

Circle of Grandmothers

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A Lifetime of Experience: Elder Women Writers

Editor's Note: In my March column I mentioned the fact that Hedgebrook, a retreat for women writers on Whidbey Island, Washington, is encouraging elder women to apply for residency. While here on the island I visited Hedgebrook again and had lunch with Communications Coordinator Sue Ellen White, who reaffirmed my belief that this is an incredible opportunity for women our age. For this reason I decided the program merited more than one brief paragraph. The following story of two older women writers is excerpted from the July 2000 issue of The Hedgebrook News. Following the story there is a description of the stipend program that can make this a possibility for those of us on a fixed or limited income.

In the past half-century, opportunities for women have dramatically increased, and though some elder women have a later entrance into the writing world, they have brought a wealth of life experience and a spirit of gratitude to their new careers.

This year Hedgebrook has initiated an effort to reach more elder women, and to support that venture by offering a stipend program to enable low-income elders to accept residencies.

Two such women are poet Myra Shapiro and art historian and lecturer Dorothy McCall, both Hedgebrook residents last January. (They) shared their personal stories about evolution as writers and about opportunities such as Hedgebrook that have influenced them.

Myra Shapiro, age sixty-eight, is vibrant, her speech peppered with enthusiastic comments and vivid metaphors. She won an honorable mention in the Allen Ginsberg Poetry Prize, the Dylan Thomas Poetry Award, a Pushcart Prize nomination, and has had an interview on NPR's *Fresh Air*. Her publications include a book of poetry, *I'll See You*

Thursday (Blue Sofa Press, 1996); inclusion in poetry anthologies, including *Best American Poetry 1999* (Scribner), *Outsiders: Poems about Rebels, Exiles and Renegades* (Milkweed Editions, 1999), and *What Rough Beast: Poems at the End of the Century* (Ashland Poetry Press, 1999).



Myra Shapiro

Harvard Review, *Kalliope*, *Calyx*, and *Ohio Review*.

"My first book came out at sixty-three. I am not going to have years and years and years; it's going to be concentrated time, so I have to make things happen more quickly. It's good to be forced to do that," said Myra. Her project at Hedgebrook was prose/memoir pieces that combine to tell the

story of a woman who gave birth to herself at fifty. And, Myra noted, all of her awards and credits have come to her after that age.

Dorothy McCall's project at Hedgebrook was work on a lecture/slide presentation about Norwegians in America from 1825-2000 for a historical society conference. Her awards include the Swedish Bicentennial Award in 1998, King Olav V Award in 1995, and the Norwegian Consulate of New York grant for independent art history research and *Queen Elizabeth II* cruise ship seminar on European emigrants. Dorothy's publications and presentations include "Karin and Carl Larsson: Creators of the Swedish Style" in *Vest Kusten* (Stockholm, 9/15/98), "Scandinavian Arts from the Vikings to the Present," *Humanities West News* magazine in 1996, *On the Wall, In the Mind and Through the Heart*, Hamar Emigrant Museum in Norway, 1994.

At age forty, Dorothy started college and in the ensuing twenty-five years worked as a volunteer art museum docent and obtained a degree in English and a master's degree in history—skills she has brought to her recent career documenting Scandinavian art history. She speaks of this transition with grace and with gratitude in her voice. "This is the first time I've received a writing grant. I'm so thrilled. The Hedgebrook award has opened a door . . . I feel like my writing is accepted. Before my writing was art history, but this validates my personal voice."

Both women started their adult lives with no thought of outside career: marriage, children, homemaking were the accepted women's roles at mid-century. Myra credits the women's movement with making it possible for her to break out of that role, take college classes, and

—Elder Women cont'd on page 6



When the Grandmothers speak, the world will heal.

Judy O's Column

By Judy O'Leary in Tucson

The drums go Bang
And the Cymbals Clang
And the horns
They blaze away*

Yes!

Everything is just marching along towards the Council Gathering October 10-15, 2000 in Oracle, AZ at the C.O.D. Ranch.

I find myself answering the phone, "It's me, is it you"? The surprise response is: Pause, then an answer from new Council applicants and laughs from those who know 'me Irish side'. As of today, Canada, Arizona, California, Alabama, Florida, New Mexico, Texas, Virginia, and Minnesota will be repre-

sented and who knows what the next ring or the next mail will deliver.

