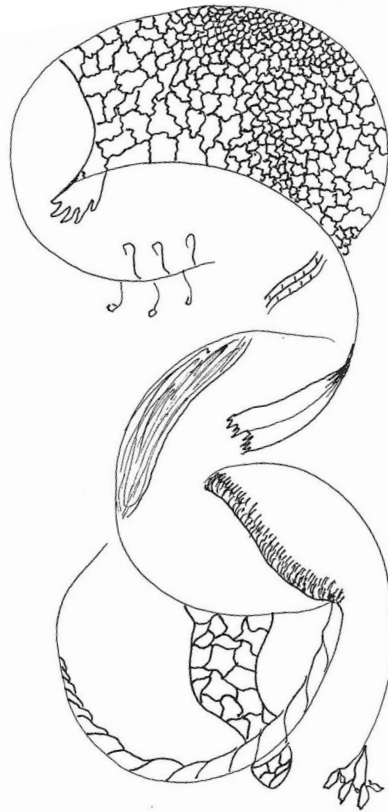


The Infinite Variety of the Aging Process



"Age cannot stale her infinite variety"



(Drawings included were also created as companions on my journey, and to prove that there is a comical aspect to God's grace in the aging process.)

INTRODUCTION

The pages following are copied from my journal, kept since April of 2015, and narrate a very particular and valuable journey that began after my recovery from knee replacement surgery, an event that upended all my assumptions about who I was as a person. I began to admit to myself and others that I am now an *aging person*—an identity I had fiercely resisted before surgery, reveling in the way I could hide my age and decrepitude!

A parallel development related to my aging was a need to make a transition in some of the ways I was part of Life/Work Direction, handing over some responsibilities to younger and more able persons. This highlighted for me my central work as a Spiritual Companion, where I began to discern a deepening in the way I inhabited that vocation.

There had been an important prelude to this two-year time of inner processing of these two dimensions of my life. In the summer of 2014, my primary care physician told me that the lack of balance I was experiencing could be treated by joining a “balance class” run by physical therapists. It was there at the introductory session that a P. T. felt my left knee and was alarmed—and told me to get it x-rayed. As a result, I was scheduled for knee surgery.

Knee surgery not only did its dramatic “carpentry work” on my knees; it also bruised my ego. No longer could I disclaim my aging status! My body spoke its own language, and I could not be false to its truth.



Sunrise over the Atlantic

But in September, before the surgery, something else took place that I see now was a preparation for the two years ahead. I went on retreat at St. Joseph's Retreat House located on the ocean in Cohasset. I met with a Spiritual Director there every morning—and day by day I poured out all the years of my life in a way I cannot remember having experienced in quite this way—unless it may have been my times in therapy or analysis. I was “full” and needed to spill it all out.

As an unexpected result, I experienced a simple direct steady consciousness of Presence with God and with my true self. Gone was my usual exacting introspection and inner dialogue. My beginning prayer was “God, help me to live mindlessly!” Not mindfully. I wrote:

Somehow “mindlessness” connotes for me a living from an authentic center apart from an intellectual construction of it, allowing pure instinct to rule, believing God is the instigator of instinct. I too easily construe, and construct, and conduct my life—imprisoned by my limitations of imagination. Mindlessness, for me, is a receptive state.

That *state of being* hovered over me the entire week, and persisted after I returned home, for some time. It makes sense to me now that this was preparation for the larger changes to come through the next two years. My last entry in my journal in late April of 2015 included this:

*I see that I am coming to the end of this journal. I am four months into recovery from knee surgery, so I mark this point as a transition from “recovery mode” to—what? **discovery**? My life has changed; my inner attitude has changed. I am more sober and realistic.*

I await God's counsel for the year ahead. I wonder how I am to invest my time and energy. Perhaps I am to reconstrue my life and future in new (and scary) ways. I walk forward—a little unsteadily. . . in more ways than one!

2015



April 29

This begins the “post-recovery” period for me, and for both Don and me a new era that may have several “post” elements in it. He just stashed his 16 volumes of cursive-written poetry in his closet and away from daily view. Perhaps I was wrong to see such an action as a diminishment (or a dismantling of his life. . .since he has cleared away a number of spaces recently), but rather an act of courage—to move on—whatever his art and calling may be.

Both of us are on a threshold and face the unknown. . .and in a deeper way than at other turning points in our life.

I wait in silence for the clarity of God’s counsel. (Psalm 119, Merrill version)

May 5

I am given an image for this season of my life: Holy Saturday, between the wake-up call of the suffering of Good Friday, and the comfort and hope implied in the Resurrection.

It is quiet. . .entering into the dying—of all that needs to die—a time between the intensity of the inner journey and the movement outward into life. “The chains fell off; the heart is free. I can rise, get up, and follow Thee.”

May 9

The Retreat in September set me on new ground totally, in the eradication of introspection and self-consciousness. For a time I knew a different experience of life—more detached, yet real.

Then came the surgery and BAM! My world upended and I was alone and needy and out of control. Everything I usually counted on to buoy me up and stay in charge was stripped bare—my ego with it!

Slowly now I am being reintroduced to life, picking my way through a thicket, looking for a sentence that speaks to me in my morning reading.

As I find one—that very day—someone comes for a session to whom that same sentence speaks. I have learned to look for that connection, and the result has been prayer for others, on a way new to me. I begin to feel a true companion—an equal. I am no longer a Helper (and I have been such a good one); I am walking *with*. I see that my sense of working with Companions has been changing. I am identifying more with their struggles and seeing how the way I am being fed and led by God coincides with what seems helpful to them—that we often are being challenged in some basically similar ways.

May 14

Something is changing in me. Today's reading in the *Celtic Wheel of the Year* spoke to that awareness.

*The world is shot through with your radiance,
reviving the earth, changing lives.*

*Life-force of God, you make the sap to rise,
the swelling of bud to burst the sheath.
May I let the fruits of your Spirit grow in me this day.
Spirit of love abide in my ears as I listen to stories different to mine own.
Spirit of joy beam in my eyes as I meet the gaze of another.
Spirit of peace breathe through my attitude.
Spirit of kindness blow through the words I speak.*

*Vivid God maker of variety and vitality,
no two of us alike, rich in mysterious complexity,
yet sharing our need for mercy,
Come to the unique garden of my soul
and give me discernment between wildness and weed.
Be with each one this day who feels their weeds
are more abundant than their beauty.*

*Walk with us and help us to remove
at the right time, and with your sensitive touch
all that blocks our potency and growth for tomorrow.*

*Spirit of God,
I offer you all the fears that come with change;
the changes in the world that make it strange to me;
the changes in my work and community that I have not chosen;
the changes in my family and friends that mean I must adjust;
the winds of change in my life that have blown me in a different direction.*

*O Spirit
help me to trust your changing me unawares;
your gentle beckon when I want to return to the known,
for the bloom cannot show lest the bud break open.*

I suddenly find myself with t-i-m-e stretching out in my days, and I do not automatically welcome it and move toward something I desire. What I miss is the *desire* attached to action—in my case, usually the act of writing. But not always. So I am “caught” unawares and uncertain, forced to *wait* for I do not want to move without desire. This feels like a very important point. . .to welcome *new* direction, not old “answers.” These words here are my prayer, my articulation of an unnamed feeling or sense. Suppose that the waiting itself were an important part of the change—to have less directionality and forward movement. Perhaps.

Later—reading from the chapter on “Staying” in Rowan Williams’ *Where God Happens*, and realizing even the impetus to reach out to help others in need, to be their Spiritual Companion—can be a temptation to “flee” the sacred solitude and silence, the contemplative quiet of waiting for desire to arise.

May 26

Last night’s dream was of my parents wanting to give me a dress. I was not particularly eager, but since they wanted me to choose one from a huge pile of multi-colored dresses in a heap, I agreed to choose. One on top caught my eye. Purple, all in one piece with a scoop neck. It made me feel wonderful and all of a piece.

Something is unifying. . .that relates to my parents within me. Not flashy, but regal and also plain though textured and lovely in color. I will be glad to wear that today.



Arcing forward a year:

On March 15, 2016, I awoke with a dream. My mother had left me four legacies. Three were in print. The fourth was a large mass of hardened clay. we knew we had to add water to it in order to reshape the clay.

I had been doing this semi-consciously in my life—adopting a more loving and holistic attitude toward my mother. . .a core issue in my life always. I am so much a product of her womb. I now envision her in the afterlife redeemed and whole, seeing her as God sees her.

I am heading toward our Sisters' Retreat at the end of this week, feeling reluctant. It is not my way of experiencing solitude and silence. So perhaps I am to learn a new way, unknown to me. I don't know what to take with me. Can I trust I will be able to find what I need once I arrive? A new thought. I always go "armed."

May 28 - on retreat with my Sisters group.
I am here at Spirit Fire, disarmed. Wanting to be present to each person. "Conscious living" is the motto at Spirit Fire. It is a new environment, very green and woodland and the sky is full of clouds today. It feels so New England, and at home in some way, though Spirit Fire has a particular esoteric foundation. No mirror in my room, I note with humor and genuine appreciation. Healthy for me.

I come here determined to write. . .for some reason. It is my need for companionship in solitude. Not bad to have a *pen* be that companion—so trustworthy.



May 29 - "To live life constantly in an atmosphere of prayer is to pray constantly." Yesterday Cecily said that one thing she knows about herself is "I pray ceaselessly." Is this the sense I have of *always* being companioned—that Jesus and I are in constant communication? What makes the difference? Is it to listen with heart and instinct, not just my mind?

And what is it that I know to be true? I gravitate to an inner conviction that God is at work within us to produce change. It is my life verse in II Corinthians 3:17-18—"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit." Transformation. This is cause for hope.

As I walked, the word "comparison" came to mind—a term not unknown to me. Com-par-ison. Parity means equal, so "equal with". This changes the inner feeling from either envy or disdain to appreciation and aspiration. To love and honor the difference in others, and to see virtues to emulate and embrace.

So today I am *walking with* my companion, Jesus, and my companions here and in the rest of my life and work.

The *appreciation* is good, but not enough; the *aspiration* elicits desire and hope. I cannot live without either. The appreciation yields rest, quiet, enough-ness.

I am picking up the chapter on “Neighbors” from *Where God Happens*, wanting to absorb the value of being with these five women on my retreat. It is a new kind of relating I seek to find. There is a deeper level in the “neighbor” and community I am examining here.

I quote Williams: *“To find my own life is a task I cannot undertake without the neighbor.”* He identifies something more than sentimental “togetherness” but speaks of that willingness to “put on hold” the perspective I want to own and cling to and possess, so that something else may happen through my presence and my words, connecting others with life-giving reality (the gospel).

O. K. about what I know to be true: that transformative change is possible. *“To receive God’s forgiveness in such a way that our lives will be changed is a lifetime’s work requiring the most relentless monitoring of our selfish and lazy habits of thinking and reacting.”*

That was what I *had* to do this morning writing my “daily pages”. I had to *shout down* that inner voice of humiliation and guilt. Shut up! —is in itself a reception of the mercy I know is there.

Yet my very struggle is “what gives (me potentially) shocking tenderness toward other sinners.”

What will God teach me today? How will I integrate this new perception of meaning? The integration is so important, not to lose what is of eternal value and adopt and internalize only what God implants.

I look for *language*—large and deep enough to contain and convey *truth*. Love and Truth walk hand in hand in the psalm I am reading today—Psalm 32. This speaks to my desire to deal with others in a loving spirit that communicates a deeper truth—for deep truth always springs from and contains love.

Later: I can respond empathetically to a person whose limited perspective my head cannot grasp, because I remember the narrower frame from which she continues to live.



June 4

Somehow life has managed to become very full, scattering my brain in unmanageable ways. Even as I dive into reading *about* quiet and meditative practices, I find myself quite overtaken by little plans and ideas and anticipations. So I sit here, forcing myself into words on a page so I can “lay it all down” before You, my God. To think of watching my breath for 20 long minutes—or even five!—boggles the mind, but of course it is the mind that has to sit on the sidelines and watch while my body struggles to sit still and wait.

