

~ BURIED LOVE ~

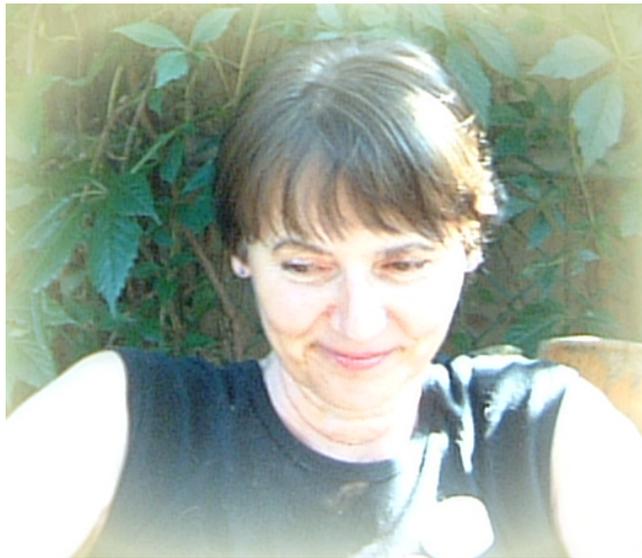


*Confessions of a
Love-Not Junkie*

~ Elsa ~

BURIED LOVE

~ Confessions of a Love-Not Junkie ~



~ An Inner Quest for Buried Love ~

by Elsa

© copyright Elsa Schieder - 2010 - all rights reserved
Publishing House - FlufferDuff Publications, 2010

BURIED LOVE

Confessions of a Love-Not Junkie

~ Part One ~

Buried Love

.

~ Part Two ~

Journeys

.

~ Part Three ~

Magical Thinking?

.

~ Part Four ~

Some Enchanted Evening

.

~ Part Five ~

Bonds, Buttons, Unbuttons

.

~ Part Six ~

Now

.

Heart Breaking Open Wide

~ Part One ~
Buried Love

~ It Starts Here ~ Buried Love ~

There are so many confessions from all kinds of addicts – heroin, crack, sex, love, grass, alcohol. People hooked on too much of something.

My story is different – and what astounds me is that I’ve both known and not known of this just about forever.

I’m a love-not junkie – somehow or other, so long ago that I have no memory of things ever having been different, I got hooked on not loving.

It’s not something I wanted more and more of – in fact, I’ve kept wanting things to change. Love, it’s something I’ve wanted as much as any junkie craves being free from addiction. And yet of course something else keeps them hooked – until something is too much. And even then, most go back, at least for a time. Many keep going back – die from an overdose.

In my case, I could have died of love starvation – not being able to feel love because something had locked up the love feelings.

The rescue has been slow.

The most recent part started when I was left – not because of unlovingness, because of too much anger, years of anger. Anyway that was the reason that showed.

And I came to grief – and tangled in with the grief, love. Like seaweed, far below the surface, invisible from the surface, tangled all together.

**

I’m left with so many questions....

~ Why No Love? And Why No Help? ~

Questions.

In the first place – no questions here – I know why I didn't get help early. I'm a no-problem person. I didn't get hooked on creeps and substances.

Later, when I couldn't really make things work in my life, when I could hold jobs and relationships but felt so much was missing, I dealt with a lot – anger, fear, parents, self-expression – so much, it felt like. But not not-loving, the feeling of never loving, hardly having any feelings of liking and loving.

There was one area where I liked easily – in my teaching. Instead of feeling nothing or boredom, I naturally felt liking – and loved this feeling. But it didn't go far in the rest of my life. Liking did come to the fore again when my partner and I started doing short term rentals – we met people briefly, often got to know them briefly. These people I liked.

Why? In both cases, no fear of being devoured and smothered, no fear of rejection. Instead interest, connection, real talk.

But surely I could have found more of that in life.

And what about love? So much lack of love.

One question: when did it happen?

~ Questions on Love ~

I don't know when things got buried in me. My sense is I was under a year old.

**

I don't know the trigger. But I can't remember back to a feeling of loving.

I know the reality I've experienced. In a way, it's like a person with a spinal cord injury. Everything is there - but there's a disconnection, a gap, perhaps incredibly tiny.

I remember when I was 8, telling my parents I thought they were the best parents in the world. It was something my father cherished, remembered and retold for years. I remember, while I said it, having the awareness of not loving them, not loving. How to say something like that? I had no idea. Most, I knew it would hurt my father. As for fixing things, I didn't have a clue. So why speak?

I don't know how far I want to go today. Maybe this is enough.

Anyway, I have been getting reconnected. Very strange, or rather not strange. Reconnection feels right.

But I go - how could the disconnection have gone on so long? - and not gotten much attention. I noticed it - somewhat. But I don't remember a therapist focusing on it.

And then I ask: would it have helped? Would I have paid attention? And much more, would it have done any good?

**

The right touch – it took the right touch of grief – and over the past nine months, the grief has ebbed and flowed, but stayed, still stays, ready to surface.

And changes happen.

**

I do have help – not words, but body-centered stuff – as if the not-love barrier is buried in the body.

~ *Buried Treasures* ~

Here's a story. A true story I came across in the news, maybe a year or so ago. A story about a treasure buried for thousands of years, and only accidentally discovered, though sitting on display for ages and ages.

A clay statue long kept – I think in a museum – in some fluke got wet. Under a corner of it, gold was revealed. At that, there were x-rays or ultrasounds – anyway, technology was used, and it turned out that below the rough clay statue, was a much more beautiful gold statue.

The people who discovered this – archeologists, I believe – guess that several thousand years ago, this was the most valuable religious object of some group. When marauders came, the priests covered the statue rapidly with clay.

Why was it never uncovered? The assumption: all the priests were murdered, so there was no one left to retrieve it. And the marauders saw a piece of worthless junk, which they left to be buried slowly by sand and debris, not to be discovered for thousands of years, until archeologists went digging. Then they found exactly what the marauders had left behind as worthless.

For them, clay statues counted as buried treasures. They were delighted.

But still they did not uncover the secret. For them the clay figure itself was valuable.

So it's only a fluke that led to what was below.

The archeologists removed the sand and debris. They left the clumsy clay.

I don't mean that gold has more value than clay.

I do mean that the thing so valued by the long-ago group was the golden figure – a golden calf, if I remember right.

So there were buried treasures under the long buried treasure.

**

As for myself, maybe the sand and debris – that was the clutter of things that did get removed when I started paying attention to things not feeling right in my life, and got help. Underneath was, one could say, a clay figure – creativity, writing, idea pieces, more productivity than ever.

I hardly came to love.

I did with animals – and there slowly, in eruptions – as if a part of the golden figure did become visible. And that would stay.

But the biggest part of the gold stayed buried – lovingness, true deep loving feelings for my partner, for anyone.

The clay calf did much. She cared about the world. She thought and wrote. It's just that there was, is, more.

So much more in terms of healing emotions, feelings emotions. Instead, buried love, buried loving feelings.

I feel sadness for how I have lived with others – and with myself. Sadness for the loss of so much time, so much love, so much possibility, years of unlovingness.

**

And I ask: this was screaming out. Why was it not picked out?

~ *Buried Feelings* ~

I think of findings about alcoholic families – that most of the children are traditionally seen as having no problems, as emerging unhurt by their families.

The responsible one takes care of things.

The placater takes care of feelings.

The adjuster goes with the flow

.

The clown takes care of trouble.

Only the rebel is seen as hurt.

Now I'm wondering – not just in alcoholic homes, but in many homes – how many people grow up to live with unlovingness, with buried love, buried feelings?

**

I know my mother did. These last few years, over and over she's said – until memory loss eroded this – that she believes she just can't love.

I understand. She takes care of. But loving feelings got buried. Are they dead? Or just so deep down they've never had the chance to get a breath of air.

**

I think of a book that, as the saying goes, just blew my mind. Facing Shame. Shame – I hadn't thought of that emotion – and then so much erupted in me, the enormity of the sense of shame I've lived with.

**

Unlovingness – that can't erupt in the same way. It's a dead zone. Blankness. So it can't erupt. It's love that can erupt.

And sadness, that has somehow managed to erupt at times – and that can wash away tiny bits of what's covered the love.