The Planning Committee met in July and August and will meet twice in September to carry the theme "the Balancing Act" into our daily schedule, working in new ideas as they come forward and fit 'the balance'. The workshops will include The Nuts and Bolts of Life, Spirituality, Healing, Improvisation, Dancing, Sound, Drumming, and Writing. There will be an Elder Circle and daily small circles. (Again this year we will use the *PeerSpirit* model for our circle experiences, as explicated in *Calling the Circle* by Christina Baldwin. The small book that comes with your registration materials explains all.)

Anticipate time to ride horses, take walks, meditate, visit and of course with

the "Caleigh", an opportunity to show your stuff, serious or silly but shine you can! The traditional Thanks- Giving dinner will be held on Friday, the 13th and the full moon ceremony will follow in the early evening. Our gourmet chef Jackie Blue returns, supported by her sister Robin and Eleanor and Jeff.

There is room! If you have hesitated, aren't sure, want to come, questioning whether ..the answer is yes! Camping at \$365 or Bunkhouse lodging at \$445 includes all meals, snacks, workshops, and activities. E-mail or call for a reservation today. The Council is You and we look forward to the sound of your drums, cymbals and horns.

*Opening lines of Irish marching song "McNamara's Band"



Editors Corner

By Kit Wiolson in Phoenix

What can I say to all of you who are still struggling with the heat, the storms, the fires, and all the other challenges that have been pervasive this summer as global warming becomes a reality.

It's probably not too helpful to report that here I am in Paradise again – Whidbey Island in the summer. Perfect sweatshirt weather. Ducks to tend, an organic garden to water, a Corgi to walk, and a two story magical straw bale house to live in. I sit in the writers aerie, a second floor nook with a view across the Sound to the Olympic mountains. A long black ship laden with red and blue cargo is passing slowly on its journey to open waters and a sail boat, minute in comparison, scuttles out of the way.

When we, as Grandmothers, ask the questions: "How do I speak so the world will heal?" and "How do I bring my wisdom into the world?" many of us think about writing. Who would have dreamed fifteen years ago that we would be computer literate, zipping emails around the world and sitting with our lap tops and Imacs entering our stories into the vast elec-

tronic brain? It seemed appropriate this month to focus on writing and writers. Hence the Hedgebrook article and the story of Ghost Ranch by **Barbara Furniss**. From **Wilma Huggett** a *Childhood Memory* and, from me, a slightly revised copy of an email I sent to John a few weeks back that I've turned into *Stair Story*.

Many of you know by now that our friend **Pauline Mitchell** died on July 3rd, 2000 at 78. A few weeks before she died I was with her in the hospital when she was making the decision about calling Hospice. She looked tired and was being very serious. Then, suddenly, her eyes twinkled and she smiled, lighting up her whole face. "At least I won't have to floss every night anymore", she said. It was so like Pauline. She made that moment of recognition easier for both of us. Her sharp sense of humor always helped the medicine go down.

Pauline spent her last weeks at home, surrounded by her loving family. Close friends came to say goodbye. The old boyfriend she wrote about for the June Newsletter was with her to the end.

Pauline was a loyal supporter of the Grandmothers and the work of the Circle. She brought us love, compassion,

wisdom, and a great generosity of spirit. And so, once again, we must invoke Rumi and say "Out beyond ideas of wrong doing and right doing there is a field" Wait for us, Pauline. We'll meet you there.

Meanwhile **Barrie Ryan** has recovered well from her surgery but is in the midst of chemotherapy which depletes her energy. Her attitude remains positive and she is very grateful to the Grandmothers who continue to support her with love, prayer, and hands on help.

The year 2000 Council of Grandmothers, our annual Gathering, is just around the corner. I'll be there and hope to see many of you. For those who can't attend – send us your energy. You'll be in the circle with us.



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When the Grandmothers speak, the world will heal.

O

Woman

Your Vast Confusions

Are Like A Forest Thick With Trees

Where All Your Doubts Can Haunt You

As Would Specters In The Black Of Night

You Are Lost And Need A Guide

Follow The Woman! The Wise Woman Of The Forest.

Just Ahead! There She Is With Her Lantern Held Up High

Casting A Pool Of Light In The Doubt Darkened Forest

See Her Inky Shadow Crawl Across The Forest Floor

Latched To Her Feet. As She Strides Onward Through The Night

Holding The Lantern So She Might See Her Way

Holding It High To Share The Light That Others Might Follow

Crowd In, O Woman And All Your Sisters, Crowd In Upon Her Wake

Her Shadow Cast By A Lantern Held High

Journey With Her Through The Night. Your Fears Dissolving In The Lantern Glow

Breathe Again And Breathe With Renewed, Free Spirit, You Can Smile

And Laugh

And Sing

You And All The Others.