June 13

A dream came to help me: I was instructing a small group that had chosen my session—among others—at a gathering. I led the group to a place apart, sensing I might “lose” one or two. The group was so small; a formal presentation was not necessary perhaps. But one woman was disabled and I began to use a device to teach her how to identify the hidden skills present when she has to manage something difficult requiring help. I listed the action and skills in a chart on a chalkboard and got very excited about the possibilities of her seeing her situation in different terms, and as positive.

I see the application to people I am working with who labor with various disabilities of sorts. But the dream is also about me, of course. I am the woman who is disabled and who needs to see this in a fresh way.

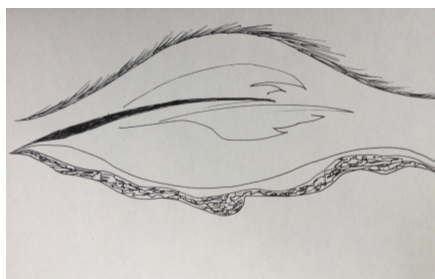
June 18

Dream: I am observing Char (a therapist friend of mine) leading a group. She asks them to share a difficult experience, one at a time. Then, another, and so on around the group several times. Then they are to go outside and figure out the meaning and return to share. But I think she has not used this opportunity to put more flesh on the bones, so to speak. It's too sketchy, not well thought through.

Awake, I take this in as a comment on my own carelessness, lack of attention to detail, sliding over things carelessly, and feel keenly this is a lesson for me.

In every arena of life, I am told that steady effort is necessary for solid results. This is basic to recovery of range of motion in my knee, and also true in the deeper things of my inner life, and also in the technical details of some parts of my work responsibility. The more I consider this, the more it appears to inhabit every corner of my life and being. Pretty basic—for me to slide through my life on many levels and in many areas.

So I pause to consider. Can I slow down, and apply concentrated effort *freely*?



July 2

The word *comparison* fits in my craw, sticks there, and I contrast it with *compassion*. How is it that my first instinct could be transformed from comparing to caring, to have that pour out of me spontaneously. How am I served by comparing? What does it clarify? Or avoid? It undergirds my position in various contexts. And it avoids looking at my own troubles, deficiencies, failings. But how it does *not* serve me is that it precludes *honest* assessment. Objectivity. . . reality and a dispassionate view.

Compassion arises easily in *some* contexts, especially in situations far removed and horrible—in the daily news. But closer to home, it is not as readily available. Comparing is easier.

July 8

The song on my iPod during exercise just now was “There is a balm in Gilead”—promising to make the wounded whole and to heal the sin-sick soul. That mirrors my feelings this morning—being sick of sin. For me it is the inward turning that becomes a burden, an unnecessary sin. That which, on the one hand, I see as a rich and deep resource, has another wily edge, covering me with sludge so that I cannot look full into the face of Christ and reflect His glory—to any degree.

“And now is my soul troubled. . .” I hear those words of Jesus, followed by His question, “Shall I be asked to be saved from this hour?” and his own firm answer, that his life purpose meant “coming to this hour.”



For me, the inner crisis continues to pivot around the *aging* process. Specifically, I wonder if I am facing the possibility of cancer because of a blood test I had. I immediately travel down a very grim road—not to a premature death at age 85. No, but to the more daunting reality of being an *aged woman*. How crazy is that! Would I really prefer death to life as an aged person? Well, in some ways, yes. It would be like going out on top, not sagging drearily along, dragging reluctant caregivers with me.

July 14

I am pondering my life and its shape these days, how it fits into the larger puzzle, how love and truth come together in the meaning of the fourth chapter of my existence on earth. Talking with Don last evening was grounding and I awoke today with a sense of a possible conceptual frame for understanding this stage of my life as well as helping others see their place too.

Meanwhile it is good for me to have seen the peace-making film yesterday (Rwanda, Ireland, Israel) and that the Iran/U.S. deal has been struck in the night time hours.

What does it mean for me to *choose wholeness*. . . integrating the opposites. Understanding not judging. Being with opposing forces. It's applicable in both large and small frames.



July 24

My dream: I was seated on a couch with three persons in the room. I was leading in the vocational process that we use at Life/Work Direction. One person was on my left and another opposite me and in an upper balcony. A third person whom I knew was there and at times her husband sat beside me.

I had arranged at one point for the three or four of them to do an exercise on their own and I closed my eyes as they began. The third person had decided to do a sexual scene with her husband and I was aware they were to my right on the floor nearby and engaged with one another, with the woman I knew taking the lead. She opened her mouth for a deep kiss—and suddenly a fly flew into her mouth—which is the one thing she said she could not stand. This broke into the exercise and I called everyone back together to report. There was another person in the upper balcony whom I recognized as another man I know and someone with whom I have worked.

Upon awaking, I pondered the dream, wondering what was the “fly in the ointment” of my work! The man in the balcony was someone I felt I had failed and who has departed from our work.

I take this dream to prayer—because I have been thinking about being more a person who prays for others and less someone who directly instigates change. A number of indicators point to this.

August 9

An odd dream: I went through an entire session with spiritual director Joan, whom I am to see next Tuesday. Amazing. Now I can’t recall exactly what I said but it was thought-through in the way I ordinarily prepare and this time it reflected my current thinking about *not* doing too much pre-thinking! I wish I could recall it now because it fit a lot of my thinking about my Sisters group, which met Saturday morning. I realized after that meeting how I don’t share *events* in my life, like others do. Instead I share my *process*, so I wind up saying a lot less, but it tends to condense my experience into “conclusions” because I have *processed* everything. Do I take the “meat” out of my experience thereby? I don’t know. I just know that Cecily’s stories are enlivening to me.

I use the example of shopping for groceries. The center aisles have the processed food. Around the perimeter are the raw ingredients—fruit, vegetables, meats, cheese. Can I speak more often from the *raw materials* of my experience? What would that feel like? Look like? Be like?

August 10

Another dream. I am conducting a session with a young woman, Christie. She is capable of numinous experience—with a childlike simplicity that goes deep. I say to her that there might be a way to examine her life and give the child-like experience a frame for understanding, to ground it in concrete ways. I am seeing her, instead of her usual time with Louise. So at the end we gather with the Walkers and a man to whom Christie is related—to determine next steps. I am careful not to undermine the sweetness of her experience, knowing that “becoming a child” is actually an advanced stage, but I ask her to tell her story of her spiritual history as a way to ground her understanding of her capacity to experience these times of transcendence. . .

I awoke in the night after this dream, wondering if it had some message for me responding to my question of yesterday: “Why am I going to see Joan on Tuesday? What am I looking for?” I need to quiet my soul with these questions and trust. Not “make up reasons” but let them come.

The Christie child. . .

August 12

Joan suggested that the “Christie child” in my dream is me and suggested I pray with the dream, dialoguing with God about all this.

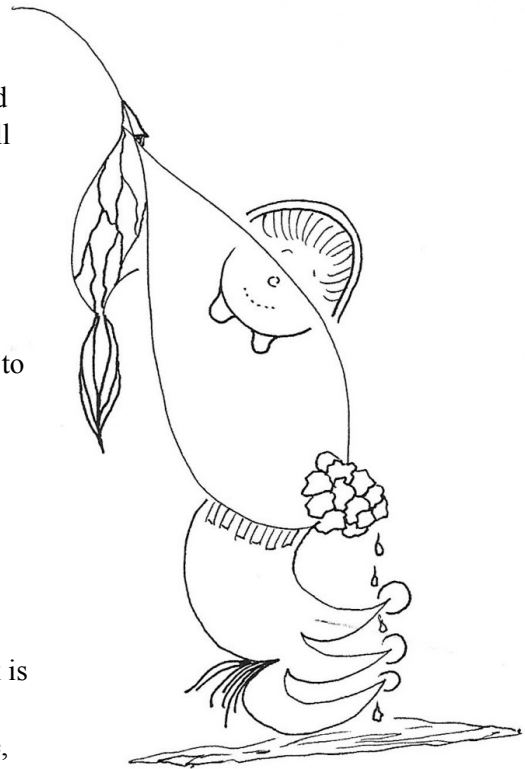
So here I am feeling very much the child this morning and wanting God’s direct care and attention and reassurance and presence. Is my feeling of aloneness, and Don not quite so involved with me in certain ways (as when he was driving me to exercise, e.g.), stirring me to God’s side, God’s embrace?

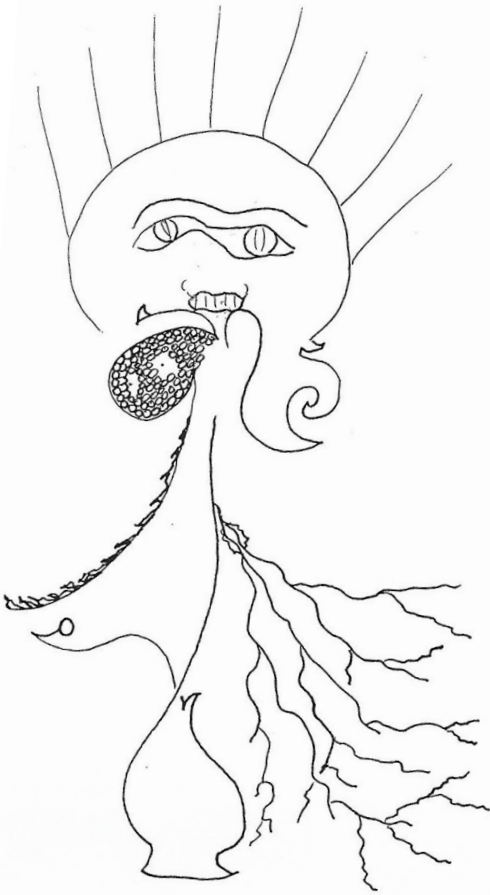
What is the undergirding deep truth that sustains me and is underlying the numinous quality of experience? I read in this morning’s psalm that it is *fear* that undermines integrity.

Something in me says *yes* to that and resonates with the word *integrity*. I am ashamed to confess that my one overriding lack is often that—my integrity. And yet that is the most precious possession of anyone—integrity. I roll the word off my tongue, feel the *grit* in integrity.

I said yesterday that I wanted the freedom that comes from not hiding, not covering, but exposing. Not making up reasons, explanations, subterfuges. It is so unconscious—automatic, habitual—a prison of my own making. I would burst those bonds.

So the prayer from today is the *plea to be free*. For only God can strip me bare in order to love me—a little like the Hispanic nurse Maria in the hospital last December when I was recovering from surgery. I had gotten myself into a colossal mess in the bathroom and she came in like a mother with an errant child and washed me up without complaint. I felt so intimately cared for.





August 19

Dreams: (1) I am part of a group of women gathered for a particular purpose that is unusual. I can't remember the cause now, but one woman stood out humorously wanting this purpose to be articulated. As time went on, I realized there were many moments I wished had been recorded for they were funny or touching or effective. Then a larger group could hear it and be persuaded of its importance. It may have had something to do with animals, or some idiosyncratic notion.

(2) Now I am walking in a forested area alongside a monk I deeply value and trust. He is gently supporting me whenever there is unevenness in the ground, aware of my frailty. But there is also a sensitive understanding between us, and his fingers sometimes interlock with mine in a way we both understand and guard. But the feeling accompanying this is deep.

(3) This morphs into a third stage where I am part of a group gathered sitting in rows (not in a circle as in the first dream) and I have devised a little questionnaire giving people a chance to prioritize their feelings about what is important in life. Everyone is interested in this and engaged. I have used some objects to differentiate their levels of priority—perhaps pastas of various types. Also people sit on each other's laps to indicate similarity of vote. Then I realize someone else had planned to be in charge this week and had a similar exercise in mind, so in a way I could have upstaged them. At first it seemed to be one of the monks, and then it was a woman, so we got together and converged our plans—she was using just one variety of pasta—and we evolved something harmonious. The dream faded.

These three dream segments had three different feeling tones. The central one walking with the monk was the most affecting at a deeper level. It may have something to say about my work.

All three dreams manifest the way I feel part of what is taking place—observing, then participating, and then leading. *Observing*: Appreciating how it might be recorded and shared. The focus was on the women, and though I felt part of it, it was about their concerns. I delighted in their initiative. *Participating*: Walking with and feeling connection with the monk, I was very sensitive to the degree of closeness we manifested outwardly, very aware of what he may have been expressing. A delicacy and hesitancy, a tad awkward, yet very much in synch, like the person this monk is. *Sharing leadership*: Having a good idea, then realizing I needed to step back and incorporate another's ideas and let those come forward.