~ Part Two ~
Journeys

~ *Inner Journeys* ~

A long time ago someone wrote about taking the road less traveled – and that made all the difference.

Last fall, I took off on a journey, a physical journey, down roads never traveled, to places never traveled. I knew, within minutes of turning down the first road I'd never driven down, that this was the right thing for me to be doing. Day after day, always new places, never seen before. It felt so right.

At the same time I was already on a bumpier journey, an inner one. It's always felt right to be on it. It's felt, in fact, decades overdue. But I hadn't known my way into this journey until I got thrown into it. I had in fact looked to make this journey many times. Had tried to find the door into it – and had gone partway on the roads I found. But I had always come to dead ends. Walls. No further access – as if that was all there was. But it had never felt quite right.

Each bit of a trip had led to all kinds of things, especially creative things and love of animals and thinking things.

But I knew something was missing, something else was possible, should be possible. Stuff to do with love, with loving – and even with warmth toward others, with liking, with liking in an ongoing way.

But how to do it?

I felt, perhaps, like those hundreds of suitors who tried to get to Sleeping Beauty in the hundred years she slept. In the childhood fairy tale I read – a horror story from their side – they had gotten stuck in the wall of thorns outside the castle where she slept. There they had died.

My story. I didn't die - but I knew something was missing - and yet I virtually never talked of this. Maybe with my sister I talked of difficulty in bonding.

But while I deeply explored lots of other things - to do with anger and shame, for example - this is something I rather left alone - though inside me I kept longing for an inner opening.

~ *Feeling Emotions* ~

And then that rupture, unexpected, into grief. And at the same time, I stumbled upon some tools – strange tools – to go further. Maybe a bit like an archeologist finding artifacts of things long buried, then using tools.

Very different from the same things found and taken with no understanding.

But it also hasn't been like an archeologist discovering things. I don't want these things stuck in some museum. I want them – long-buried emotions – to become part of my life, part of me.

The last thing I want is them taken away – going from being buried, to them being distanced in another way.

Yet I want to share – not in a museum, but in a living way.

I want to share the journey, the changes, and maybe most of all, the tools.

The tools:

[EFT, meridian tapping](#) – top of the list– it feels like an archeologist taking away bucket after bucket of sand. (What is tapping? It's easy acupuncture points that help you let go of things – from anger to blocks to procrastinating and onward.)

[Taoist chi exercises](#) – also top of the list – for helping construct a strong inner self through body centered exercises, for being more in the body, and then for connecting with chi (as in Tai Chi – inner vitality).

[The Lefkoe method](#) – for removing some heavy beams (in this case limiting beliefs).

.

Effortless Success – for daily routines on gratitude and appreciation and 5 actions.

**

I don't know how much I'll be writing or how it will flow.

I'm not bringing you along on my journey – I'm 8 months into my journey. I'm sending out a message that this is a better place. If you're on a similar journey or would like to be on one, maybe these are some of the tools you'd like to take along – just like a hiker is more likely to go all the way on a long trek with the right equipment.

I'm not saying this is the best equipment. I am saying it's been doing more, as I experience it, and as others (especially my sister) are telling me, than anything else has managed to do for me – including various talk therapies, even analysis.

~ More Inner Journeying ~

In stories, adventures often happen. The hero or heroine doesn't know what will happen next. Alice falls into Wonderland, meets one magical creature after another. Sinbad the Sailor learns magic words and treasure is revealed. In stories, ogres and other horrible monsters threaten death. Love beckons – and sometimes false love is a horrific trap.

In this story, over the past 8 months, I've been on a roller coaster ride – some of it to do with outside stuff. But much to do with what's happening within. So the outside world could stay unchanged – and I might feel fine about it, I might fall into a week of deep grief, I might be in a gray zone.

The big thing – as with the physical journey I took last fall – I don't quite know where I will be going next.

Last fall, I knew: next is, say, Cape Breton Island. But what exactly will I find there? Where will I stop? What will I see? Whom will I meet? And how will I feel about all that? No idea.

On this journey, I knew: I will use whatever tools I have to get further, to deal with whatever is emerging. I also knew – unlike when on the journey last fall – that there were some things I really wanted to reach, and that reaching them could bring much.

Last fall, though I felt like driving along, say, the Bay of Fundy, it hardly mattered what I saw. And I used no special tools – just a car that drove.

This time, I have much less sense of choosing where I'm going. And I know that, while the journey matters, the destination counts enormously.

Maybe it's a bit like an Easter egg hunt. I've been finding – or rather, mainly

discarding – lots. But there is a big prize, a part of myself, I'm supposed to be able to join with, take with me in the deepest way possible.

Some of the tools – [EFT](#) – have given mainly ways to get rid of some of the briars blocking the way, some of the sand that's covered the prize. The [Taoist exercises](#) have done more of the same – clearing. And also they've been building inner connections.

~ Change ~

Grief – that’s washing away more. And then letting go of grief (not repressing, and also as I’ve found out over and over, not letting go of all the grief, as I’ve kept coming to more) – grief, again, as I was saying – somehow has been crucial.

But what’s brought me to turning points? My biggest sense: it’s cumulative. One change is just one change. But keeping going leads to things looking so different.

One thing comes to mind. Over the past few weeks, with the help of one person, I’ve cleared a room that has been essentially storage for several years. There is still more to do – but now the room is a room. One hour didn’t do it. But 18 hours did it (9 of hers, over 3 mornings, and 9 of mine, working with her).

I have the sense that, in my life, as in that room, there is more to do. But it has become so much more do-able. Instead of heaps of debris, things are sorted. Most of what needed to be thrown out, has been thrown out. And what is left, I can look at, bit by bit – and things will become ever more within reach. Like an awake Sleeping Beauty.

But I don’t know, of course. I have such a tendency to believe things will all turn out well. I want things to turn out well. And I do believe somehow there can be outcomes that are full of love, and more than love – contentment, fulfillment, achievement. But definitely, love.

But I can’t see further than today, not for sure. However, all along, that sense that there can be self-connection and love has pulled me further – like, I imagine, most people going into uncharted areas where there isn’t a certain outcome, but a desire that the outcome be good.

Actually, I think many people who have kept going further have had more than the desire to reach whatever they were reaching for – many, I am sure, were profoundly convinced it could be reached.

~ Water Under Many Bridges ~

Much water under many bridges, but my sense is that much inner flow is happening in me now, a different kind of flow - not just the flow of time.

What strikes me most is how things change within. So much flow, and the sense now of water flowing more rapidly. Definitely not the sense of being stuck - but very much the sense of not knowing where I'm going, as if in a canoe with lots of bends in the river. And yet isn't the river in good part myself? It's all a bit confusing.

~ Daydream? ~

In my 20's and 30's, every now and then, I fell into intense daydreams for a day or two. In them, so much longing. Two people who should have been together not getting together. Such stupid barriers between them which of course neither addressed directly. So much pain and grief ... And finally, they get together, at which point the story stopped. And somehow that final getting together was the least deeply felt part of the story. The rest, so much power, so much pull. Such intense living in those daydreams, while life was so much flatter. Just about nothing felt really right, though there were many good parts to life.

I didn't write that story down - maybe too embarrassing, such a typical "love" story - meaning a story of longing and pain and things blocking two people from being together. Jane Eyre. Gone with the Wind. Villette. The Tenant of Wildfell Hall. I was so gripped by those stories. They were my inner stories.

But the everyday me could not get to those feelings of pain, except through the stories - and feeling along with the stories did not change my own inner landscape.

In other words, I wasn't falling in love, no matter how much I wanted to - not even to feel love and pain.

**

The inner landscape is changing now.

*~ Part Three ~
Magical Thinking?*

~ Magical Thinking vs Stronger Foundations ~

Magical thinking – believing something is so, or will be so, despite the weight of evidence to the contrary. I will walk again – when the spinal cord has been severed. I will recover fully – after the verdict, this cancer will kill you within six weeks.

I came across the term, magical thinking, when I heard Joan Didion read from her book, *The Year of Magical Thinking*, about the year after her husband’s sudden death from a heart attack. She was utterly convinced he would walk back in at any moment through the door. The nurses at the hospital, when they came to comfort her in the waiting room, were convinced she was utterly cold – they could not see that she needed them to leave the room fast, so her husband could walk back in to her.

