



Living in the Balance

March and April 2020

Thud. Thump. Thud. Whistle. Thud. Scratch. Thud. My husband glances up, “Do you think it’s him?” I look up from my oatmeal, give him that very married look and say nothing. I get up and start rooting through the recycling to find yesterday’s newspaper. I pull back the curtains and tape more printed sheets across the sliding glass doors. “Maybe reading the paper will take his mind off his troubles,” I say. “Did it help yesterday?” “Well, he stopped banging on the windows to our bedroom and moved to the sliding glass doors. I’m not sure that counts as progress. I just don’t want him to knock himself out.” I sit back down. Thud, thud, scratch, whistle, whistle, thud. Now the whistles are even more pleading and plaintive. I look out the sliding glass doors. Nothing. Thud. Whistle. Thud. “Oh, no, now he’s at the window over the arch in the front door. His little head is all I can see. What a sad, confused little face he has! He thinks he sees something real in the window, but that something isn’t there!” My husband sighs, “You’ve done what you can. You don’t speak bird.” I look for more newspaper.

Like the blue bird, I’ve chased illusions. I could not stop imagining. Chasing. Pushing. Why didn’t I see? If I knew the answer, I’d have saved myself a lot of head banging and frustration. I believed that this “cause” for the greater good would be THE one. I threw myself into it with all I had and got behind the wheel knowing everyone would get onboard! Forward yah who! Singing “High Hopes!” And sometimes there was movement....maybe glacial....but movement. And the encouragers said, “Well, we gave it a go. And isn’t that better than not?” Well, if we set out for California from Greenville and ran out of gas in Georgia, I have to wonder.

I woke up early one morning and had a moment of clarity. I saw my overinvestment. I owned my illusion that everyone else bought into the dream, the goal, the program, the project and would, like me, throw themselves into it with total abandon because something so worthy wins. Rosy and her glasses.

I reported these insights to my husband over dinner. “I feel foolish. Just like that silly bird at the window, I always believe that what I see is what is real. And I think others see what I see. I keep pecking and pecking and pushing and pushing.”

My ever-pragmatic husband sighs, “And how was this project different from the others? This is how you operate. It’s not an illusion. It’s reality. If you didn’t have a cause you’d die on the vine. You just rarely see that about yourself. You say you’ll never get on another committee or host another meeting, but you do, and you will because that is who you are. Your issue is *degree*, not direction, Super Crusader Rabbit. Stop trying to save the entire world. Just do what you can.”

Several years have passed since I started writing this piece and I left it hanging. I have been drawn for many of those years to Mary Anne Perrone’s piece ***Advent at Midlife*** as she reflects “*I am no longer waiting to do something great; Being awake to carry my grain of sand is enough.*” I have come to know and understand this well. It is a continual discernment of what is mine to carry. My grain of sand is not everyone’s and that’s OK. Each of us has our own grain to carry.....or not. I find myself less frantic and overinvested. More focused. Less overwhelmed. More centered. I put the Crusader Rabbit cape away and tend my own “backyard” and grain of sand.....and I have that to be more than enough.



Calendar considerations.....

Silent Retreat Weekends

March 13-15: Silent Retreat Weekend

June 12-14: Silent Retreat Weekend

September 4-6: Silent Retreat Weekend

December 4-6: Silent Retreat Weekend

Spiritual Direction is available on each of the silent retreat weekends
Order of Saint Helena, North Augusta, South Carolina
<https://www.osh.org/calendar/>

Valle Crucis Conference Center

Women Writers Weekend 1 – June 4 – 7

Women Writers Weekend 2 – August 27 – 30

<https://vcconferences.org/programs>

Information is available now for registering for one of the hermitages for personal retreat.

Southern Dharma Center

In Nature our True Nature, March 28 – April 4, 2020

Song of the Harmony of Oneness and Difference, April 16 – 20, 2020

Living From The Heart Of Buddhism: A Study Of The Four Noble Truths, April 30 – May 3, 2020

More programs for 2020 are listed on the website. Retreats fill quickly.

www.southerndharma.org

The Anchorage

Praying the Scripture Ignatian Directed Retreat, Mepkin Abbey, March 30 – April 3, 2020

<http://www.theanchorage.org/events.htm>

Kanuga Conference Center

Lansing Lee Conference, March 13 – 15, 2020

Art and Soul, June 7 – 12, 2020

www.kanuga.org

Awakening Soul 2020

Jennifer Bailey, Serene Jones, and Brian McLaren

November 5 – 8, 2020

Lutheridge Conference Center, Asheville, NC

<https://www.awakeningsoulpresents.org/>

The Cathedral of St. Philip

Amy-Jill Levine

12th Annual Spirituality Conference

October 24, 2020

Atlanta, Georgia

<https://www.cathedralatl.org/>





Calendar considerations.....

The Sophia Institute, Charleston, SC

Jean Shinoda Bolen, *Your One Wild and Precious Life* – March 20 – 21

Joan Borysenko, *The Mystic Heart* – May 1 – 2

Mark Nepo – *The Book of the Soul: 52 paths to Living What Matters*, May 15 – 17

See the website for these and other one day events.

www.thesophiainstitute.org

St. Mary's Sewanee

One River Wisdom – Perennial Wisdom, March 6 – March 8

Calm and Clear Meditation Retreat – March 12 – 15

The Enneagram's Greatest Secret, Living in Essence – March 20 – 22

Drawing Closer to God – Icon Writing for Lent – April 3 – 5

Mindfulness on the Mountain – May 1 – 3

Lectio Divina Immersion Retreat – June 5 – 7

One River Wisdom – Cup of Wisdom – June 12 -- 14

St. Mary's Retreat Center, Sewanee, TN

<http://www.stmaryssewanee.org/about/events>

Anderson Forum for Progressive Theology

Brian McLaren, June 14, 2020

Matthew Fox, October 11, 2020

Anderson, SC

www.afptonline.org

Montreat

Discovering Renewal, Finding Renewal in the Everyday, April 13 – 16

Columbia Theological Seminary Spiritual Formation, April 16 – 19 and April 19 – 22

Montreat Retreat Center, Montreat, NC

<https://montreat.org/events>

Haden Summer Dream and Spirituality Conference

Judith Orloff, MD, Keynote

May 24 – May 29

Kanuga Conference Center

Hendersonville, NC

<https://www.hadeninstitute.com/summer-dream-conference>





About Spiritual Direction —

- Offers a space and time for you to explore, reflect upon, and deepen your relationship with God.
- Provides a haven from the daily busyness of the outer world and opens a time to be still and to reflect on your inner journey.
- Is a companioning relationship grounded in dialogue and discernment.
- Explores ways you may integrate spirituality into your daily life.
- Is not limited to any one spiritual practice or tradition.
- May involve one or two meetings or multiple meetings over time.

You may wish to consider spiritual companioning if you are —

- Longing for a deeper relationship with the Divine
- Looking for a place to dialogue about spiritual questions
- Seeking ways to connect with the Spirit in a more intentional way
- Discerning ways to live in a more integrated and whole way
- Standing at a crossroads in your life
- Exploring new or fresh ways to be in relationship with God

For more information about Spiritual Direction, please feel free to contact me by phone
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The photos are my work and were taken on the grounds of the Penn Center in Beaufort, South Carolina. The opening photo is a camelia blossom found on the railing of the Gantt Cottage where Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote his "I have a dream" speech.