September 2

It is curious to me how I awaken with a fairly distinct sense, sometimes leaden with unnamable gloom and at other times equally mysterious, yielding hope and steadiness of heart. The latter is clearly preferable, but it seems beyond any conscious control. So this morning I receive this more balanced calm as sheer gift. It makes me feel receptive and detached—both—in quite a wonderful way. So the reading today in Psalm 38 was a mild shock, because it comes from a very distressed psalmist!

I would like to welcome this receptivity and detachment more readily, since it clearly is there.

September 9

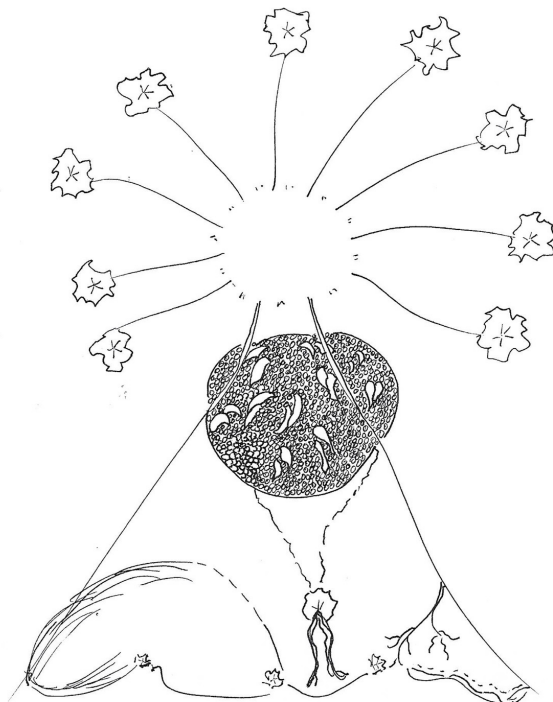
Psalm 49: *"I will solve my problems through the whispers of the heart's voice."*

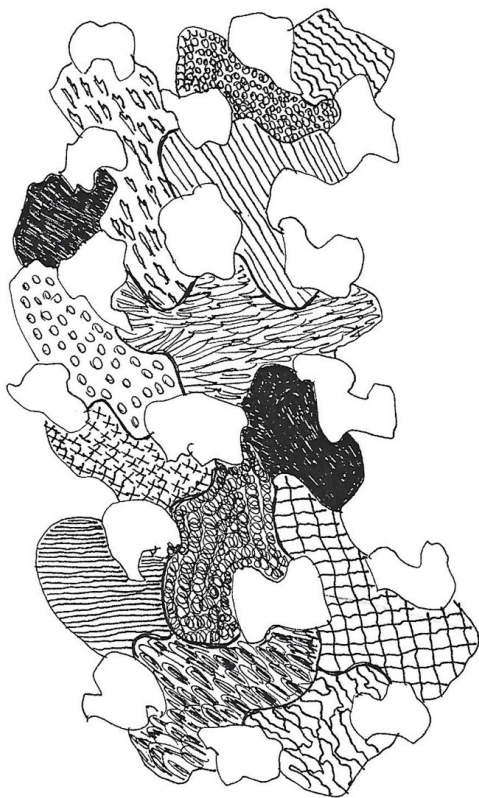
(Merrill version of the Psalms)

Dream: I am seeing a group of girls, one at a time, as each one comes into a separate space where I am meeting with them. Each one is symbolized by a tree, and I tell each one of their particular gift and glory. When one person enters the space too soon, I ask her to go back, for each one is to first pause in an outer chamber to prepare, to consider on their own who they are. Each person feels very distinct to me and I see them that way, and speak to that.

September 29

I am learning about the subtle distinction between effort and trust, between reaching out to touch and remaining separate, between hoping for change and facing reality of what is. There is a connection between the opposites and that is what draws me to find that connection. . .the substance of which seems to be love. The emphasis for me appears to be on the side of trust, remaining separate, and facing reality as it is. This is where love arises most helpfully.





October 2

I have been noticing these past months the level of *crisis* in the lives of people coming my way. This week has two stark new examples—two persons in fairly volatile situations and in both cases their agitation and tendency to react, over-react is compounding their experience of the traumas of their life and the effect of their choices.

It occurs to me this morning that in both cases what they tap into in *me* is also my haste to react and go into task—about the externals—when clearly the deeper issue is the need for internal change.

So I kneel and pray. And like Pope Francis said, “Pray for me.”

October 14

Dream. It is of my friend Thea—who always rose to the top in whatever she undertook and manifest a special starlike quality. In the dream I am connected to her in some way. I struggle to recall the details. . .but when I awoke, there was a clarity about the attention I might pay to what she symbolized in the dream—a transformative quality. I felt a better acceptance of my own uniqueness, but not superiority. There was depth there in who she was, not glitter.

October 22

The line came to me in prayer this morning: “When folks are feeding at another trough.” My thinking had gone to people who came here for a time to feed, and then left to find nourishment elsewhere. So internally I release them and bless them. I do not have to *be the one*. It is good for me to remember that, along with Isaiah 43:13: “*I work, and who can hinder it?*”—words God spoke to me last year on retreat.

November 8

This morning, I pray for my friends and companions, aware of the closeness that comes through prayer, the comfort of entrusting them to the Everlasting Arms. I feel Jesus’ love come through me. . .though I am unworthy and this is a grace.

I have been struck by the degree of freedom from anxiety and peace that resulted from my deliberate choice to stay home yesterday, and not try to take in a movie or go out some place. I needed such a clear indication of the value of that *pause* that preceded a different decision. That is how I want to live in this next season of my life. It is how I try to teach others! How can I unless I practice it myself? It gave me such happiness—both on the surface and in depth.

November 16

The dream was in a terrain that was like a camp area and numbers of us were spread around in chosen spots to be alone for a time. I had the sense of being somewhat in charge, though the degree to which I actually was I found unclear. There was a time limit—maybe 5 minutes—and as I sensed it was up, made my way across a brook with difficulty (I saw a trout!) and up onto another plane.

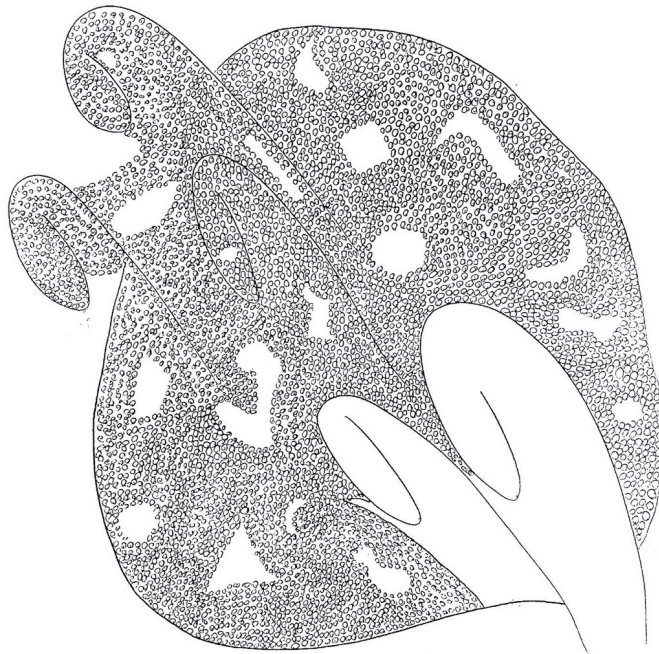
As I awoke, I saw the dream as representing various parts of my self.

November 26 on retreat with Don at Campion Retreat Center

I was in a somber frame of mind all day yesterday, and it lingers today. It feels just *quiet*, and receptive, even submissive.

This morning I walked among the graves to find Tom Gallagher's who died in 2009. I admit to being affected by the seeing of the movie *Spotlight* as I mingle with all the graves, wondering what secrets these men took to the grave with them, and if Jesuits are more immune to some of the immaturity and distortions afflicting priests in other orders. They seem, in general, to be more in touch with contemporary movements—including the psychological, that ferret out inner maladaptive mechanisms more readily.

This retreat of ours has had a different character from what I usually associate with “coming apart.” I’ve felt more “collected” from the onset, ready for quiet and non-doing. My physical body has endured its assaults: a different diet, greater frequency of meals and quantity and variety of enticing foods. I have had to tame myself and choose only what I am hungry for. The eye is deceptive.



Don keeps asking me to articulate “where Eunice is” now and “what Eunice does.” His constant prodding does not especially elicit new responses. In fact, I am resistant, in a way, preferring to allow sensibilities to *arise*, for indeed I am aware that my sense of my *work*—which is always front and center—is altered by certain events and the effect my spiritual companions have on me. My place, increasingly, is to simply *listen*. Some responses may be forthcoming from me in words, but the keenest awareness is that which I *feel* in my own body and spirit to each person’s dilemma. Carry them, as it were, but do not feel *weighted*, simply *with*. And God in me is responding just through those channels, and not necessarily by words of wisdom.

I do feel the wisdom of years within me. Is that humility or is it pride? Could be either, or both. It’s the accumulation of *years* that does mean something.

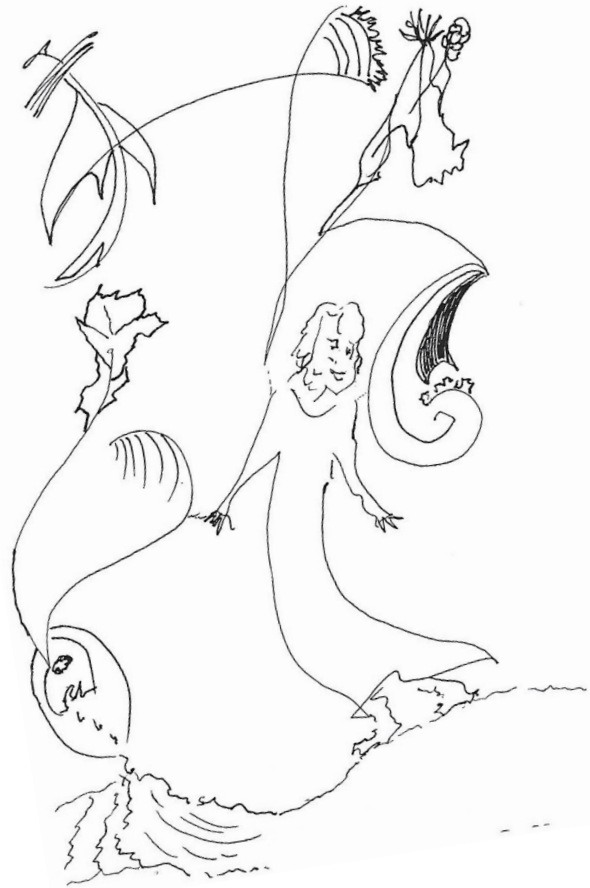
I turn to You, my Lord and God. I have little to say, but much to hear. Standing in the graveyard today felt *alive* to me somehow. All those rows of crosses—bland, ordered, non-unique. What is buried underground? And what lives now beyond the sky I see—in the universe of the departed?

December 2

So now a new reality sets in. I await news of the “shaving” of my “mole” (is that a biopsy by another name?) to see if it is cancerous. I assume it is, and that surgery follows.

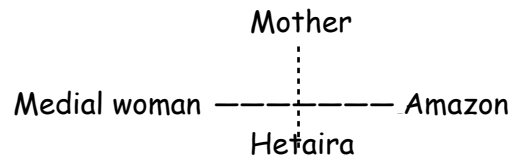
There is a thud about the real. An ordinary *thump*. So this is the new normal. The body decays, falls apart, deteriorates, shrivels, quivers, swells, shrinks, complains in multitudinous ways. But I am not homeless, or a migrant starving or in mortal danger on the streets. I have a human condition. I am in a human condition.

Later; No, it was just “keratosis” and completely harmless. The doctor sliced it off and says it will heal on its own.