Another term for magical thinking is wishful thinking – except magical thinking is way stronger. It’s deep belief in something, utter conviction of something.

Another common term for magical thinking is denial, so you could say Joan Didion denied her husband’s death – but that’s such a cold harsh term, and misses a lot. Maybe denial is part of magical thinking, but there’s more. There’s a strong sense of hope, and more than hope, belief, conviction – like conviction something will happen, the cancer will be gone, the treatment will work utterly.

And that is something powerful. Studies have shown that people healed “miraculously” of what was supposed to be terminal cancer at some point came to the utter conviction that they would be healed, and then that they were healed. Was it the mind that did it? Or did the mind just pick up on a change that had happened, would have happened without the conviction? It’s my belief that the inner conviction has something – maybe everything – to do with it.

~ Magical Thinking and Me ~

So, magical thinking – and me.

Has it been that with me? Has it been magical thinking that kept me hoping with Philippe?

I've used the term, denial, frequently. I've recognized that, inside me, I've denied that Philippe is gone for good as a partner. I didn't deny that he had left, had met someone else, that there was good reason for the split-up – reasons like years of anger and stress and negativity. I didn't deny my huge portion of the responsibility for the break-up.

I was unexpectedly, over and over, faced with feelings of sadness, grief. And also love, stirrings of love. And with the sense that there was a good chance we would get back together, in a very different, intensely loving way.

My (perhaps) magical thinking. If the things in me are removed that blocked the love, the love will flow again between us – not just the grief in me, not just the budding love in me – but love will flow between us, strong and mutual.

That was my conviction.

That was not my reason for doing all I could to change the things in me. I didn't like the hardness in my face, I didn't like the hardness in me, the anger, the coldness, the meanness. I didn't want to live like that anymore. I didn't want to be like that. Such a high cost to me – in addition to the high cost to Philippe and things between us.

And suddenly, instead of just not wanting to live like that – because I hadn't wanted it before either – suddenly it was at the forefront, all important.

But back to, magical thinking.

On an intellectual level, I kept the positive image much more neutral – strong mutual love. But on an emotional level, I knew things were different – I had such longing to have what, in a deep way, I had not had, had not been able to have, with all those blockages in me around the flow of love.

The bulk of the work: myself. Meridian tapping. Chi exercises.

Also, I did keep reaching out to Philippe.

The consequence, over and over, in me: the emergence of more grief, unless I denied.

The denial could not last forever. So over and over, more grief.

But along the way, maybe because of all I was doing, inner changes.

~ *Just What Is Magical Thinking?* ~

I still ask: just what is magical thinking? Joan Didion's husband did not walk back in. So it seems that, for her, the magical thinking was just protection - inner protection she needed until she could somehow deal with what had happened.

Maybe something similar happened after my father's death - when I felt his presence near me for the next year or two. He seemed to be beside me. Often he would sit beside me, especially if I sat on a bench overlooking the hills.

Or was that another kind of magical thinking? Did some of him stay near me? I know he would have wanted that. Maybe it happened.

And now, how much is magical thinking?

And how much is just dealing with as much as I can, and some inner part of me protecting me as well as it can?

I don't know.

~ Inner Changes ~

I do know that what I'm reaching for, from deep inside me, is strong mutual love. That isn't magical thinking. For the first time in my life, I can imagine getting married. Not only can I imagine it, in fact, but I desire it. Something has changed inside me.

Part of me is amazed - mainly that I was so different before. Now what is real in me seems like it should have been real forever.

So anyway, magical thinking - and then living from deep inside. Not easy, figuring out what is what.

~ When Is It Magical Thinking? ~

More questions on, when is it magical thinking? Joan Didion expected her husband, alive, to walk in through the door. But he was dead. Magical thinking.

I didn't expect my father to come back, alive. But, without trying for this, I felt my father beside me. Maybe a delusion or illusion. Or maybe he was, in some way, there. It had nothing to do with thinking or wishing or wanting.

Actually I did wish and want that we had gotten even closer before his death. The last six months, we had spent more time together than in the past six years. I had the first holiday with my parents since leaving home. But I certainly did wish for and want more.

Most, though, the sense of his being there came from my sense of him – that he wanted the closeness as I wanted it. The time together.

So when is it magical thinking? My self-work didn't have to do with magical thinking. I deeply knew that, if I did not change, another relationship would have lots of the same limitations, in terms of my feelings. So lots could be different – but something fundamental would be unchanged – something not just fundamental, but also something not-me, something that did not feel like it should be there, had to be there.

But when it came to the hope for reconnection with Philippe – as a loving couple – was that magical thinking?

There were strong elements of hoping, I am sure.

But was it magical thinking – meaning, something was dead and I believed it alive?

~ Was It Magical Thinking? ~

There was never – as I experienced it, anyway – a total rejection from Philippe, and also I never had a sense that he had found a true soulmate, a true full match, in the woman he went to. As he himself often said, something was missing, something he had had with me – but something else was there, something that had been missing with me.

My changes, the ones I wanted in me – maybe they would bring me closer to having those qualities. But, much more, they were fundamentally hungered for by me, to feed the starved and starving parts of myself.

So, inside me the jury is out – no decision, yet anyway – on if I've been dealing with magical thinking, if I've been caught in the spell of magical thinking.

I know I've been incapable of giving up hope, and more, have not wanted to give up hope. I've also done some looking – online dating sites, offline singles groups. And I've done some meeting.

I will find out what happens with me, where my emotions flow.

**

I have a kind of sense that it's my heart that will decide for me, that just as I couldn't reach it, force it to love when things were so blocked, now I won't be able to stop it from feeling, from loving in some strong direction.

Strong loving – that isn't some desperate in-love clutching, but a healthy mutual loving. Anyway, that is what it feels to me – as if I'm on the edge of something, on the edge of something to be happening soon.

I've felt that kind of out-of-control-but-it-feels-right thing a couple of times before – both times to do with love, things happening around the heart and attraction.

**

So why, you may ask, if I've been there before, have I been doing so much inner work this past half year (and even longer)? The other times, I went as far as I could – but in many ways, not far at all, just further.

This past half year, I've been on the biggest clearing and reconstruction project of my life. Why? Obviously I had the sense of so much more to do.

It will always, of course, be an ongoing project.

But according to my inner self – or it could be my magical thinking – so much has happened and much more will happen in the close future. That could just be from the crazy hopeful side of myself. Arguing about it wouldn't make sense. The only thing that makes sense to me is going on.

~ It Could Be Magical Thinking ~

If the hope about Philippe could easily be classified as magical thinking, what about my profound conviction that the other desired changes are possible? Isn't that magical thinking, that I can get down to the buried treasure, that there is a buried treasure, that that part of me is alive, that I can live in a way I have no memory of ever having lived?

There's no evidence I can do it, nothing in the past has managed to get the job done, the job of really letting the lovingness flow fully - no matter how much I've wanted this. So isn't this even worse, totally nutty thinking?

Maybe. I don't care, actually. I'm glad I have the conviction I can do this - though I've also had to work against despair, the sense that it's hopeless, nothing will do it, and nothing will work out with anyone anyway.

I've used my new tools, kept using them, reached for more.

And I will say, what have I got to lose? I have everything to lose - or anyway, i will continue losing - if I don't make it, if most of the loving feelings stay buried.

So who cares, if it's magical thinking, or something based on truth, a deep inner truth?

It's like those given a terminal diagnosis, who yet keep on searching for a solution, a way out. What have they got to lose?

The only thing - sometimes there are horrible reactions to experimental drugs, sometimes quality time is lost.

That isn't a cost I've had to face. No experimental drugs. No drugs of any kind. And hardly any expense - a few online courses costing a few hundred dollars each, max. Lots has been totally free.

But maybe I've wasted my time.

No waste - it's what I've wanted to do. The waste, I'd say, is the time lived far less fully.

Or, everything is a gamble, and this is a gamble everything in me has wanted to take, is still committed to taking as far as I can get.

~ Magical Thinking vs Stronger Foundations ~

I started with: magical thinking vs stronger foundations. And I haven't ever come to stronger foundations. I think it's because I've been dealing with stuff where I didn't have stronger foundations - lots of nice clear facts and stats.

I have had conviction, desire, belief. I have had tools that promised to deliver amazing results - and these tools came from people with credibility. Plus, in small ways from the start, I could feel results. So I suppose that's more than magical thinking.