O

Take Heart

The Coming Dawn Dissolves The Specters

Reveals The Path

You Think To Thank The Woman Wise

Who Guided You Through Your Darkened Night

And So You Touch Her Shoulder In The Early Dawning Light

She Puts Down Her Lantern at the Forest Edge

And Turns and Smiles. Behold! Her Countenance Is Thine!

Your Wisdom Unshackled from the Fear of Stumbling

In the Dark Has Led You To the Dawning Light.

The Universal Truths Learned Through The Night

When Shared Will Be The Sparks Igniting Other Lanterns Held On High

To Chase Away The Dark Imaginings Of Doubt

Creating Paths To Follow Through The Forest Thick With Trees.

Visualized by Judith Toone

Written by B.J. Salterberg

Correction: We are re-printing the above poem due to an omission of four lines in the previous issue. Ed.

A single sparrow sings
His sweet song
To an unhearing world.
Where are all the lines of chatter?
The Maytime immigration
Of flocks of double spear tailed
Doves of summer hopes and joys?
They twirled and danced
Swift diving to deep woodland greens
To soar aloft lost in the blue violet
of arched lilac scented skies.
Early summer brilliance flecked
with diving flashes of forked blue
It's sparrow time.
Except it's gone -
Away to find another sparrow
To weave its' dance of life and hope
Across unseeing hearts.

English Summertime

By Cara Keane

Devon, England

When the Grandmothers speak, the world will heal.

The Artist's Way: Restoring the Soul at New Mexico's Ghost Ranch

By Barbara Furniss, Tucson, Arizona

A neat white sign, almost lost in a vast landscape, assures us that we have arrived at the entrance to the Ghost Ranch Conference and Study Center a few miles beyond the small, old town of Abiquiu, New Mexico, about a two hour drive northwest of Santa Fe.

Soon we are skirting a large green field guarded on three sides by massive red rocks. Sheep are grazing in the field, and we pass low adobe buildings that are scarcely visible against the cliffs. It feels like coming home, for Todd and I have been here many times in the last 24 years. Ranch directors change, programs are added, mattresses and food improve, and through it all the magic holds firm, just like the first time.

New York painter Georgia O'Keeffe found and added to the magic in the 1920's when she visited a dude ranch on the property that was eventually owned and operated by Arthur Pack of Tucson. The new owner called it The Ghost Ranch instead of using the land's earlier Spanish name which carried memories of Indian wars, cattle rustling, and murders. I find it hard to believe that this peaceful landscape has had such a violent past. Today we see it through the sublimely radiant big canvasses of the artist who loved it enough to stay and paint it for more than half a century.

In the 1960's Arthur and Phoebe Pack gave the ranch to the National Presbyterian Church, an astonishingly generous gift of about 23,000 acres along with all of the old adobe structures which comprised the guest and the working ranch. The Church turned it into a summer camp for adults. Before long it evolved into a camp like no other, a place of freedom and inspiration, offering hundreds of week-long seminars in not only theology but paleontology, geology, archeology, the history and plants of New Mexico, yoga, writing, music, and all the fine arts and local crafts. The instructors are invariably established and respected professionals

in each subject. Visitors can also come just for rest and recreation including hiking, horseback riding, or just sitting and looking at the view.

O'Keeffe, who continued to live in a house on the ranch, was understandably concerned by the influx of mobs of people. She was still there when we arrived for the first time in 1976, but you wouldn't have known it. The tactful first director was able to ensure her privacy, and usually pleasant staff members maintained a frosty silence if you ventured a small inquiry.

After the artist's death, the ranch could no longer ignore the booming industry that turned this part of New Mexico into "O'Keeffe Country." Its gift shop now carries postcards and reproductions. This year's catalog lists a November Elderhostel called "Santa Fe, Abiquiu, Ghost Ranch: It's all O'Keeffe Country."

Elderhostels are reserved for the fall and spring months, quieter times for the ranch, easier accommodations (fewer shared bathrooms!), no children underfoot while you are carrying trays in the cafeteria. The summer months can be crowded even for this huge sprawling ranch. We are lucky because there are only about 170 campers enrolled this week, and we have a comfortable double room in the old convenient central part of the ranch with a front porch that looks over the alfalfa field to O'Keeffe's favorite subject, a distant flat-topped mountain called Pedernal.