December 4

In the night, awake and up, sitting and letting the coming day pray through me. I realized an archetypal concept explains some persons' dilemmas. A woman can become a mother, a daughter, a therapist, or a wife in her marriage. I remember Toni Wolff's archetypal portrayal where she depicts two places on the personal dimension: Mother and Hetaira (or companion)—only I remembered it as Daughter. And on



Now I am looking for parallels in Scripture:

Daughter – Mary's *"Be it unto me according to thy word."*

Mother – Psalm 131 sitting on God's lap. Also Jesus' command to *"feed my sheep"* and his compassion on the crowd, feeding them.

Amazon—might be Queen Esther who *"came to the kingdom for such a time as this"* to rescue her people.

Medial Woman—Mary of Bethany? Emptying her jar of perfume on Jesus' feet. Or perhaps Mary Magdalene, the one sent to tell the disciples Jesus had risen.

I can think of a number of women who exercised their medial powers in an evil way.



December 7

My dream was of a small gathering of persons for a meeting in my home, all of them from Dorchester. As we assembled, and I began speaking (as convener) I slowly realized all of them knew more than I did—in terms of being in Dorchester, in most cases intentionally, and aware of the sociological characteristics of that milieu. One of the persons there was male, either a pastor or perhaps someone representing the Emanuel Gospel Center. Claire was there as well, and tuned in to help me at times when I needed it with logistics.

Then it was as though I entered my own dream to change it, for realizing that these persons have more living experience of the environment in which we lived, they were already more adept than I. So I decided to abandon any "teaching" element and instead asked them a question that would draw on their actual lived experience and create an alive contact and sharing. The question was simply, "What are you hungry for?" and such a question required that we go into a period of silence so that everyone could access this question at the deepest truest level.

That is how I awoke! My realization on awaking was that the dream was about my changing attitude toward my work with people, that they know more than I do. It is certainly true that many of them know more existential pain and suffering right now than I do, and at least that is how they are experiencing their life now. They often come as they have reached the “unbearable point”—the zenith, or nadir point where they can go on no farther without some relief. Their perceptions need to be reset!—who God is and the “why” of life.

Living with the questions. . .as Rilke wrote. First, loving the questions, then living them.

December 22

A certain grayness has swept over me in these hours of the days before Christmas. It has a distinct quality I cannot name. It feels sober, at times even somber. I lack the energy to plan and initiate. At times I even feel a wave of sickness. Again it is all unnamable. I am constrained from moving away from it, or *doing* something to assuage or banish it. Rather I guard it as a thing in itself—that must find its own voice. The death wish crosses my mind for a flickering instant, but does not have a root. Instead I start planning how to divest myself of possessions, starting with my books—even of my hymn books stored close by.

And then I remember others whose suffering is palpable and existential, and prayers rise spontaneously. Is a life of prayer enough? Sometimes it is all I can manage. What do people do without that conduit of communication—so constant and grounding?

I ask God to do what I cannot. To intervene. To reveal God’s self incontrovertibly recognizable as Divine loving presence. . .

December 23

I am thankful for the dream in the night—sitting with women and understanding together in a new way the quality of *savoring* that can accompany this stage of life, and that I can be a restful presence—rather than only a stimulating presence! This feeds into Don’s and my conversation yesterday about the new year and *soul*. Not so much focusing on “spiritual practices” (grace at meals) and more on savoring life in each moment.

December 24

I began today’s meditative quiet listening to the piece from the Elijah, “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel. . .” and sank into the lovely knowledge of my roots in the Jewishness of my faith, and therefore the wonder and specialness of my marriage, how it blends us together. I feel the “Jewishness of God” —at least the root, for me and others, and recognize the blessing Don is in my life and faith. It makes it feel fuller and more rooted authentically.

December 27

Words to remember: *“Hope is not a conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense regardless of how it turns out. Hope gives us the strength to live and to try new things.”*



2016

January 6– Epiphany!

Sitting quietly this morning, praying for Steve Plotner undergoing surgery, and listening to music on my iPod, “There is a balm in Gilead” sung by Trinity choir on a disk his wife Judy gave me—“He makes the wounded whole”— I realize the love I feel for the persons who have come here to Life/Work, Judy being among the most faithful, receptive and giving. The receiving and giving are all one in my experience.

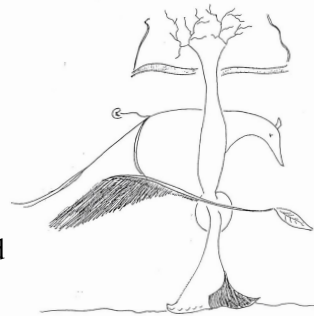
January 9

Dream: “*Aging cannot stale her infinite variety.*”

I was in a situation where I must don a pair of jeans, and then another pair of slacks over the jeans, and then one at a time various pants, one atop the other. And then I was to take them off one at a time. Though I knew this was unusual, it was something I could do.

Upon awaking, I realized this was what I was doing in my current writing project, unearthing stray bits of writing over the years that seemed to fit my sensibilities of a way to unravel—in the sense of reveal my life trajectory and experience in a new way.

I realize that just as in my work with others, I am constantly awed and amazed by the intricacy of their interwoven lives, so I have the same respect and wonderment—and sometimes sense of God’s humor—at the “infinite variety “ of my own little life, which is never stale.



A dream followed: I was taking a solo trip from Maine south toward New Jersey (?) or somewhere in that area. I knew there were a variety of ways to go. I had a map, but it was hard to read, and as I traveled I used my instinct and foggy memory of the visual layout of the map to begin. I recognized the numbers of a couple of routes, but it was confusing.

Then I found myself on foot, off the highway, and in a place with workmen who were engaged in hard physical work, picking up stones or bricks and placing them in some strategic way for their purposes. There was water and rubble of rock about as I walked around, and I found a hidden brick or rock that could be unearthed.

I discern that this dream was charting the work ahead of me in my writing project. And describing its as-yet-undefined character.

January 15

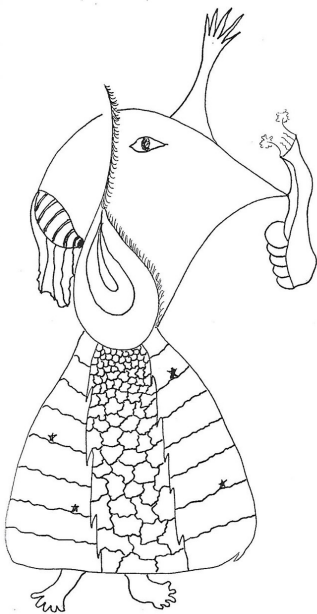
“Weaving Spirit, may I know that the texture of my journey is shot through with your mercy.”

“Spirit Weaver, go before me to be my guide, and with the gentlest fingers untangle the old and the unfinished and weave their ends into the next step as directions change and the cloth feels new and strange.” (Celtic Wheel of the Year, by Tess Ward)

January 25

There is some sense of a threshold today. It is an inner marker as I come to realize I need a return to warmth, or perhaps a *new* warming in my daily quiet time with You, God. Using the Vanier book (*Discovering the Mystery of Jesus in the Gospel of John*) was so rich and yielded treasures for a long time. Do I always need another person's words to light the fire within that brings me to the sense of presence that nurtures me for the day? It is pausing that helps *always*, and for some reason I forget to pause!

I am increasingly aware of my persistent fears—really it is more like anxiousness—when I look ahead to my day or week. And this week looks unusually full. Taken one thing at a time, I can proceed soberly and still my heart and mind. But it is easy to rush ahead and anticipate. So it's the need to trust in the present—to feel it in the *now*—and simply do the next thing and only *when* I am clear what that is. To live practicing the presence of God—that is my desire. I need to be taught how. By You.



February 13

I am wondering about my reluctance to seek out a new spiritual director, now that Betty died, and take on the directee role again with another. I know it requires being vulnerable, but it is something I genuinely long for—to pour out my soul with candor and freedom.

But, of course, this is what I need and want from God, who is available all the time.

So what was it about the August 2014 retreat that made that so fully possible? Was it the attitude the situation engendered that made me so utterly free to just “pour it all out, chaff and grain together” with abandon?

And is there some holding back in my relationship with God as though I had some responsibility for God's reactions—or my reputation?

I wait to discern all this before reaching out to someone, but I do wonder if the time has come for me to re-enter a relationship of this sort, where I am not the one to listen, but the one to unwind and let go.

There is some stuckness in my life with God right now that I want to address. Can I let another in—a spiritual companion—and in so doing, can I receive what God has for me? Am I too independent, too self-contained? Do I foster dependence? Do I have to do it all myself?

March 28

So Easter is past, and my instinct today is to retrace my forty-day Lenten journey by repeating the steps in Martin Smith's *A Season for the Spirit*. I need to taste it again, savor it, for it spoke powerfully to me and moved swiftly day by day, leaving me hungry to absorb the fullness more slowly from now to Pentecost.

The intent is consonant with the hunger of my being—to know the *truth* that makes me free. To experience *unhiddenness* of the sort that exposes *love*.

April 18

Dream: I am in a wooded area approaching a house where a couple live. The woman is a sort of priest who with her husband is in charge of it as a retreat place. I am being shown to the building where, inside, I am to meet with the woman priest. Inside, I find Alice is there, having spoken with this woman priest figure. I slowly awaken from the dream, aware of this as a reminder that Alice needs my prayer and that this is the import of the dream.

A second dream comes later in the night: I am with Louise, and am showing her ways of accessing certain features on her iPad and instinctively can figure out ways to get at the controls that will allow her to change the typeface used for her messages and other work. We are strolling through a mall area, and keep checking to see if we can access the kinds of typeface we see on the counters.

Then we are joined by a third person—a sophisticated attractive competent woman who swoops in swiftly, obviously in charge. She reaches high on a rack for a colorful scarf made of flimsy material. I realize it is very expensive like other things in this area of the mall, and that cost is of no concern.

But in the process of reaching high up for the scarf, there is the possibility of a tear in the fabric. I see a similar scarf lower down, and offer it to her. She accepts it and pockets it. Then I realize she may not plan to pay for this second one. I then proceed. . . as I am awakening from the dream. . . to figure out my part in this and how to defend myself if we are accosted by store police, for example.

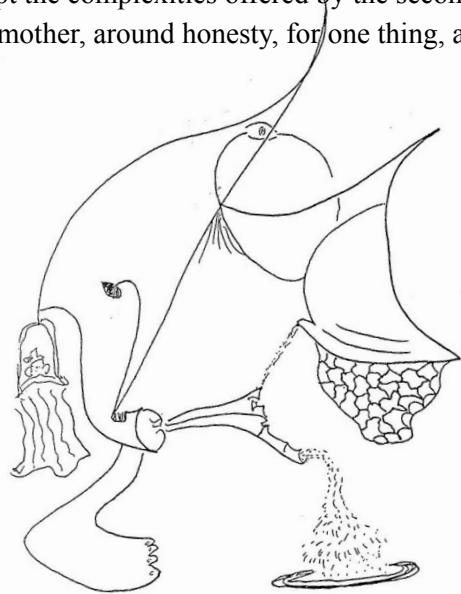
This second dream unmasks another part of me, in contrast to the first one! It is more complex and reveals more *complexes*! I want to “retreat” to the first dream, yet accept the complexities offered by the second. The second one feels more inhabited by the sensibilities of my mother, around honesty, for one thing, and my own high-handedness for another.

There is more in these two dreams than I can mine yet.

April 26

I have had this headache now for a few weeks, gone this morning, thank God. It has been instructive—to live with that oppressive *ache* in the face! Something many people experience in allergies to pollen. It was new for me, and unexpected to realize how that constant oppressive feeling can alter one’s whole mood and stance toward life.

My mind is a-swirl with all the tides and currents of this transition into “old age.” I guess that is what it is! At times I counter it; at other times I yield. But it feels like a reality, and definitely new. I don’t want to lose the zest for life—the welcoming of the new—the unlearnedness—the youthful eagerness. But I sense a sobering, and looking reality in the eye.