One magical thinking part: the conviction - not constant, but strong enough - that this would work, I could reach for this thing I was reaching for.

The most magical part of the thinking - the deeply rooted belief, torn out several times but emerging over and over, like an incredibly hardy plant that will not be rooted out - that my changing would bring Philippe back. Painful that that is not happening.

The other part of the magical thinking - that I could reach the inner changes I so much desired - in other words stuff relying only on me, that I have found easier to achieve. Amazing - to have been stuck all life, and that it is possible to change that.

Yet still, sadness as well as happiness and gratitude.

~ Early Stages ~

This is not the beginning of this story, the story to opening the heart to full loving, strong mutual love and desire.

Fifteen years ago, the end of a six-month love brought something I might have expected – grief, very deep grief. It also brought about an opening to poems of love, longing, love – to spoken word and songs, to feelings in words.

Later, with Philippe, sometimes, not quite able to feel the feelings of love, I would still hear the words. So strange – to get something partly, to have the words only partly connected – a bit like someone hearing sounds of life after an earthquake that has buried so many. Yes, there is life here, life and liking and love. In this case, the poems had a strong life of their own – but what they were connected to could only partly surface.

In part, I didn't get help reaching down to where the words were coming from. Philippe was angry – so what, these words? so what, they were not the reality.

And I didn't bring the poems elsewhere – to some other potential help – with my desire: how do I connect these words to the feelings below? how do I make this fully real? In a way, the words are real, describe reality – but it's a reality lived behind a veil, buried under sand and debris.

So the poems were not used as signs of life. They were just taken as what they also were – things alive in their own right.

~ More Stages ~

Perhaps six years ago, there was another rupture from deep below. Fluffers, a dog I loved, was hit by a car and killed. So much intense grief. Within days, the first chapters of The Fluffers Book wrote themselves.

A month before that, my father died suddenly. The project I was working on – on Home – suddenly changed, was enormously enriched by all that came up, all that would not have come except for the grief of the loss.

**

Further back, much further, I got a fortune cookie: “In love you could shine like a brilliant star.” Everything in me longed for that, for shining in love like a brilliant star. I knew I wasn’t doing it. I longed utterly.

So much longing, all my life, for love.

Not much of a sense of a map, how to get there from here – and not much sense that there was stuff in me, stuff to do with loving, that was broken, hurt, buried.

**

This could make me despair. It also gives me reason to hope.

I realize I’ve had inner changes, profound ones before – like an archeologist who has found riches, and is convinced there is more. It just feels like more riches should be there. The old finds – those are evidence. Plus, maybe most – there’s the feeling that those riches are there, almost in reach.

Each time changes happened, I've come out with more, more of myself. So why not, this time, now that I have more tools than ever, and again with a deep grief, should I not be able to get what is such an ordinary prize, full mutual loving.

~ Part Four ~
Some Enchanted Evening

~ *Some Enchanted Evening?* ~

Almost a month has gone by.

So much has changed over the past month. So much of the inner landscape.

On the outside, nothing, or nothing much. No new love. No big disruption.

But inside, the songs in my head are different - with the lyrics usually frustratingly in the background.

Still, the words go, *Some Enchanted Evening* (some enchanted evening, you will meet your true love) instead of, *This Nearly Was Mine* (one promise of paradise, this nearly was mine).

~ *Wishing and Hoping* ~

This morning, I'm hearing something upbeat ... something like ... Hoping and Dreaming ...

and I just went on Google, put "hoping and dreaming" in the search window, and right there, up popped the start of the full lyrics:

Dusty Springfield - Wishing And Hoping

Wishing and hoping and thinking and praying,
planning and dreaming each night of his charms
that won't get you into his arms ...

And from there, just following a few more links, on a site selling ringtones, I find the full lyrics ...

Wishing and hoping and
thinking and praying,
planning and dreaming
 each night of his charms
 that won't get you into his arms
So if you're looking to find love
you can share, all you gotta do,
is hold him and kiss him, and love him
and show him that you care

Show him that you care just for him,
do the things that he likes to do,
wear your hair just for him,
'cause you won't get him,
 thinking and a praying

wishing and a hoping

Just wishing and hoping and
thinking and praying
and planning and dreaming
his kisses will start...

that won't get you into his heart...

So if you're thinking how great true love is
all you gotta do is...

Hold him and kiss him
and squeeze him and love him
just do it and
after you do, you will be his

Show him that you care just for him,
do the things that he likes to do,
wear your hair just for him,
'cause you won't get him
thinking and a praying
wishing an a hoping

Just wishing and hoping and
thinking and praying
planning and dreaming
his kisses will start...

that won't get you into his heart

So if you're thinking how great true love is
all you gotta do.....

Is hold him and kiss him
and squeeze him and love him
just do it and after you do
you will be his....
you will be his.....
you..will..be..his.....

**

Hmmm ... interesting, is all I can say ...

Take action ... In crude terms, hold and kiss and show ... don't just hope and dream.

Hmmm ... that takes me in quite a different direction.

And I come to no words, for a moment anyway. And to gratitude to the world wide web, and the urge to make money - in this case by getting me to download a special ringtone - and in order to lure me to the ringtone (which I had no urge to buy), to post the lyrics, and in this way I could come to the words of this song just out of reach in my mind.

~ *Where?* ~

Where is the inner truth, I ask myself? In the happiness of the song inside me? Or in the full song it brought me to, when I looked further?

Because the two messages are so different. The song faintly inside me is a happy one – just very happy. The full lyrics, though, say: wishing and hoping won't do it, reach for him, hug him and kiss him ...

But reach for whom?

I've been leaving grief behind this past month – and with grief, longing for the one who left almost a year ago now.

But right now there's no one else I want in my life, want to make a life with.

~ *Grace* ~

I know what I started wanting to write about: GRACE, the sudden movement from inner pain to the pain gone.

Grace.

Eckhard Tolle – now a big leader in the spiritual growth world, going from years of depression to sudden (my word) grace. Depression gone, inner peace, living in a happy flowing here and now.

Byron Katie – again a big leader in the inner growth world, going from decades of utter despair and addiction, inner doom and gloom, to awakening to another reality – all of a sudden. Depression gone, forever. Thoughts changed. Grace. And then, she became a teacher of her revelation.

I think also of the slave trader who wrote Amazing Grace after his inner awakening. He became – I believe – a Quaker minister and outspoken abolitionist (anti-slavery):

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost
Now am found
Was blind, but now I see

Amazing grace ...

~ The Joy, Not the Thing, is the Point ~

A quote, from the Oprah site:

“To attract something that you want, become as joyful as you think that thing would make you. The joy, not the thing, is the point.”

Martha Beck

Here’s another way of saying something similar but also different: fake it until you make it.

I know that faking anger can make you feel angry.

Faking love and joy? It doesn’t work as well, in my experience.

Becoming joyful and loving? I’ve been doing a lot on heart opening wide ... but now it’s later in the day, the day has slipped by and I’m feeling a bit discouraged.

But to go back to the quote: I’ve been working on changing myself, not to attract love, but just because I wanted to be more fully myself.

Will that be more likely to attract love to me?

I don’t know.

Moods – such unstable things, often. Even when they feel so strong and sturdy as I live them. It feels: all is well inside me. And then that shifts.

For today, enough.

But much feels as if it’s shifted over the past month.

Most, instead of grief so near, ready to emerge so easily, it feels as if the grief is fading, maybe drying up – just a puddle here and there. At least that’s what it feels like at the moment.

**

It’s Friday evening – spring – early May. I’m alone – except for my animals and, this weekend, my mother with her memory loss.

Heart opening wide? Not much today.

~ What Do I Want? ~

What do I want? Grace is one way of saying it. Magic is another. Arrival, breakthrough, happily loving and reaching. I want to get through all those doorways, outside the cave, into a life right for me.

Open sesame. Delight – today, on a cold May day, delight seems both utterly impossible and yet also reachable. There is in me someone everlastingly optimistic. She just hasn't been able to go from optimistic to succeeding. But she knows there's a way. And today I've done a lot – in terms of my site, with more planned.

On love? Chi exercises. Strengthening. Also listening to an interview on understanding men – interesting stuff.

Of course I also know that people with a tiny fraction of my knowing are way ahead in terms of succeeding. Be that as it may ...