We don't spend much time in our

room. Todd puts in long hours down in Pot Hollow getting his micacious clay pots and his traditional red and black pots ready for firing. I spend happy and stimulating days with a succession of New Mexico writers, who generously share their published work and writing lives with my small group. Learning I am from Tucson, a guest novelist tells me about an older dancer who broke both elbows at the Ranch earlier in the summer. It's our Grandmother **Cora Miller!**

I become anxious to get home and find out how she is.

Our week at the ranch ends on Sunday. The morning worship service is outdoors where we listen to a good sermon while assessing a distant storm and enjoying a breeze that ruffles the huge cottonwood trees. After dinner the craft groups display their work: beautiful arrangements of newly-fired pots, colorful small Navajo rugs, traditional stamped tinware, retablo paintings, woven baskets. The blacksmiths show off their big intricate ironwork. I see that my retired Thomas Davis Clinic rheumatologist has forged some large, handsome, decorative iron hooks. His wife looks alarmed when I ask where she plans to put them.

I like to think that Georgia O'Keeffe would be pleased by today's ranch as it continues to celebrate creativity in all its forms, human and divine. This week the craftsmen had their turn. Surely she would approve.



When the Grandmothers speak, the world will heal.

Childhood Memories

by Wilma Huggett

Childhood memories of the 3C Ranch in Oracle Arizona are many. I was born on the ranch and lived there until 1945.

I was five, still riding Sally, my Shetland pony. It was roundup time, and all hands including Elna Huggett, Inge Johnson, and Lillian Christensen Albertsen, were on hand to drive a bunch of cattle from Peppersauce corrals to the corrals and weight scales at the main road.

Just as we got out of Peppersauce, on top of the mesa, I found myself and Sally trapped between the fence and two angry fighting bulls. There was no way out and no way the cowboys would chance breaking them up, as that would put me in a worse position.

The quick thinking of Benny Samendiego and Chico Leyvas saved Sally and me. Benny from behind me and Chico in front slid their horses and chaps along the fence, literally shoving the bulls away from Sally and me, breaking up the fight with much chap slapping and yelling. It all happened so fast I really felt it was all part of the drive and part of the cowboys' work.

Another incident during the early 40s, the war years: large convoys of soldiers in trucks and jeeps traveled the original Mt. Lemon road. At this point I was riding Mosquo and must have been 11 or 12. We three, Bingo, my German Shepherd, Mosquo and I, had been exploring past Peppersauce Canyon and above the Salvation Army camp, Camp-O-Wood.

We had almost reached the road when I could hear the convoy coming down the road. I waited for them to pass. The trucks were winding their way out on the other side of the canyon, their droning motors geared down, sounding much like a giant hive of angry bees.

Just as I crossed the road to cut across by trail to the other side of the canyon, I heard the rear jeep coming fast, too fast for the curve. They didn't make it.

Down and over and over they turned landing at the bottom of the canyon. I

didn't wait, but spurred Mosquo home-ward as fast as he could travel.

When we reached the road on top, where the trail comes out, I stood high in my stirrups. I could see the last of the convoy crossing the cattle guard a mile away at 3C Ranch. I urged Mosquo on as fast as his legs would carry him, and arrived at the ranch shouting for anyone who could hear.

Juan Morales and Louis Montano were working around the main house s I rode into the yard. Louis and Juan took the truck with chains, pulleys and ropes. My aunt Lillian was sent to Oracle to phone to notify the Army and return with more help and stretchers to carry the men out.

I rode back at a walk, to cool Mosquo out, to the east edge of the canyon and with my binoculars, watched the rescue operation.

Many months later the Army officially wrote my mother, Elna Huggett, to thank us for our kindness and help — also to the young lady (that was me) who ran her horse the two miles to bring help so fast.

Wilma is a regular contributor to The County Oracle, the Oracle, Arizona Newspaper. This story was reprinted from her column, Along driveway trails, August, 2000.



Pauline's Poem In Memory of Pauline

The wind blowing in my ear
Signs of fall

empty seed pods on the acacia
drying flowers of lavender and
yellow – forming seeds for next year's
Spring.

The desert growing and dying at the
same time with the oak
and mesquite standing guard.
Testimony to the circle of life.