April 28

I walked a labyrinthine path this morning, seeking God's way through my sense of failure, coming from the reality of a betrayal, as experienced by others, and including my betrayal of another, and my need for reconciliation and that being denied, my need for reassurance of anything I had been able to provide, though clearly, it is God who has been at work, even using my failure/betrayal as part of the precipitant for breakthrough. I still find it hard to *rest* on the Isaiah promise: "I work, and who can hinder it." But I am being forced to acknowledge its reality. I'm a stubborn cuss in this matter. I want to *count*, to make an impact, *and* to have it *acknowledged*! "Ay, there's the rub!" Please tell me that I matter!

There is something important in that—the ability to genuinely care and feel that I matter, and the corresponding need for that to be acknowledged by another earthling!—not just by inner confirmation in the Spirit.

Resolving the dilemma is a matter of the Spirit's work in me. I try hard to resolve it internally by endless story-telling, tracing events over and over. Can I simply *stop*—and allow God to dissolve my resistances and tenderize my neediness? Enter my life in a *new* way?

Perhaps I will be shown through others. . . those I meet with! An odd idea, but creative.

May 6

I have come to the end of reading over again Martin Smith's *Seasons for the Spirit* all through Lent and now ever since, leading toward Pentecost. I read more deeply this time, thoughtfully. The first time felt more emotionally connected. Now I am considering what my continuing practice is to be. I have so often depended on reading—not solely Scripture. I have to consider how to proceed. I feel a certain dryness, of the character of *not knowing*. A beginner really, who "knows" so much on one level. . . and yet so unformed in other ways.

It occurred to me this morning that I learn more at times by writing, so that is a discipline I can explore. "Pages!"—*The Artist's Way*— and to be free, using notebook paper. Not so concerned about form or content.

May 24

I have found Merton again, and he always re-establishes order and meaning for me. Do I need to understand? Or simply trust and rest in God's arms? Something about Merton's ability to stand in both humility and love, in the truth and in gratitude. . .resonates today.

May 25

Reading in Merton's diary (*Intimate Merton*, p. 254) I am at the juncture where he leaves the monastery and enters the hermitage—and solitude. I am fascinated by this transition, so definite, yet so subtle. I feel the real sense of change in him. . .and in myself. I said in staff meeting yesterday, "*I am leaving the monastery and entering the hermitage!*" My solitude is more shared—Don being beside me—but I resonate with so much of what Merton writes about his sense of solitude now that he is freed from the usual contacts and responsibilities. He realized his lack of strength on his own for the solitary life now that he really confronts it. "*A deep sense of his poverty*". . .and awareness of wrongs in himself he has allowed along with "good desire."

And then, "*I am glad to be shocked by grace*"—seeing the seriousness of it. "*I have been merely playing at this.*" The solitary life can't "*tolerate illusion and self-deception*"—ripping off "*masks and self-disguises.*"

Then he gets down to the basics: "*The need to pray, the need for solid theological food, for the Bible.*" Not experimentation, dilettantism, distractions.. "*Distractedness is fatal*"—bringing one "*to the abyss.*"

But no concentration is required, only *being present*. For him this is reading, meditation, study, psalmody, manual work, some fasting.

Hope, not acedia!

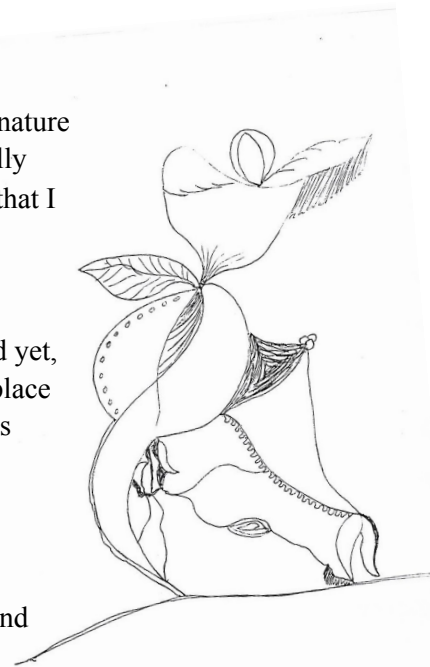
May 26

Do I aspire to something beyond me? Or is that the essential nature of aspiration—to reach beyond? How do I then affirm and fully inhabit the present—what *is*. Am I imprisoned by what *is* so that I cannot move toward a wider, deeper, freer place?

I sometimes (reading Merton) long for the natural world, so available to him. I access this most keenly in my dreams. And yet, today, in his diaries, he is haunted by political events taking place in 1965, and my world is also full of that kind of awareness as well.

May 27

Yesterday, I experienced the utter naturalness of spiritual companionship—with first one person—and then another—and still another—and felt the healing of my introspective self-conscious self, and the *gladness* of learning together.



June 2

Merton's entering the hermitage full time allowed him the solitude and freedom to fall in love—an experience that was both erotic and mystical as it turned out, for he was “caught” and returned to the reality of his vocation. But what emerges is his sharp criticism of the monastic life as well. Today I am reading about the two spaces he inhabits: the hermitage in solitude, and the Merton Room in the library in Louisville that houses the collection of his writings! I am struck by that contrast *and* a fullness. It makes me think about my own desire to assemble my writings and—of course—Don's struggle to find a way to release his opus, his poetry.

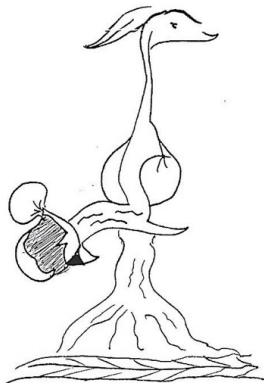
To whom do we belong? What space in the universe are we to inhabit? What mark do we continue to make and leave behind? To what or whom are we dedicated? There is the Poustinia, my place of silence and solitude, yet shared with others. And the computer!—often my diary, though I also have these journals in various forms.

June 5

I write—again—to stay in living communication with God, with You. There's a certain dullness over the last 24 hours—at the Life/Work retreat with others—and now home again with Don and his concerns about his work. Our concerns about legacy are quite different and I struggle to understand my place in this, or whether each of us has to discern separately. Meanwhile today beckons, and I don't want to miss the detail of it by being lost in the murkiness of my not knowing. . .

June 8

This morning I could not pray—at least not *articulate*—and then it dawned on me that I was looking for *words*, and *thoughts*, and what I needed to do was listen and wait and let God pray through me. It is perhaps enough and even better than enough! I do not understand this season of my life, this coming to terms with what I perceive as aging and the irreversibles of that condition. It *is* new. Being *old*, I mean! I'd like to enjoy it if possible.



June 16

My conversation yesterday was helpful. Carol is studying something called “Intelligent Conversation” based on neuroscience, and it has interesting implications for my own approach to a decision I am making. She suggested I focus on the decision itself, rather than spending too much time on my feelings about how my decision would affect others. That suddenly felt releasing and free to me. My decision came clear and true.

Now I am making a connection between that and what I read in Elaine Prevallet's *Making the Shift* where she writes: “*Evolution has programmed our human brains to produce a ‘good!’ response when we do something honest and generous and compassionate.*”

For someone like me—so keenly aware of my own minute gradations of feeling—this wisdom is liberating. Acting compassionately and generously and also honestly frees me at a basic feeling level.

June 28

I have completed writing the story of the small Sisters group spawned by a Shalem conference I attended in 2004, and which has met ever since. We went through some hard spots I needed to process. I am calling it *My Shalem Odyssey*.

Rereading in *Where God Happens* I have again been put in touch with how much of even the contemplative life is involved with one's neighbor. This morning the phrase about "putting our neighbor in touch with God" as being the mark of a loving community reminded me sharply of a comment made by a member of my small group—how she had not been able to be in touch with God within it, and was therefore leaving. This gives me a sharp pang of sorrow, as it did at the time.

But Rowan Williams goes on to suggest a similarly difficult but important characteristic of a loving spiritual community and that is its capacity to be a place "*where it is possible to engage each other in a quest for the truth of oneself, without fear or the expectation of being despised or condemned for not having a standard or acceptable spiritual life.*"

He goes on to contrast individuality and conformity, and then this morning in Richard Rohr's online meditation another similar duality is posed: fight to change the world versus deny its dark side and say all is beautiful. He suggests a "third way" that weaves the strands together—Truth and Love would be my way of saying it. Truth exposed by love can be freeing.

If one were to drill down to the deepest truth of me, would it not find my ultimate attunement to God who made me?

"Deep down we are attuned to God."

Listen more deeply, he is saying, past the jarring notes out of tune, "the habits of self-protection and self-regard." Listen to the heart.

"God alone will tell me who I 'really' am."

Is my writing, at core, a "manifesting of my thoughts" as in spiritual direction as perceived by the monastics of the desert? Merton's writing was, I think. . .

July 2

Dream. We are visiting my brother Phil and his wife Leigh and others are dimly present. We enter and mingle and talk. At one point I go over to Phil, who is sitting slightly apart, and put my arms around him in a loving gesture and feel the comfort. I am aware that Leigh is solicitous about his comfort and that Phil is somewhat limited in mobility.

Later we are seated together in conversation and something I say is a stimulus for Leigh springing up from her place and going over to a piano and suddenly beginning to play with animation and joy. The piece is one I recognize—a kind of hymn or piece from a religious work. Leigh has grown up with it too and she plays it animatedly like ragtime or jazz. It is lively and joyful.

Upon awaking, I of course thought of Phil and wondered if he were dying. I know he could collapse suddenly, and I need to be prepared for that. So I was thankful for the sweet dream as a reminder.

July 7

I have been engaged in an “odyssey”, though the sharp lines of the journey are fading. My last entry about that Shalem journey has been built upon since then, making the journey seem never-ending. I am less inclined to share it with others, as the sharp outlines fade. What I am left with is my aging life, and that in itself is taking my strength. Right now, there is concentration on several tasks related to work that I do not feel competent for, so I instinctively pray for help and for patience and trust. There seem to be more and more things I cannot do. I’d like that helplessness to be converted into surrender—yielding—openness.

July 21

I shared my writing of the Shalem Odyssey yesterday—needing an outlet—and surprised myself at being moved by my own writing—in particular the two very powerful dreams I recorded. I realize that dreams are perhaps the most trusted and authentic sources of wisdom as to what my soul is experiencing.

I am not sure now if I can lay down this writing about our Sisters group, and my part in the rupture and conflict we went through in 2011 and which shaped us since. I may want to share carefully selected pieces with them at our September retreat, if it seems wise and fruitful. For me, *sharing* my experience is a part of expressing it in writing to myself!

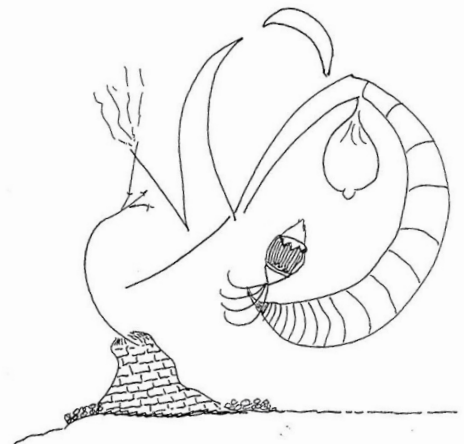
July 25

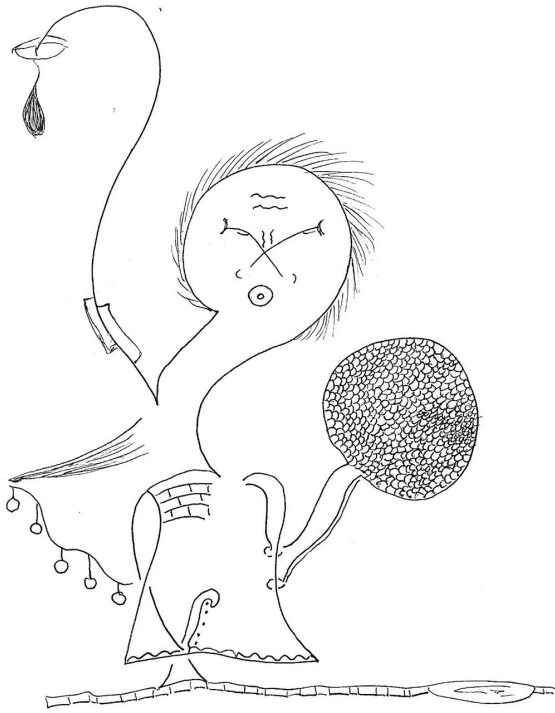
A new insight about that telling phrase and book title: *Where God Happens*. When we open up doors for healing and wholeness for another, we “gain God, in the sense that you become a place where God happens for somebody else.”