I would very much welcome grace – without the stage of going to sleep in a heap of utter desperation and misery – instead I've love grace from working on and on, chipping away, opening as much as I can ...

**

That's it, what I want. I have a desire for grace – a gift, perhaps from myself, also from outside me – the right person, the right people, doors opening. Magic, or the feeling of magic, anyway.

~ Love Flow? ~

Loving. I'm feeling a flow of loving some of these days.

A good feeling. I took a chi course last fall where heart opening was in the seventh week of an eight-week course. Why so late? That was my inner cry. The course notes explained why: for many people, to have these exercises any earlier made them love in a dangerous way – ungrounded, not centered, not aware of other aspects of the self or the world around them.

I thought of those people – so different from me.

Now, heart opening, love flow – easy these days – but still with much sadness mixed in. I feel love. I'm not in an unloving relationship. But not in a loving one either. Sadness.

I think the sadness also links with longing for the past relationship, for what some part of me experiences (still?) as the potential within it.

**

I think of love and see myself at la Peyriere, the place in Provence where Philippe is now, which we once had together – instead of seeing myself where I am, at the country in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. No matter how much I love it here, no matter how much I love this home – I long for love.

~ *Always, Sometimes* ~

Two days have passed. Now I'm having lunch alone at a restaurant in Montreal.
Words are going through my head.

always
life is with me always
life flowing
always
 always

sometimes
love is with me sometimes
sadness sometimes
 sometimes

always
hope is somewhere sometimes
it could even be always
but I can't feel it
 always

sometimes
I'm hoping sometimes
to have love always
to feel love always

but sometimes
the sun is shining sometimes
rain is falling sometimes
I'm longing
 more than sometimes

always
things in me always
all days
things in me always

sometimes
changes sometimes
and always
not the same
always

sometimes
things in me sometimes
things change always
and sometimes things fine

sometimes
things fine sometimes
divine sometimes
sunshine sometimes

always
things change always
day by day
things change

always
sometimes
always

*~ Journey into Loving? ~
or Mish-Moshed Cables Forever*

The image in my mind: lots of cables on the floor – like when musicians are setting up for a performance – the cables all connecting to each other, all needing to be properly connected for the lights to go on, the sound to function, everything to work.

Any mish-mosh – and nothing may happen.

Or if a cable is connected to the wrong place, then when the light switch is flipped, the sound may go on.

Mish-mosh.

Why this?

Such a muddle with Philippe.

If he were here, there would not – based on the evidence of memories – be closeness, the feeling of loving closeness. He would be working. Or even if we sitting having coffee, what comes up is a sense of neutrality, not warmth and love, connection.

Yet, now that he's with Sylvie, I ache, I hurt, I long ... but for what?

Stupid misconnected cables.

They make me feel that if he were here, there would be closeness.

Or they don't even tell me that. I long for him, for love, for closeness.

But how can I have what I'm longing for? And why am I longing when he's away, and actually not just away physically, but truly away (because he's often been away, working on something, and this longing didn't come up)?

~ *Bali Hi* ~

I'll start with, why am I longing when he's with Sylvie?

In my mind, I've been hearing Bali Hi, from South Pacific, a musical from the forties, for the past few days. It's the third song from that musical to play in my mind these past months. First, This Nearly Was Mine. Then, Some Enchanted Evening.

Right now, words from Bali Hi ...

my own special home ...

More and more, that song is playing in my head ...

special island
where the sun meets the sea
my own special island
come to me, come to me

bali hi, bali hi, bali hi

come to me, come to me ...

**

The first song that played in my head

this promise of paradise
this nearly was mine
close to my heart he came
only to fly away

only to fly astray

this promise of paradise
this nearly was mine ...

**

Then, weeks later -

some enchanted evening
you may find your true love
you may find your true love

you may see her laughing
across a crowded room

never let her go
never let her go

**

And now ...

bali hi
special island
come to me, come to me

**

It's not about losing or loving - but about a special place, magical. Of course it's
a place of love - beauty and tranquillity and love.

In my mind the words are clear.

It's not about my traveling to any place,

but of my calling the place -

come to me, come to me
my own special home

But why is so much aching connected with anything to do with Philippe, now that he's with someone else? I love the sound of his voice, sounding so warm, connected, caring ...

I feel warmth inside me.

Sure, I'm doing the heart opening stuff now,

but my heart could be opening to others. That would make more sense.

~ Love and Loss ~

All my life, there's been an especially strong flow when there is loss. Maybe it's only when there's loss that something gets turned on. Those misconnected cables, again.

I remember coming to love Brandy, my first dog as an adult, most of all in her last two years, when she had cancer. Actually I remember some love feelings before that, more and more love being turned on. But such a flow, an open flow, from the time of knowing she had cancer, and that even with surgery it was likely to recur.

Five surgeries. So much love.

I didn't need any fear of loss to get the love flow happening with the next dog who touched my heart in a big way, Fluffers.

But there was loss with another dog, a puppy I gave away and only then came to recognize how hugely I loved her. Blaze.

There's someone I loved briefly - always knowing he felt much uncertainty. Imminent loss was always close.

Philippe - arteries flowing with love were soon clogged with anger.

So now, what is happening?

Is it that, as other things get flushed away, the love feelings can flow as they would have flowed all along, had the arteries not been clogged up?

In that case, I'm not dealing with messed-up cables, wrongly plugged cables – but with stuff jamming the cables so the current can't get through – massive jagged plaque, so the merest trickle of life juice can get anywhere.

And then such a reservoir of ... what?

Blood clots if it can't flow.

Does loss act like aspirin? – stopping the clotting?

Does it even do more? – does it undo clots, so the dissolving clots turn back to blood, to love blood flowing in the veins? Except the landscape has altered.

I have no idea, says one inner voice.

~ The Power of Loss ~

But my sense is loss does act, in me, as a de-clotting agent. So, suddenly things get transmitted through cables that didn't seem to have any use, were just lying around with loads of other cables.

And then, with no one doing anything – with no one, say, turning on a love switch – there it is, love flowing, at least in tiny bits, and then more.

Sometimes, especially lately, life has felt like a roller-coaster ride.

But this isn't a roller coaster ride. It's something else. It's a kind of mystery. There's not much concern with whodunit. It's more about how-undo-it.

I hate the tangle of cables. More, I'm tired of it.

But I'm pretty good at untangling wool.

But this isn't some small tangled mess of wool. It's a landscape I know and don't know – large enough that there's much I can't see – and it's changing. I can't predict what I'll find.

This all sounds a bit too sweet to me. I think of all the grief felt since last fall. And now still grief and emptiness and a sense of longing and loss – and warmth.

~ Part Five ~
Bonds, Buttons, Unbuttons

~ Life Continues ~

Three months have passed. This is not where I'd have expected to be, three months ago. Heart aching and open, then. Heart much more closed now. No new love. And little contact with Philippe. Good as it's cut the flow of grief.

But the flow of love? That has also diminished to a trickle.

Work. That's been flowing, somewhat.

I don't know if I'm doing what's best for me.

I started one personal growth thing – and then pulled out. It didn't feel quite right to me. Something closed in me. I also stopped doing lots of tapping.

Just a rest?

Or self-sabotage?

I do some things. Meditate. Walk the dogs. And now I've just started listening to more personal growth interviews.

I know what I long for. The right helping hand – like a mother holds a child's hand, so the child feels safe and secure crossing the road. I'm not a child. I still have that child's longing. But have no sense of a hand I can depend on, trust fully.

I wish I could end this with a happily ever after ending.

Maybe it will come. It hasn't happened yet.

I know what I want. Heart breaking open wide, flowing with love.

Heart breaking open wide – those are the central words from a love song I wrote 15 years ago.

It feels good that, tonight, I've come back to these confessions of a love-not junkie, confessions started with such passion, and left aside when the hope that fueled the writing – hope that deep mutual love was close, almost mine – stayed just that, hope.

I want the happy ending.

Am I keeping myself from it?

Is it close, that mutual love?

~ Underground Bonds ~

Another month has gone by. It's been months since I started. What might I have expected? Some opening of the heart into big love - that was a longing.

Something else - whoops, very interesting slip. Something else has been happening lately. A recognition of deep underground bonds - like an underground river that has shaped much of my life.