Empty seed pods on the acacia –
they've already given to the cycle
drying flowers of the desert making way
for the seeds of next year's spring.
The yucca's tall bloom stalk has it's
bounty spread further by the wind.

The shadows of the building, strong and dark
And across the sand
The shadows of the mesquite
dancing in the wind
with the light coming through the leaves and
branches.

So do I try to stand – strong with
light through what darknesses cross my path.

*Pauline Mitchell
Written at the 1999 Grandmother Gathering*

When the Grandmothers speak, the world will heal.

Elder Women cont'd from page 1

eventually become an English teacher and professor of literature, while Dorothy started college when her daughter began college. Though she had always been interested in art, a change in circumstances, a move, a visit to New York's Ellis Island and subsequent exhibit on Scandinavian art brought Dorothy closer to her Norwegian heritage and resulted her decision to write about Scandinavian art.

Her first grant application was to research and present at a seminar on the *Queen Elizabeth II* about immigration from Europe to North America and Dorothy said she was truly shocked when she received the grant; it changed her self perception. "For most women of our age, if you didn't start out with a career, volunteer work may be what you do, and then all of a sudden you're a different kind of person; you're a grant recipient. It made me feel that while what I had been doing as a volunteer was well and good, my personal observations had credibility in the wider world."

Venturing into new areas seems to have come step-by-step to Myra and Dorothy, each small achievement giving impetus to the next level. Dorothy suggested that as older women come to these transitions they are already prepared with valuable life experience. "What they have experienced is valid and real. It's hard to decide what to write about because one has so many things to write about. You go through different periods in your writing life. When I first started college, my mother had died, and I was very angry about that because I didn't know her. Now at sixty-five, I'm thankful and I'm amazed. I've had so many adventures in my life, I've met so many wonderful people and I never know what's going to happen next. Yet each step has its doubts, Dorothy said. "When I first got to Hedgebrook, I felt kind of like a fake, because Myra is an accomplished poet and published a book, and I am still feeling my way. But last night I read a story to the other residents and then I felt good that I'd had the courage to read this story I'd written."

Though Myra had always written poetry, several events occurred that propelled her to write on a regular basis. Her youngest daughter went off to college, leaving her with the house to herself during the day. Her mother died about this time, leaving her as the family's elder woman. "Maybe that's a force that works its way and tells you that 'you're next and you better get to it,' whatever the 'it' is that you may not have verbalized." And, she signed up for a women's writing conference that she saw advertised in *Ms.* magazine. It was at that first workshop that she began to think of herself as a poet. "To call myself a poet, that was a big thing. I remember wondering whether



Dorothy McCall

I was a dilettante. That worried me for awhile," she said.

Writing workshops, especially women's writing workshops have been valuable to Myra's development. "It's about a place among others, it's a community of other poets and invariably you meet someone you connect with in a way that matters," she said. Hedgebrook functions in much the same way, and as the only published book author in residence during her stay, she commented on Hedgebrook's rare openness. "That's a wonderful thing. It says to women we want your voice, your voice is important, we want to nurture it. It's so funny, we don't honor the arts in our culture as much as we should,

but still we stand in awe of people who accomplish in the arts."

Myra advises other elder women to go to workshops, and not to fear rejection, to instead use it as a lesson and try again. Her next step is what she calls "claiming authority." "Being the older person here and by chance having more publications tell me 'You are in authority, whatever that means, claim it. . . . Because I started writing so late in my life . . . I was still a beginner, a student for a long time. So, I think that's my lesson. I didn't come here knowing that, but it's happened to me. I'm ready for it. A readiness—*Hamlet* says, 'A readiness is all.'"



Hedgebrook Stipend Program

Hedgebrook provides writing residencies to women, published or not, of all ages and from diverse backgrounds. Applicants are selected, based on writing samples and project questionnaire, and offered residencies ranging from one week to two months. Six writers are in residence at one time; each lives in her own cottage at the thirty-three-acre retreat where the food is grown and cooked by staff. The writers are free to write, think, walk the land, and share their thoughts over dinner in the farmhouse. All this is provided at no cost to residents.

In addition, to help the voices of all women be heard, we have recently initiated a stipend program providing support for expenses and travel costs. The program is for low-income women without a college degree, and elders over age 55. To qualify, an applicant must earn less than \$16,700 for a single person, or \$22, 500 for a family of two.