And this is *not*—as I previously thought—because “I am good and wonderful—but “because that is what God has done.” And we do this by being in touch with God’s healing in our own lives!

It occurs to me that this is precisely the way I represent the place where God happens even for persons who find me difficult and with whom I clash! It’s a very new way for me to appreciate “being the place where God happens.” I have to pause to take it in. As this is the place where God happens for me.

Today Don and I travel to Onset for a house blessing. In some ways the trip is difficult for me—finding my way, the timing, etc. and expectations on the other end. So how is it all—the *day*—and all in it, the “place where God happens?” I open to that.





August 1

The trip *was* difficult and I did lose my way, adding an extra 20 miles to the journey. And the aftermath was more devastating than I could have predicted, because on Wednesday a stab of pain in my “driving leg” ushered me into a new era of pain that I am still in the midst of—bewildered and beset. I will go to the doctor’s this week and see if I can get a handle on it. I think the intensity of driving that interstate for two hours and again home did something to the muscles—or tendons—who knows?—but the result is intermittent acute pain. This is new to me and spiraled down into a very low place from which I am gradually extricating myself, slowing down to try to find a pace of life that fits my much older sensibilities. At last, I have to surrender to *what is*. I do not know how to live in this new consciousness and I would like to be able to do it with joy and equanimity.

I am also living with a certain degree of tension about Don’s 80th birthday and that is the last thing he would want! This brings to the fore my realization of how much *he* does for me, often just by being there. And I am often very self-absorbed. It’s a pretty basic stance for me. . .

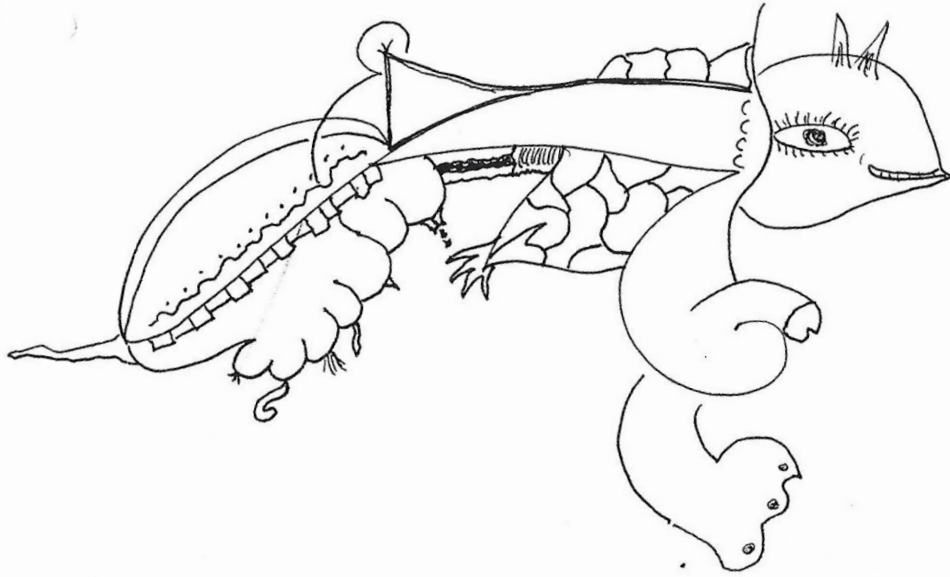
The news in the world is another source of disquiet. The election is depressing—at core—and the media is in charge, really. Lord, deliver us!

August 6

What a week! The doctor, the orthopedist, the cortisone treatment, the cane, not driving. So is this my “cell”—in the desert? Today I read about Zen as Merton speaks of it:

Zen. . .experience not mediated by preconceived structures—to fit them into. Not “*deciding beforehand what we think things mean*” and limiting us to “*preconceptions and logical verbal formulas.*” How do I “*come to direct grips with reality without the mediation of logical verbalizing?*”

Zen is enlightenment, “*transformed consciousness of reality—pure awareness. . . Existential concreteness. Receptivity to what is— not something to achieve, but self-emptying.*”



August 9

A conversation:

Come Holy Spirit come.

I am here. Breathe me in.

Help me receive.

Let me carry you and everything before you this day.

Something in me rises up to protest, to need to actively prepare.

For what? For the unknown?

No, it's the imagined future that haunts me, what I fear.

So the unknown and being unknowing might be more restful.

Oh yes, especially trusting Your ways, your intervention.

So let me be between, inter-vening.

Yes, my shield and protector, the One who goes before.

You surrender leadership?

Gladly, though it is unnatural for me.

Take my hand.

August 17

My desire is to be wholly at God's disposal. How this relates to a sense of "agency" I do not know, but somehow I believe that who I am and what I desire are both empowered by God. That which is conscious in me derives from that source. What I hope for is not *self*-consciousness, but complete identification with God's desires and will.

On a practical level, this means listening. Staying awake to what is. Being alive! And yet at rest. The still woman moving.

August 19

Awakening this morning to Don's musing about art and his place in that world—looking at the book his sister sent him for his 80th birthday and remembering his relationship to the world of art in the 1960s. I see Don as an observer with trenchant commentary, always viewing from a broader and deeper angle. He speaks of conceptualizing and remembers conceptual art. Anyway, after a few minutes he pauses and *thanks* me for our conversation! I am thankful for all I do not fully understand in him. He is not prosaic and boxed into an easily delineated entity. He is elusive, defying categories. I have not *begun* to fully appreciate this person he is.

August 24

It felt good just now to confess to Don two things: (1) that I don't know how to launch a website for his poetry and (2) I'm at sixes and sevens in my own life and its meaning just now. I felt comforted by his acceptance of that "burden" I carry. So Jesus, that is what I bring to you. I very much want to awaken to my own life, and its meaning at this stage. It really *does* feel like an *adjustment* is needed as I age palpably. And I long for some sense of meaning—including the miniscule aspects of awakening to sunshine and the shadow patterns on the Poustinia door. Oh *yes*.

August 25

So later yesterday I went for a walk to the pond and had a serendipitous encounter with a woman who paused to talk with me. . .and who might open a door to tech support for that website! Who knew?

Later I went to a darker place—a place where there are few words I care to express here. Some kind of light that often gets turned on seems extinguished or unavailable or perhaps only unplugged from its source. Whatever the case may be, I wish for relief, and until that comes, I need strength to bear it and continue trusting God who is light and in whom is no darkness. I have fears. They eat away inside me. . .

"I need Your presence every passing hour."

August 26

What a difference a day makes! Just the time spent "back in the work" of Life/Work Direction lifted my spirits. Sharing with the Walkers, especially. There is such concord there.

My chance meeting yesterday led me to a website developer who met our exact needs—and at a reasonable cost.

September 1 – *On Sisters Retreat at Spirit Fire*

The quiet was deep, and easy to sink into without effort or blockage. I realize I love these Sisters and feel freedom in their presence.

Why I am here—to what new purpose—remains a mystery. I hear the cicadas and the creatures of the forest. . . a rare treat for me as so city-encased. Perhaps I shall learn listening to these sounds, more powerful than my meandering mind!

To rest in trust, so shall God lead me through these days. I am not to plan or organize or engineer.

September 2

I do not have much with me to read. I seem to have come to listen to You these days in other ways. The cricket chirping nearby, the sun on the back of my neck, the rustle of leaves in the woods beside me, the hum of insects. . . and also I see you in the luxuriant green of the forest and feel the soft touch of the wind. I see the moving shadows of clouds, reflected in the grass. Can You speak to me in these kinds of words that get blotted out in urban life?

It was a wonder in the night to see the night sky—clouds and then stars—and to just *hear* the stillness. The city is rarely quiet and air conditioners compound the noise with their constant whine. I have longed for nature and here, at last, I find myself and in relationship to the Creator. How rare this is in so many parts of our world today. And no wonder there is nostalgia for persons who remember country life—and for me, so much time each year was spent in camp as a young person—and in a tent!

But today, I nestle in the luxury of a return. . . It occurs to me: I have such a rich inner life, but oddly enough, an impoverished outer life, so clogged with sound and sight and smell—all man-made!

When all at once I saw a crowd. . . of golden. . . “ not daffodils, but prosaic ubiquitous *goldenrods!* And how golden they gleamed in the early morning sun.

I looked, and looked, and looked again, and each time I saw something new. The sunlight illumined each flower, and each one differently. And the flowers began to sway and dance and then become still. Sometimes the intensity of the golden flame was more than I could bear. I knew that on another time with my camera, I would have wanted to capture the image, but now. . . this morning, I had to simply hold the image in my heart. Suddenly the little patch of flowers became an altar and I knew I was at worship. Moment by moment, I would become aware of a single stalk, or I came across a single Queen Anne’s lace. The flowers seemed to be talking to one another, but aware of me—listening. They would sometimes bow, or bend, and occasionally stand straight and still. We were so much *together*.

Thank You. . . I heard you.

And then, I opened to Psalm 11: *“In the Beloved do I make my retreat.”*

September 4

I awaken early, warmed by an extra comforter—a solid night of sleep unlike the night before when I was so cold and full of discourse! A moment standing in the meadow before the goldenrod in morning sun is sufficient to bring me into Presence.

I cherish the moment in the group yesterday afternoon—of oneness with everyone, a oneness beyond thought and also beyond or below feeling.

For the first time then I was not as focused on going home. I was *here*! The key is being present. Always! I still feel it within at 7 o'clock in the morning. I awoke early, having had a full sleep. Meet me here, Father, lover of my soul.



September 14

Richard Faxon would remind us of his birthday today and that it is Holy Cross Day and how he shouldered that burden all his life “not getting past Good Friday” he would say.

This morning, talking with Don on his Last Day as Being 79! I was struggling to get through a certain degree of angst about these next four days, and the celebration of his 80th birthday going on. Then I opened my book of psalms (Nan Merrills’s free interpretation called *Psalms for Praying*) to #32 and had to “acknowledge my shortcomings” lest I “become ill through my defenses” and feel the “heaviness in my heart.”

What are the “faults I must admit to the most High” or the regrets. I have gotten so wound up in planning and setting the stage for this milestone occasion —the mailing about the Don Schatz Leadership Development Fund he established, the “memorable moments” I asked people to share, the slide show to assemble, and the miraculous launching of his website. And now, at this moment, I stumble in making decisions about a *cake*!

So I cry out, “Forgive me, O Comforter” and ask that my Beloved “create a clean heart in me.”

Why am I “overwhelmed by fears: when I need to be “embraced by love” and become “free from distress to *live creatively*.” Don asks that for me as we spoke this morning.

So the prayers of the psalms are mine this morning for Your counsel and “inner peace and wisdom.” I surrender into the hands of the Beloved.

September 24

I ask myself, “Why is it that I have been drawn to reading Merton’s *The Silent Life*, about the monastic life? What is there in the *concept* itself that draws me in this chapter of my/our life? I am finding much that applies to me, as a lay person.

The sentence this morning about how such a life requires both maturity and humility to deal with the *interior life*, not evade it. Well, of course, I respond, the interior life has always been my dominant focus, maybe even too absorbing! Something about the search for the *truth* of the inner life and self attracts me and the resulting *freedom* truth brings.

October 7

I continue absorbed in *The Silent Life* along with the Psalms daily, still looking for clues that will define my life in new ways moving forward. I feel the rhythm of work tasks—and physical movement. I notice an absence of knee pain most of the time, and attribute that in part to being happily engaged usefully. I have “the right amount” of contact with people in spiritual companionship. . . often processing that work during the night when I awaken for a time. I notice slippage in my memory, losing a thought or word. It is momentarily distressing. . . a reminder of being 86. I also am aware of aliveness in my interchange with functionaries like tech support persons on the phone, and revel in them. They often tell me “You made my day!”

