur, Mexico.



Happy holidays, darlings.

(To be honest, I ignore them to the best of my ability, and yet

devoutly embrace the innate holiness of every day.)