Do you know of a woman writer, elder or not, who would like to apply to Hedgebrook, but has not done so because she may not be able to meet expenses at home during a retreat? Or do you know of an organization that reaches such women? If so, we would appreciate your networking help. To provide contacts for our elder outreach program, please write

Hedgebrook
2197 East Millman Road
Langley, WA 98260,

or e-mail
journal@whidbey.com.



When the Grandmothers speak, the world will heal.

Stair Story

By Kit Wilson

Even in the Paradise of Whidbey Island there are lessons to learn. Change comes swiftly, often without warning.

A couple of weeks ago I went to a concert here on the island - two delightful women telling stories, singing, and making music with keyboard and guitar. The concert was in the Thomas Berry Hall at the Whidbey Institute which is on a hill with access up three sets of broad, gently pitched cement stairs. The kind of cement that is rough with all sorts of little stones in it. The stairs themselves are about a foot deep and are edged with a lip of some other material.

I went to the concert alone and was one of the first to leave, smiling and humming the last tune. I was over at the side of the stairs, next to the rail, descending easily and with gratitude to Pilates, the fitness program that has improved my balance and removed the stress from my stair-descending process. Next thing I knew I had stubbed my toe, negotiated three steps at one time and was on one of the cement landings, flat on the right side of my face, feeling the blood beginning to pool beneath me. Before I landed I remember thinking "This is not going to be good".

Then there was Chris saying that she was an EMT, there was an oxygen mask, a checking of vitals and telling me not to move, and finally the sharp light that announced the arrival of Jeff and Jeff, the paramedics on duty for the evening. More checking of my neck, back, hips, and the wounds on my arm, hands, and some assessment of my face and forehead and then the complicated

maneuver of turning me over. I heard several sharp intakes of breath from those standing over me as my face became visible. Then I was strapped to a board with my neck in a neck thing and hustled into an ambulance. One Jeff drove while the other sat with me and checked my BP and discussed the possibility of blood seeping into my brain. He asked me who the president was and what the date was and told me I was a "trooper". I said I watched ER, so I was familiar with this routine.

On arrival at the Whidbey General Hospital Emergency Room in Coupeville I was removed from the board and transferred to a bed by two nurses and the two Jeffs who neglected to say "On the count of three". The nurses looked at my face and said "Oh my". They took my BP and said "Oh my". They asked me what State I was in and were pleased with my response. Finally the doc arrived and asked me what State I was in and what is the capitol. I still knew the State but I flunked the capitol. Then he said green, Vermont, and Washington and asked me to repeat what he had said. He looked at my face and said "MMM" and sent me to Xray where, after some time, it was determined that my nose was broken. When I got back I told the nurses I didn't feel so bad and one of them said "you haven't looked in the mirror yet".

Eventually they helped me to the bathroom. I did look in the mirror and I said "Oh my" and didn't feel so good anymore. By this time I was beginning to hurt pretty bad too.

The doc came back. He asked me to repeat the three words he had told me a half hour before. I said "Are you kidding? Just wait till you get to be my age?" But then I told him green

and Vermont. I couldn't remember Washington.

The doc said I had a concussion. He told me all the possible symptoms of further disasters, none of which sounded pleasant. He said I wasn't bad enough to stay in the hospital but I wasn't to be alone. I needed someone to watch me and wake me up every two hours to see if I was still with the program. Since I am staying alone that posed a dilemma. Then a nice woman from the Whidbey Institute who had followed the ambulance said she would take me to her house. The nurses cleaned me up as best they could and we left. We stopped to put the ducks to bed and I crawled into a guest bed in her husbands pajamas at about 2:30 am. I couldn't go to sleep because they had given me a shot of some non-narcotic stuff for pain. (No narcotics because I had a concussion.) It kept me awake.

There's more, of course. None of the disastrous *what ifs* came to pass and my wounds are almost healed. The Whidbey Institute invited me to attend an all day seminar with Sr. Marion McGillis in which she talked about creating a sustainable life and presented the new paradigm creation story ala Thomas Berry and Brian Swimm. The insurance man called and recorded his interview with me, but once he heard that I wasn't going to sue he was no longer interested in me. And I learned a few lessons. I learned the true meaning of *falling flat on ones face* and *taking a nose dive*. And I learned, once again, that once you've hit bottom there's nothing to do but lie still, turn it over, and let go. And that, sometimes, can be quite a relief - not having to do anything at all, except, perhaps, remember green, Vermont, and Washington.



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