I thought I was unbonded to Philippe when he decided to leave. I found that there were deep bonds within me. Much grief.

Many bonds - to him, to places, to the college where I long taught - and maybe very deep down, to my mother.

Those bonds to Philippe - not a great time for them to emerge in me. But I'm grateful to know of them. It's like learning that one can sing or dance - even if it isn't the right time for singing or dancing.

~ More Liking ~

One change that has happened is more liking – or maybe not more liking, but more awareness of feeling liking.

There's a poem I wrote long ago – Heart Breaking Open Wide. I had such a longing for that. Instead, my experience has been of a washing away of what is between me and the heart. Slower. Bit by bit.

I think of the long-ago buried treasure, covered in dried clay, that accidentally got wet, revealing the gold beneath. Well, it's the gold statue beneath that gave the general shape to the clay statue. Down below – a golden calf. Up above – a rough clay calf.

And then I come to my mother.

~ *My Mother* ~

My mother's memory has been fading. Also her personality has been changing. My sister thinks the changes have come because she can't remember, anymore, what she used to resent.

I've noticed something different.

She used to dislike one of my dogs. What a bother, what a pest. Every time she spoke of him, there was active, irritated dislike.

Now she likes the same dog. The dog hasn't changed. She has. Now she's come to see the same dog I see: funny, fun, very alive, playful – and very likable, even lovable.

I don't think the change comes from the loss of certain memories – but from the erosion of parts of her personality, parts like the clay that hid the golden calf. So underneath, the liking always flowed. But it wasn't allowed to surface. Instead, the surface was cluttered with the negatives.

~ *Not an Onion* ~

I'm actively trying to wash off the cumbersome clay.

It's not like with an onion. Because with an onion, once one is past the skin, the outer layers are true onion - and no matter how far one peels, one only comes to more and more onion.

Here the clay and the gold are quite different. The shape of the gold gives shape - but the clay statue is far different from the gold calf.

~ The Underground Flow ~

I've said that I've come increasingly to feel that my life has been shaped by the underground flow, as well as by the surface layer.

~ Generation to Generation ~

I'm going to go back three generations - to my mother's mother's aunt.

When my mother's mother was seven months old, her mother died. For the next seven years, she lived with her father, a pharmacist.

One day, when she was seven, her aunt - my mother's mother's aunt - came to visit. She saw that my mother's mother had pus running from both her ears, though her father was a pharmacist.

That's it, she said to the father, I'm taking her home with me. And she did take her home.

Was she a warm and loving person? Later, when she brought up my mother, yes. But as my mother heard many years later, her beloved great-aunt was quite a rigid and difficult person earlier on. She and the girl she took in did not get along well - they were utterly different. The child was a tomboy, hated frills. My mother's mother's aunt loved nice feminine things.

Yet she never rejected the girl. She did all she could.

Years later, when the girl grew up, married, had a baby and then did not want it, rejected it when it was seven months old, the aunt even took in that baby - my mother. So she took in a seven-month-old baby when she was sixty-five.

Living with that old woman, her great-aunt - those were the best years of my mother's life.

What fueled that woman's doing what she did? - first with her niece, and then with her great-niece? Many others must have seen the little girl with pus running from her ears. No one else interfered.

I think that, deep down, a river of love flowed inside that woman. She never learned to reach the tough little girl. But she never gave up.

As for my mother, she had many hard experiences in her life. Her beloved great-aunt died when my mother was eleven.

My mother had to go back to her mother, who openly rejected her, made it clear she did not want her back. All my mother could say was, "Where should I go? I have nowhere else to go." Her step-father was given to violent rages. It wasn't his fault, everyone said. He had had a massive head injury in the war (World War I, for those interested in dates). He had a steel plate in his head. So, for three years, my mother endured the rages and violence – until finally she ran to the police. He was taken away.

But that brought her no closer to her mother.

And outside there was another war. World War II. My mother lived through the bombing of Vienna. Twice, when she emerged from the basement where she and the others from her building had sheltered, they found that everyone from one of the other buildings on the street was dead. A direct hit.

Anyway, my mother became a beautiful young woman. She married, had children. I am the oldest.

My sense is that, in her own way, she had much that stopped the flow of love, kept it underground. I can't remember any love between her and me. She was definitely never a great listener. Yet she took care – of me, my sister, others.

Why? My guess is that, just as there was underground love feeding the actions of her great-aunt, there was underground love feeding her actions.

And I haven't been that different. I care. I care to reach, to teach, to do good.

Love? I've wanted so desperately to fall in love, to love deeply.

There have been cracks, where love has come to the surface – love for Brandy, my first dog, love for Fluffers, Blaze, Scruffers and some other pets.

There have been flashes of falling in love.

And there have been long stretches of living not feeling love, only feeling the much tougher surface. And yet I would do and act. I cared.

Underneath ... that flowing river. That's my impression, anyway.

~ Self Care ~

One person who had very little care given her, by me, was me. So much easier for me to take care of someone else – especially in my last (quite long) relationship.

I'm not saying, by the way, that I was loving. I took care.

One way the love from below got contaminated by the sludge above was that the care was tainted with anger, frustration.

What happened, these past fifteen years, that in many ways I lived in a home with more harshness directed at me – and more rigid anger in me – than ever before?

Was it that my underground stream of love was much closer to the surface? – that I (without knowing) bonded much more deeply than before?

I had had lots of therapy. I was feeling more. Maybe I bonded more.

It's my guess that this was it.

Maybe also I was at a different phase in my life – a more settling time. But many women don't get there, instead give up on relationships.

So anyway, I'm not at an ending place. I am at a place of recognizing invisible bonds, deep bonds that I didn't recognize existed.

**

There's more. In so many ways, over and over, I did not protect myself. I saw my strength. I didn't act with tender caring – either outward or to myself.

**

And that brings me to something else I have been thinking about. Unbuttons.

~ Unbuttons ~

All of us have heard the phrase: “that really pushes my buttons.” Well, a couple of weeks ago I got an email in which someone, once again, wrote about buttons being pushed and what we should do.

This time I didn’t just nod and go, yes, buttons, so very important.

Instead I was suddenly hit by the thought: what about unbuttons? What about the way we sometimes don’t react when a reaction would be called for, when it would be normal to have some kind of button there, something that responded?

Imagine you put your hand on a hot stove – and don’t react.

**

So my thought: it’s vital to pay attention, not just to buttons, but also to where there are no buttons, where we have no response but from all we know and believe, it might make sense to have a strong response, or some emotional response at least, considering how we’re being treated.

If people can – with no consequence – not take us into account, if they can do things that are, as we know, intended to be hurtful or to anger, and we just take it with no response, it makes sense to ask: what’s going on here? Are we above and beyond?

Or is it that somehow we’ve learned to turn off inner signals about self-care, about its being not-okay for others not to treat us with care.

We may not come across as a doormat at all. I know I don’t. In fact, we may be one of those seemingly strong people who can take anything. But should we – should I – should you – be able to take anything?

Another time, what to do. This time, just notice that, not only may you have buttons that easily get pushed, but there may be an absence of buttons that should be there.

With buttons, we can't help but be conscious of them - so it's pretty easy to at least be aware of them and our over-reaction.

But when it comes to unbuttons, it's different. In my case, my sense is that their unbutton nature was often out of awareness, so choosing (consciously, anyway) to deal with them wasn't an option.

There was stuff I was aware of. There I had choice, and by exercising choices I've often come to other things - unbuttons, frozen areas, and so on.

Most, I remember my surprise at some things that have emerged - unbuttons that turned into somewhat-buttons - and then other things the trail has led to.

~ Part Six ~
Now

~ *Now* ~

Where am I now?

I can't believe the amount of anger I loved - whoops - lived with. But yes, that was a telling slip. I loved with such an admixture of anger that it could be quite a toxic brew.

Also I took so much anger - anger that my partner denied, saw only in me.

In some ways the situation is more difficult right now. It's time to separate who gets what.

At times, in the discussions, I could get angry - or rather, I would have gotten angry.

I've burned with fury in the past - like twenty years ago over stuff with my brother.

This time it's about my contributions in our relationship of fifteen years. We worked so hard, many of those years, from the moment we woke up to the moment we fell asleep, exhausted. How to share what we created when we don't see eye to eye?