October 12

These have been Family Days with Don’s sister and family visiting and the days were surprisingly easy and fruitful and full. I let go of over-planning and “presentation” and simply enjoyed—especially the younger ones, Lauren and Steve. Penny and Stu made it all possible, and observed with joy their own kids relating to us. I could be in the background in a way, yet entering wholeheartedly whenever the impulse arose.

I am thinking a lot—and reading—about the relations that exist in any community, broadly conceived, and that term of “deep mutual respect” arises often, full of meaning for me viscerally. I see this quality arising in so many different relationships.

October 14

Thinking about that phrase from *The Silent Life* about “deep mutual respect.” I see how it refers to a “rhythm” in relationship between solitude and community: being able to be with, and to be apart. This has produced a feeling of equality in my relationships, freeing and wholesome, anxiety-free, trusting.

October 20

I have been struggling these last few days, since my presentation to my Peer Group, knowing I was somewhat incoherent in my talking, and also the instinct to “teach” others is present a lot of the time. I have felt weighed down and this was especially hard for me, having experienced a lot of “weightlessness” spiritually—really a wonderful sense of equanimity, and I wanted to recapture it. I didn’t feel like *talking* about it and even my prayers were just an inner yearning—and wordlessness. I was intent on inner honesty—ruthless and freeing. Then I read Rohr’s meditation yesterday—“A Clod of Earth”—Jung’s quote and felt freed by the sense of descent. The false image of God and of self needed to be broken down in order to be free. It is hard to express cogently, but it relates to St. Therese’s way of utter and instant honesty about being dragged down into protecting my self image and need for others’ love and approval. “There it is again!” I can say, and let it go. To detach in that moment—see reality as it is and in myself and others—receive it all.

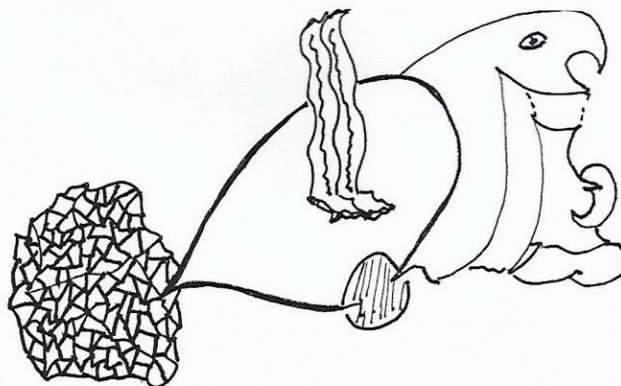
I want that impulse to come to the surface more quickly and naturally (or supernaturally!), to live closer to that sensibility. And not introspect too much about it. Not be such a watch dog!

So today, lean into the tasks (that is the easy part) and remember persons—Don, and co-workers, and all I meet on the street and in e-mails.

October 21

So Brian Murdoch has died. . .at 62. . gone to sleep and now rests in Gods arms. There is a wake tonight and a funeral tomorrow and I don’t know which of them I want to attend, or neither. Why don’t I know? Don asks me, because leaving the house affects him. Such a simple request: what do I want? So often I do not know the answer to that simple question. So much depends on the effect on others, and theirs on me. So I cannot find the inner *want*.

This I take to prayer this morning.



October 24

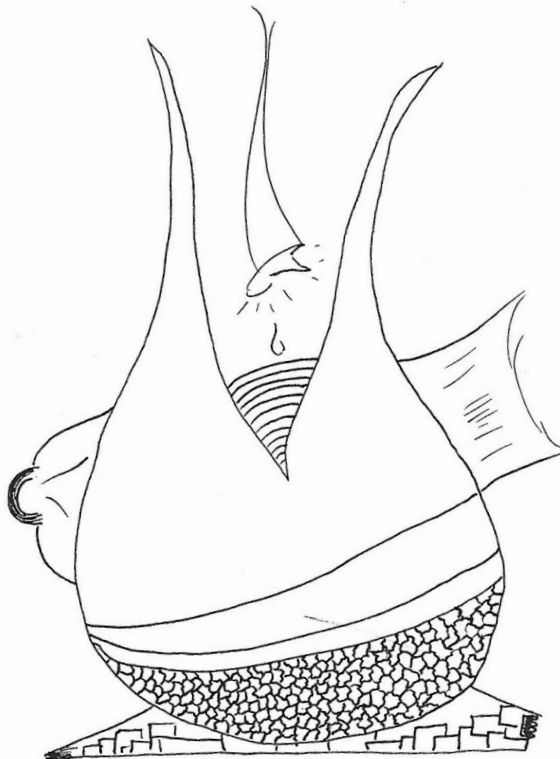
Dream: I am in a small gathering of women—young, affluent and hip. I enter an enclosed space just as they are discussing “church” and I say something, then others do, one by one, and after many have spoken, I add more, having heard the “tenor” of what they said.

Scene change: Emily and I go into the flood waters outside. We have our own connection and can risk the water, she farther out than I. So I head back through the surging waters, she following.

Then we are part of a conference of men and women. Margaret Benefiel is in charge. At the end of the session, she comes forward to announce a deficit that occurred relating to the plumbing and the plumber needed \$100. There were 100 of us present. A plate was passed. I was aware of a gentleman next to me who had a number of checks written out to the sponsoring organization that looked like it spelled Life/Work Direction. At the end, I discovered \$1,010 had been given and I sensed the welling up of generosity from the group gathered.

Then I was back with the small group of women (and men?) and we were to plan a picnic. We talked about the underlying principles in planning this and several were offered, including our wish that it be supportive of church. At one point one of the men questioned if this were to insure a moral standard, with the implication of having a dampening effect. I spoke up quickly and spontaneously and said the right word/concept was “hilarious.”

I awoke with that, aware of my gifts of striking a note that brought things together conceptually through words. I decided the word “hilarious” fit for the conclusion of Life/Work’s appeal letter: *The Lord loves a hilarious giver!*



November 1

I pause—to find the words to say to You, my God. Why do they not flow easily? Am I such a stranger with You? I press into the strangeness, wanting response, and presence, yet somehow afraid of a reality I truly do not know. I hesitate before the familiarity, not sure there is basis for it. I don't want my words to be careless; at the same time I want them to be *carefree*.

I confess I do not know You well and when I think of the future—beyond death (today is All Saints Day and tomorrow All Souls)—I cannot imagine God face to face. God, the unknowable, Source of all that is.

Still, before me lies today, the ticking clock of this day. I need a simple prayer to ground me in the minutes and hours, to simply love from the source, without judgment or hyper *preciousness*.
Unremarkable.

November 2

I linger with that word “unremarkable.” So why do I remark on it? It is my way. This morning I approach You slowly, hesitantly, oddly unsure of where the truth lies, just supple in spirit to receive what You have to give, needing guidance moment by moment.

I am aware of needs of the world outside, some known to me, and many known only abstractly by the news. So as an unremarkable soul, I contact everyone by prayer.

And then there is today and all that is set before me. I can choose, and I can receive the unexpected. Both stretch me in different ways. And I often do not know what I want—what is the deepest way of Your will. I pray my will and yours may unite because I am enfolded in Your love.

The most honest statement I can make? That I am *waiting*.

November 3

What is the journey I have been on—moving from *uniqueness* to *equality* to *unremarkableness*? A journey fitting for me in particular. And today, I find myself gravitating to prayer for *others*, less concerned to pray for myself, perhaps feeling not only an equality of need but perhaps identified with those suffering more, be it persons fleeing from Syrian violence and destruction or someone here mourning the impending loss of a friend who symbolizes an aborted hope for fulfillment.

What is my life with Don to be today? I don't often focus there—on our *unremarkable* life together! But it deserves, and I believe receives, Your loving attention and care. Teach me how to Be with another.

November 4

Simplicity is my word today, and that includes praying for that quality for others as well as for myself.

I feel on the edge of frontiers in many respects. So along with simplicity and “unremarkableness” comes the energy of the *edge*! A certain alertness keeps me from being asleep or hidden or hiding.

“Open statement of the truth.” (II Corinthians 4:2) “Life is at work in us.”

November 7

This morning my heart was gripped by a despair—a disillusionment, a discouragement—and almost a distaste for the God of platitudes or easy answers. I wanted to keep my distance. And at the same time I felt torn by the war being fought in Iraq, full of compassion and sorrow.

I'm missing the lilt, the lift—my eyes to the hills? From whence cometh my health? Help? Oops! Yes, there is dis-ease.

November 14

I expend a lot of energy justifying my situation, my opinion, my point of view. Such a waste of time, when I need to focus on the guts of my present experience this morning as I prepare to attend Peer Group with fears of the journey itself dominant and confusion and struggling with how I don't fit in the group. Such a defensive posture leaves me agitated and lacking in either love or equanimity. Oh to be unremarkable! And free. Dear God, I bring to You the raw reality of who I am at this juncture of my life, ashamed of the state of soul that so easily emerges as dominant. Heal me, steady me, wash me.

November 16

I walk into Psalm 142 this morning, sinking into its words with relief.

*I call to You from the depths of my being. . . I confess the doubts that I feel within. . .
You are my Rock.*

More and more I need that sturdy resting place as I waver and doubt and cannot remember. I am losing things! Too!

Yes, Your presence washes over me, like the ocean lapping the shore.

Can I lie back and let that wave wash me, still me, reassure me?

You are in my understanding. Come to me in the silence, drop pearls of wisdom into my heart.

There is much just now that I do not easily understand and hold in memory. My mind does not work as well. . . sometimes.

Forgive me for every unkind word and thought.

It is the unkind thoughts, because I repress the unkind word. Last night I was able to say what was true for me in the meeting and I think the end results were merciful and healing—all God's doing.

Transform my weaknesses into new life—that I may be a gift of your love to all I meet.

My heart sings at the second line. *Yes* to be a gift of Your love to all I meet! But oh, that gift comes through *weaknesses*, as they are transformed. As always, to be thankful for weakness, not power. Power (confidence) *feels* so good. Can I let it be not the power of self-confidence but the power of truth in acknowledged weakness.

So today, dear God, I go forward in Your strength.

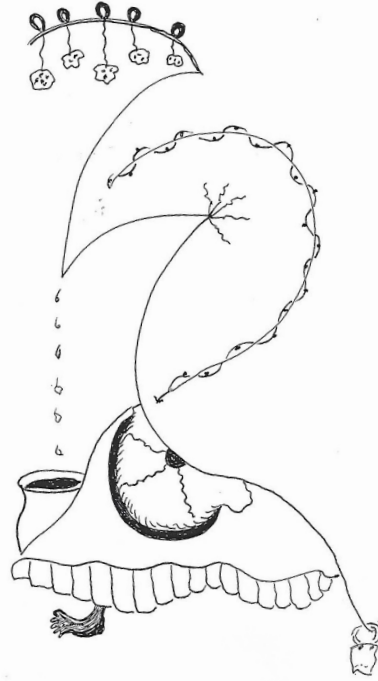
November 25

Today I turn 87. It is just a number really. Not one to make a fuss about. It took a lot to remind Don that it was my birthday!

Simplicity is a good word for this season of my life. I easily get cluttered in my mind. I need space *between* things so I can refresh myself and remain enchanted with the unexpected.

Letting go of anxiety about the little things is another wish. I wonder if I can do that. I often try to teach others to pause and let go of the anxiousness. I will teach it best by my own practice!

I am back in the gospel of John with Vanier. Something about the mystical element in the very embodied Jesus feels like the good balance for me now.



December 7

This tremendous release I felt last evening when Louise turned to Scott and asked, “What you really want— isn’t it—is to have someone else be the head?” That unveiled in an instant what we all recognized. Scott’s gifts are in program creation. We need an executive function guiding us. How this will unfold is uncertain, but the admission of the truth of our situation is liberating and paves the way to receiving God’s answer. This has tremendous implications for the trajectory of my own life, seeing its meaning backwards and ahead. I am so grateful. May God direct us.

December 9

How do I lead by doing my own work? (something our Sisters group has committed ourselves to as we meet each month) I see that I use my sharing time to *process* in the presence of others. It requires open honesty. Asking more penetrating questions. How is this in any way *leading*? It is doing my own work. Do I substitute this open sharing for what I should do more in private? What does it mean to *lead* anyway? Is it humility—leadership as humility?