The anger button is off.

I'm often tired though. This isn't a fun place to get through.

**

Another button - the shame button - has been largely disabled.

Shame: I'm not ashamed that I felt so much grief for almost a year. I don't experience it as something to be ashamed of.

And I'm not ashamed that I put in so much hard work, without settling who'd get what if things ended.

I do want fairness – and not only want it, but will, I believe, get it. Both of us, I know, have good intentions.

**

I'm not in love. I haven't met anyone that it feels I should be feeling in-love feelings toward but am not.

I don't feel desperate.

**

Maybe for today I'll end at this resting place.

I started with, confessions of a love-not junkie.

Where am I today?

I've been listening to a lot of stuff online – on intuition, on connecting with the fragmented parts of the self. Over and over I hear: if you leave parts caught emotionally in the past, or if you're caught emotionally in things turning out one way or another, you have less power now.

That makes sense to me. If I'm caught in rage at my brother, maybe I will feel more of the power of rage, but I won't feel other sources of power. Also, I will be chained to that anger – the energy won't be available.

Actually, what I remember most about the anger at my brother is that the rage might flood the day. It could be a fabulous fall day – I would be out walking – and the anger would be gripping me.

**

And now?

Not angry.

It feels, heart open – relatively, anyway. So weird – I feel more affection toward Philippe – except when he’s being very angry at me – than I (at least consciously) felt for much of the relationship.

What’s happening? The image I get is of mud being washed off. There’s still mud here and there – and mud is far more useful for growing things, actually, than gold.

I think I’d better not hold on to the image of the golden calf too tightly, too rigidly.

Things feel far more fluid in me.

Maybe this is all an inner illusion – so hard to know – but ...

but I will see.

**

So, a brief taking stock.

The love-not junkie part of me seems to be melting.

The inner experience of things that are happening to me is strengthening – so “healthy buttons” are emerging. One day, out walking the dog, I gasped and gasped again. My breath was taken away, hearing inside me something that had been said to me earlier. It was as if a buried button had just popped out of hiding.

And deep bonds, unfelt, are being felt – where they can also be disentangled, as more stuff comes in, like true un-angry acknowledgement and recognition of the complexity of things that are happening.

We will see what happens.

**

Maybe these confessions of a love-not junkie will end here. Maybe they won't.

What matters most to me is that it's an ongoing story – that I can feel the flow, and maybe even the quickening flow.

~ *Famous Last Words?* ~

I had a book, years ago. Famous Last Words. Brilliant and often funny last words.

I wish I had some words like that.

But this is an ongoing story.

Anything to say? Maybe that if I started a relationship now, it wouldn't start at the same place as fifteen years ago. I'm very aware now, of those underground rivers of feeling, and how they've fed my life, and - my optimistic sense, once more - will feed it more and more.

But even for that, no guarantees.

This isn't a novel. War and Peace. The Tenant of Wildfell Hall. Jane Eyre. Persuasion. Lord of the Rings. A neat ending.

This isn't an advice book. No neat recipe.

I wish us all love, tenderness, gentleness, strength, fulfillment, deep inner connection and also outward connection.

Love, warmth, and all the best,

Elsa

September 5, 2010 ...

and then ... more

~ Memories of Loving ~

Another two months have passed. Fast and slow. Still no big love in my life. Yet tonight, memories. Of loving.

It happened unexpectedly. It was after my first long relationship. The dog stayed with me. Brandy.

And then love came, first just a tiny bit, then ever more. I knew it was love.

Brandy was, I think, five at the time.

Why the sudden love? Was it that she was safe? Was it that she loved and kept loving year after year, even while love wasn't coming back at her?

**

About two years later, when Brandy was seven, she became ill. Mammary gland cancer. Five surgeries over two and a half years. In the end, it was a matter of time. Months, then weeks, then days.

Brandy's final months came at a time I was home, day after day. I had ten months to write my doctoral thesis - from February to the end of November. There was one surgery early on. Then she was fine for months. It was in late summer when I noticed a knob on a hip bone. The cancer had spread.

I have a photo of Brandy on a glorious day in mid-October, lying on the lawn, enjoying the late autumn sunshine.

But it was clearly a matter of time.

I finished my thesis on November 30th. Her last day was December 9th.

I had gone out and bought a tiny plastic Christmas tree a few days earlier. Somehow that mattered to me, enough that I would leave her for an hour. I knew she would not be able to make it to Christmas.

I remember the tiny tree with its tiny lights, and the small decorations I bought.

So much grief. Grief and love. What mattered most to me, on her last day, was that she knew I loved her. Somehow that mattered more than anything. And somehow I did not feel sure she knew. Yes, she knew, I was told. How could she not know?

I am remembering her eyes, eyes that looked deeply into mine.

I spent the day playing Ave Maria for her. I had rarely ever played that song. But somehow I put it on in the morning and Brandy clearly loved it. She breathed deeply, sighed, relaxed completely. When it ended and the next song came on, the peace was broken. So over and over, I played Ave Maria for her.

I knew it was her last day. I had called the vet in the morning. I had painkillers, strong painkillers, but she had clearly not been well the night before, even with them.

It felt to me that it was time, yet I wanted so much to give her more days – but not at the cost of pain I could not make go away with painkillers, strong painkillers.

The vet was wonderful. He would come after his day – and if I changed my mind, felt she was okay to go on for another day, he would come the next day.

But moving was too hard for her. Pain. I did not want to put her through, again, the pain of moving, of going outdoors, even if I was carrying her – not easy, as she was a Doberman, a large dog. Still I had carried her up and down the stairs the last few days.

Maybe I had already let her live too long.

But the time of pain had been short. Lying down, she had seemed fine.

Now her breathing had been labored in the night.

**

I grieved for months. Even months later, when I caught sight of myself in a mirror, tears came – the grief in the eyes of the woman in the mirror bringing forth my grief.

**

And yet I was so grateful to have had Brandy in my life – to have had her love, and to have loved her. The grief was a small payment for the love.

**

There are other animals I have loved since her. Fluffers, another dog. Scruffers, a cat. Blaze – a puppy I gave away, not realizing until too late how much I had come to love her. And, less intensely, other animals.

**

Loving Brandy opened something inside me.

**

Maybe the most important thing it did – in addition to the loving itself – is let me know I could love – that I didn't just long to love. Instead, like the fortune cookie said, "In love you could shine like a brilliant star."

**

So why hasn't it happened as well with people?

There have been bits of loving. In a short relationship before Philippe. And at the start of the relationship with Philippe.

What stopped the love from blossoming the way it did with Brandy?

There's more blocking the way with people.

Brandy loved with an ongoing steady love – something hard for humans to have for another adult human.

Also, once I started feeling love for Brandy, there were none of the obstacles in me that are so easy for me to have around people. I didn't want to improve her. I didn't want things from her that she wouldn't give. So there was no build-up of petty irritations.

**

Anyway, memories of loving.

**

I come once more to an ending place, a beginning place.

Elsa

November 10, 2010

~ A Modern-Day Sleeping Beauty Saga? ~

I don't come to an ending – because there is no neat ending, though I'd love to be able to present a great feel-good ending.

I do come to ...

When I'm feeling good, I feel like a modern-day Sleeping Beauty. Like any modern-day heroine, I haven't just passively waited. I've been trying to hack away some of those thorns keeping people out – and keeping me locked in.

Like a modern-day Sleeping Beauty, I haven't been satisfied enduring a curse, but have done my best to break it. The curse, in this case, isn't from some nasty jealous wicked fairy godmother or step-mother – but from hurt that happened to my mother, to her mother before her, and to who-knows-how-many generations before that. That hurt has been passed on.

Small wonder, unlike Sleeping Beauty, I didn't find True Love at sixteen.

Instead, while the long ago Sleeping Beauty was both sixteen and (after having slept one hundred years, according to the old story) one hundred and sixteen. I'm still younger than one hundred and sixteen – but like many modern-day women seeking love, well over sixteen.

Yet I haven't given up. I want the happy ending.

And like a modern-day Sleeping Beauty, I do what I can to help make it possible. No lying around for a century, sleeping. Instead, there's looking around, reaching out.

I've done way more than inner work. I've been on a couple of big dating sites, on and off, for just about a year now. An interesting experience. You give and get a

lot of information – which means, on both sides, that there’s a lot of weeding out before any meeting – which has its good sides, but also means there can be quite some space between meetings.

There have been a few meetings. No romance.

Most recently, I had a coffee with someone a couple of days ago. I’ll have supper with him in a few days. Who knows? If not him, then someone else. Though some days, it’s hard to believe that someday things will work out with someone.

I feel emotionally ready to connect. My sense is that my antennae are out – which they weren’t a year ago. Then I had more hope of meeting someone quickly – after all, every day new faces popped into my inbox – but also the longing to get back with Philippe.

Why hasn’t anyone come along, swept me off my feet? My sense is that many of those looking – myself included – are also quite hesitant. Plus, since we’re not sixteen, we have so much built – homes we love, for instance. It’s much harder to find someone who fits.

There’s another way of looking at, why hasn’t anyone come along and swept me off my feet? It might be just as good to ask, whatever am I doing, still hoping and trying after all these years?

Maybe I’m caught in the modern myth of “yes, you can have what you want if you just keep trying” – just as nineteenth-century heroines in operas were caught in the myth of “you have to die romantically of TB, on stage, while singing your heart out.” I don’t know.

I’d rather be caught in the myth where there is the possibility of a happy ending – not happily ever after, but living with a lot of deep happiness and connection with others, as well so much else.

Sleeping Beauty – not quite the right model, I see.

Anyway, I wish us all luck in our quests.

And I feel like the last guest at a party, reluctant to go – or the host at a party, saying good-night to the last guest. In my imagining, we're both reluctant to go, to end this connection. But we each have to go, not quite our own separate ways. We can always come back. But this evening, this connection, is over, except for whatever we take with us.

Elsa

November 16, 2010

~ What's in a Name? ~

You see one name on this book. Behind it is an invisible struggle.

I started with ... Confessions of a Love-Not Junkie.

I was told by first one person, then another (the second time, very strongly) that this was not the right title, that it did not fit with who I was - caring, and all kinds of other good things. But I was told, equally strongly, by two other people that it was a great title, that it fit - and that they were not at all put off by it.

So I did a survey, giving a choice of 6 titles. Confessions of a Love-Not Junkie came out way ahead. It was by far the most popular title - the book people would be most likely to buy, according to the findings. Almost 60% gave it a very high rating. None of the other names got a high rating. Most bombed utterly.

There was a question the survey didn't ask: which title most fits the book?

It's someone else (person 5) who brought that up:

"I don't like the love-not junkie concept - I don't think it is descriptive of what you're describing, which sounds more like a return of your heart from a dead state to re-connection with life.... Your title needs to be more congruent with the developmental pathway you have described."

In other words, what title most fits the book? What title most lets people know what the book is about, and also (or otherwise they will ignore it) most pull people to it?

**

And I also think - something I've thought over and over - what am I comfortable with? Do I want to be associated with words like "love-not

junkie", no matter how popular they would be in the title of a book? I've never been fully comfortable with the words.

And that brings me to why one of the people hated the title of the book. He was upset because "the image of a love-not junkie does not fit into my image of the Elsa I think to know ... a most active, thoughtful, caring, loving and respectful personality."

Is the most important thing a catchy title? What about, that it catches the essence of the book (and also the essence of this part of me)?

That's the kind of thing I was thinking when, today, I came across a fascinating study about rats - about the impact of Rat Park on the likelihood of their becoming addicted and on their natural recovery from addiction.

~ What's in a Fact? Like the Rat Park Facts? ~

Rat Park - where everything is set up to give rats pleasure.

And then, the facts.

[A study](#) contrasted what happened to rats living in [Rat Park](#), with rats in a conventional caged environment, when both groups of rats were offered two choices: water, and water mixed with sugar and morphine.

Finding one. Rats in Rat Park tended to just say no - they weren't interested in the addicting brew. Rats in cages became addicts almost instantly.

Another finding was even more interesting to me. Finding two. When addicted rats were moved from their cages and put in Rat Park, they tended to, on their own, become unaddicted. The addiction tended to just fade away. Rat Park offered better pleasures.

What do I take from that?

I think of Brandy, my loving doberman. She was a "Rat Park" for me. Love and more love. And I blossomed (eventually). Actually, the blossoming did not take that long - I think it started less than a year (maybe only a few months) after I came to be alone with her. In other words, there was nothing keeping me in my conventional distance from love.

Then I think about Philippe. So much non-stop happiness, the first months. That slowly faded. There were still glimpses of happiness. Poems of steady love. But ever more anger and frustration. Then years of being closed down to love.

It wasn't a Rat Park environment - for either of us. And my response was very much the response of the caged rats - I was strongly hooked to the way I was feeling, strongly caught in the anger trap. I wanted to change - but could not. In the last few years with Philippe, I especially hated the way most photos showed me - hard, tired, cold, sad, blank. I had never looked worse.

Now my inner sense is that, above all else, I am looking for someone who will give me a safe strong love - in other words, a place where my loving can blossom. (And I've been amazed at how good I've looked on photographs this past half year.)

**

An aside on the name for this book. Should it be: From Buried Love to Rat Park Heaven? The answer is no. But I do need something to really catch what I'm after, and where I came from.

**

It's interesting to me that the study was on rats who were addicted - like I saw my not-loving as an addiction, meaning I was hooked on it somehow, could not pull myself from it.

Unlike addiction, unfortunately, I could not just go to a detox center, and at least get the substance out of my body, even if the craving continued.

**

But back to the big thing from the study: spontaneous healing when the environment is right. That's a huge finding for everyone - showing how much we're affected by the right environment, and can blossom when we get into one that suits us.

A parable about seeds comes to mind, about seeds landing in different places, and how differently they turned out. We're not quite like seeds - there's a lot we can do. We can move, for instance - somewhat, anyway.

But where we are, what's coming at us, is clearly very powerful.

**

And I think of Philippe and myself. I did not get the environment I needed - and neither did he.

And I think of listening I did a few months ago, to interviews about people in relationships healing each other, setting up the relationship so it is a place for healing.

I also think of a process that's supposed to be especially powerful in pulling people away from their addictions by offering them something better - requests for small periods of good times, focus on the good times, loving rewards for the good times. It could be called positive reinforcement. It's supposed to be 6 times as effective as Al-Anon in getting addicts into treatment (60% versus 10%). ([More information here.](#))

I have no idea if Philippe and I had the capacity to move from our trap to mutual love. My sense, from the journey I've been on lately, is that I had it in me. I do have it in me to feel love. I don't know if I had the capacity to give Philippe the loving he needed for his own inner healing.

I know I did want to try - did try somewhat, as I knew about the process, had heard about it and read about it, and was impressed by the findings. Maybe if Philippe had cared to be part of it. Maybe if I had had outside help in implementing it.

**

But that is looking back, wondering about what might have been, could have been.

**

Looking forward. Will I find someone who can give me what I need, a human who can love me strongly and warmly and safely?

~ Once Again, What's In a Name? ~

You know the answer to what name was finally chosen. I don't know it yet.

I know I want something that catches attention and also gives the person browsing an idea of what the book is about.

Right now, I'm thinking:

~ Buried Love ~

Inner Quest for Emotional Healing

Confessions of a Love Not Junkie

I will see.

Or maybe it will be the original title

Confessions of a Love-Not Junkie

The original subtitle was:

Heart Breaking Open Wide

It comes from a poem written years ago:

Heart breaking

Heart breaking

Heart breaking open wide

That's what I want - warm heart-open love.

Elsa

December 6, 2010

For more, come to

~ ***Elsa's Emporium*** ~

<http://elsas-creativity-emporium.com>

Inner Self Blog

[click here](#)

Creativity Blog

[click here](#)

Home Is ...

[what does it mean, to be at home?](#)

Words and Music

[poetry, spoken word, songs](#)

The Idea Emporium

[good thinking on everything,
including good thinking](#)

Zee's Cafe Cafe

[virtual cafe](#)

[words, music, images, ideas](#)

The Fluffers Book

[preteen girl, ghost dog, hit and run,
questions about reality](#)

Contact Elsa

email

zeescafe@zeescafe.com

Information on Teleseminar

[click here](#)

Stay in Touch - Free Updates

[click here](#)

Questions, Comments

[click here](#)

Interview Elsa

[click here](#)