Then, how do I connect God to the events in my life (the second principle our Sisters group adopted) and not just share stories? What is the place of sharing stories? This is how I learn, by listening to myself speak, tell the story. It seems that *condensing* the telling is important to seeing the God connection. Thoughtful recounting, searching for God’s voice. Otherwise I meander in the details. How useful is it to “enter” another person’s story—asking for *details* and connections, needing to *know* the facts. Not helpful. It stops the connecting the person needs to make herself. Seems like wanting to “solve” the problem. Destroys trust in the person being able to make the God connection.

The issue of assumptions can be a barrier to genuine inquiry.

December 14

The thought occurred to me: Suppose the person I meet with this morning is “drowning” in discouragement. I might ask, “Which do you want—an arm reached down to save you, or someone in the pool with you?” And then I imagined the reply and my response: If “an arm to save,” then Peter trying to walk on water to Jesus and crying ‘Lord, save me’ as he flounders. Or if “in the pool with me” I go to Gethsemane where Jesus asked others to watch and pray and he found them asleep: “Couldn’t you watch with me one hour?”

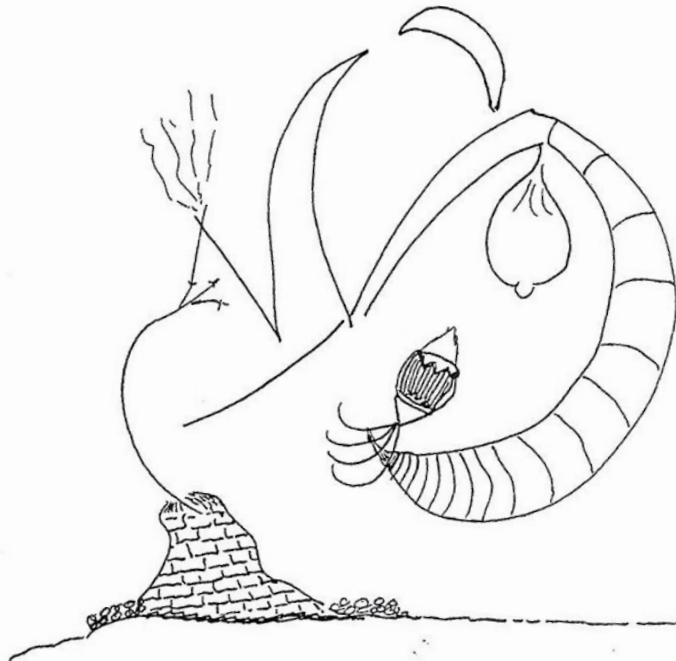
Some of my sensibility this morning relates to all this. I am prone to sink these days. My buoyancy is missing! How I count on that buoyancy! Ah Lord God, You hold me up. Only You.

December 20

I seem to be “channeled” by dreams these nights. Sometimes they are clear and I remember and can read their meaning. At other times I retain only fragments or a “sense” of them.

Last night the first fragment was of me and a young version of my father whom I was facing as I tried to recapture my memory of my father as he was, always older and gray-haired. I wanted to put the two together—this younger version with the old memory. Perhaps I am revising my father connection.

In another fragment I was with a small staff of persons gathered to talk about and proceed with a desired change in our organization. I was concerned both about the pace of change and its content and philosophy. Pretty straightforward application to my present life.



2017

January 8

Ah, the new year has begun. I read over these fall entries just now and can feel the waves as a natural movement like a tide. It doesn't feel disjointed. I feel the pattern underneath. Perhaps all my reading in David Whyte's *Heart Aroused* about order and chaos have helped me see differently and unite the two rather than feel tossed between, valuing one more than the other. Rather, I see that "my times are in Your hand, God." I like seeing the longer view. I suppose that is the way God sees, knowing the end from the beginning, in a way. Is God ever surprised then? Well, yes, in a way, because God is also ever present, in both past and future.

January 23

I have found Rilke to sing with in his "love poems to God". This morning it was:

*We become so accustomed to you,
we no longer look up
when your shadow falls over the book we are reading
and makes it glow. For all things
sing you: at times
we just hear them more clearly.*

So the shadow falls. And then this:

*You are a wheel at which I stand,
whose dark spokes sometimes catch me up,
revolving me nearer to the center.
Then all the work I put my hand to
widens from turn to turn.*

I am so aware today of the work I am looking forward to put my hand to, and how near I must draw to the *center* in order that the work may *widen*—serve a large purpose.

Instructive. Directive. Grounding. "All things sing You." Yes.

January 31

The line from Rilke about the “*partner of her loneliness*” stood out when Sherri read the poem I sent her. This sent me to another Rilke line, how “*love is two solitudes that border and protect each other.*” That word *border* can be both comforting and fraught with fear, reminiscent of the world right now, worried about borders and walls.

This took me to the psalmist’s line about “*the boundaries having fallen to me in pleasant places*” and “*having a goodly heritage*” and musing about the connection between one’s heritage and the place of boundaries creating pleasantness and not fear. And then the “deep mutual respect” that creates the specific *aesthetic distance* in any relationship and perhaps also with God, not suffocating, but supportive. Safe. Generative.

February 3

Talking with Don just now about the list I am making of “What Eunice Does” was enlightening—how my avid desire to communicate and lack of times when this is asked for or desired, means I often interrupt the flow of the day as it takes place, and I lose the attentiveness to the existential moment when a person arrives at the door—because I am squeezing in some excited tale of a book I am reading or TV bit I have heard or other experience I am eager to share and thus I *interrupt the larger flow*.

Ouch. Truth.

February 7

I take pen in hand to encounter the One Who is there for me. Therefore, what follows? I do not know the day in advance. I follow it with a degree of attention and desire. Some apathy too. Some dullness. So I take pen in hand to awaken my senses, to breathe out resistance, and welcome in rest and readiness.

February 15

What do I have to say to God this morning? I wait in quiet for a word. Do I speak? Or listen? To take pen in hand is to do both simultaneously, hoping there is something there in the *ink* to speak through or to me. The force of *word* in my life: is there something behind *word* that I am hoping for, listening for? Some music of soul I sense or crave? To be surrounded rather than to be addressed? Or perhaps infused?

Is the deeper truth that I am afraid of silence—the possibility there is nothing there to be heard? Yet, in silence is often great comfort. The stillness itself is soul-quieting, like “a child on its mother’s breast,” as the psalmist says. Like a child, the only way one “enters the kingdom” as I read just now.



February 20

I am reluctant to put words on the page as I seem to be traversing a wilderness journey of the spirit. I quickly recognize *moods*. . .and reach for the *reasons*. . .so I can eradicate the spirit of heaviness. I seek a way *out* rather than *through*. Am I shadowed by the peculiarly difficult trials of others just now—persons I am meeting with as Companion? Or is it the extraordinary mood of the nation just now under Trump's odd Messianic power? Or am I experiencing something quite different? What are You telling me, Lord God? I am losing a sense of Your presence. How can I live? The question is quite basic that I face today. I need *courage*. . .*heart*. To surrender and trust.

February 21

A day with You has made a difference. I awaken this morning as a thoughtful person awaiting Your touch. I know I need to surrender to the day, not knowing what it will bring, but *trusting*. Can I believe that You are shaping me for some purpose rather than needing to constantly correct my misshapeness! That there is *purpose* awaiting, something I am blind to now. I realize how hard waiting is for me. I love the immediacy, the pounce! The Aha! Waiting—either agitates or I fall asleep. Or rush to some trivial task to help me forget impatience.

March 6

Don and I are beginning a practice of morning meditative quiet each day, just silence for 20 minutes. I want it to knit our hearts. . .to one another and to You.

We have been reading Bernard Henri Levy's *The Genius of Judaism*, and then I took up Thomas Cahill's *The Gift of the Jews*. These two are of great interest to me, recognizing the uniqueness of God's revelation to the Hebrews and through them to the West more generally and profoundly. And this at a time when so many are touching base with the *circle* mentality of the East. Yet we are holding to the idea of the *line* and the sense of *journey and destination* that comes from those Jewish roots.

How do *circle* and *line* intersect? And in the stillness each morning, where am I and where is God if *where* is the right question. Maybe *how* is more to the point.



March 8

I awoke this morning with a series of dark thoughts, and so Don and I talked. . about losing capacity, about the beginning of the new—or is it the end of the old—these things we are doing to make a collage out of the past and hoping it will take us forward.

How do people *forget*—or throw away, or mark, an era? What imprint do I leave behind, and for whom, and more important, *why*?

As I lose capacity, I might use another word—*shed* capacity! A kind of necessary molting in order to make place for a new unknown. Or, more drastic, can I *fling* it off, much as a no-more-needed burden, and feel a bit antic about it, like “*a one-act foolishness or quirk that makes others laugh or weep.*”

(*Celtic Wheel of the Year*)

March 18

What a difference this week has made. Carol’s simple declaration Thursday that “You think like a board member” totally freed me to let go of my staff connection and placed me in a whole new orientation to my place with Life/Work Direction. A burden fell off. I felt exhilarated and free beyond words. I felt the release in my entire body.

And then, words did come, as I recalled my morning reading in *The Testament of Devotion* by Thomas Kelly, and those stirring beginning words, “*Deep within us all. . .there is a sanctuary. . .the Presence. . .the Light within.*” It all welled up and Carol came over to me and knelt by my chair. Embraced by inner knowing, each of us bonded in so many ways and yet individual and free.

I have yet to mine the full significance of this realization.

This morning Don awoke to his own sense of transition. He said, “It is our “Wellesley moment”—referring to our 2007 April walk around the lake on campus when we both acknowledged an opening to a new chapter in our lives, he in his poetry, and I entering Shalem’s Program of Spiritual Guidance.

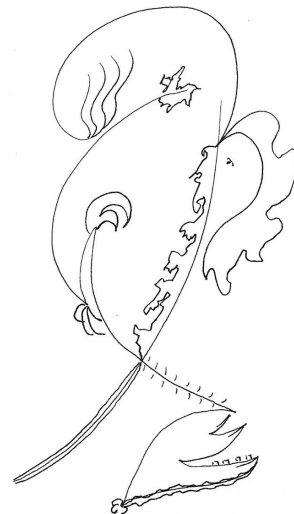
March 25

As I pull out my old files, I try to sift and sort and decide what to do with all this material. I came across a piece on the Examen of Consciousness, and wondered if this was a practice for me just now.

Don and I are beginning to do this in silence together each evening now. . .

March 29

“Blessed are the poor in spirit” was this morning’s word for me. Humility is freeing.



April 3

These sweet morning conversations with Don—even before breakfast!—are opening my eyes to new ways of seeing this decline in my faculties. Like jazz—my mind skips a beat! A nice way to characterize “losing it.”

Also Don’s recounting of an early adolescent experience with an Adlerian therapist where he discovered his *inability* to play a part in a little psychodrama scene. Don has to be who he is. Truth—in its most urgent and bare form.

Then just now, in Psalm 31, the words Jesus quoted on the cross: “Into your hands I commend my spirit.” Yes, I know that at death must come surrender of spirit. But is it not something I need to be learning now—in advance of those “hospice moments”?

Is some of my mind-skipping-the-beat moments perhaps akin to surrender of spirit? The psalm goes on to say, “You have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of *truth*.” And it is truth I seek, always.

Last night’s dream was significant in that respect. Two persons were going away for a period of time and had created an elaborate “explanation”—basically a lie—and then they realized they needed to come clean and tell the person the real situation to whom they had lied. They found that truth-telling profoundly liberating.

I awoke with the feeling in my body and knew the dream was directly for and from me *in the inward parts* where truth is desired.

Don is so much my guide in this just by his BE-ing. May I be married deeply within—and all that means. “You have redeemed me, O God of truth.”

April 7

I detect a clue to my ongoing process in a line from Thomas Kelly’s book:

*Between the relinquished past and the untrodden future stands this holy Now. . .
the dwelling place of God Himself. Now we are at home at last.*

That is the huge point where I am standing—relinquishing the past, and seeing the future as untrodden. *Relinquishing*—yes, while relishing the past. God’s Nowness in my life in the past, and seeing the future as simply *untrodden*, not foreboding.

And feeling *at home* there in the “Eternal Now.”