

Narelle Grace

NOW IS NOW IS NOW

The cat is tucked on the kitchen window-sill, eyes shut against the late afternoon sun, whiskers stirring in the breeze. Gazing at her through the glass, I realize her 'being' and I like the feeling. My hands, in the warm, sudsy water, wash up automatically. I wonder what it would be like, to simply 'BE'. Empty-headed, like the cat. (Assumption). Perhaps she is anticipating her evening meal, while I am mentally concocting ours? Suppose the difference is . . . she doesn't 'think' about it. Musing . . .

The day is shining and most of the clouds have scudded away. A plane is humming in the distance; birds are calling; the camelia bushes are shivering harmoniously; the silver birches are wearing the last vestiges of their autumn glory and the new winter sun lights their lacy gold . . . Reflections.

A leaf leaves the tree - drifting. Will I as easily shed my offspring, when the time comes for their parting? Will they feel free to simply drift from me, without any tugging or pulling either way? THE PROPHET reminds me: "*Your children are not your children*". True. The leaf does not **belong** to the tree, nor the tree to the leaf. Each is already free. The realization floods me with its beauty and simplicity. Overflowing, my eyes spill.

In the past months I have read many books - Eastern, Western, ancient, modern, futuristic, religious, psychological, theoretical, practical - each and every one dealing in some way with self-knowledge, awareness, becoming a WHOLE person, etc. Suddenly, I recall a Zen saying: "*When eating, eat; when walking, walk*" (or words to that effect) and I become aware that I am washing up, watching the cat, thinking about the evening meal and so on. I wipe down the grubby bench and stove, enjoying the new sparkle - like removing the grease-paint mask after a performance and watching my mirror-image face emerge, bit by shiny bit. It is 3.20 p.m. I want to write all this down. A cup of tea throws itself together. Is 'realizing' an intellectual exercise or what? A 'knowing' or a 'knowledge'? Confused.

Thoughts are tripping through my mind. It's all right (I presume) for those people who write about being, and becoming ego-less, and gestalt and awareness etc., to ramble on. None of those I have absorbed lately seems to talk much about how to manage all this wonderful stuff in the snake-pit of everyday family life, with its writings and wriggings, snares and ups'n downs. They (the authors) all seem to be past that stage - (of course, it might be that they just don't mention it) - able to devote all their energies to "*getting it together*". For almost five years now, I have been learning slowly to un-learn - three steps forward, two steps backward (sometimes four!) - and I don't feel as if I'm anywhere much. I suppose that would be O.K. if I were happy with such a state, but I'm not. I want to arrive at, to be - I don't know - somewhere in the middle of my very extreme extremes. CENTRED.

The word has an echoing ring to it which haunts me, and urges me on

The kids have arrived from school. They're full of bubble and noise and talk - all together; all at once! Kara needs some help to fill the horse trough, so I'll stop writing for now.

2 hours later. Now that was a prime example! I didn't **want** to stop writing. I really feel that was not my choice. I drove Kara (with the hose, which was too heavy for her to carry) to the horse paddock; came home and put the washing on; drove down to pick Leon up from football practice (also had to leave some forms and money with his coach); arrived back and put clothes in the dryer; unloaded the dishwasher. I suppose I could have said "No" to Kara. Oh hell! Another interruption. Leon needs some help with his homework. Most times I enjoy this togetherness. Tonight I WANT to go on writing. I help Leon. (Martyr). And inside my head aches, my nerves scream, my stomach rumbles, my teeth grit and I really want to yell at the "*Where am I going-ness?*" of it all. Of course, I don't - I decipher the English language with Leon and appear as calm as possible.

Now where is the gestalt (or anything else) in that? I suppose I 'chose' to help Leon - if one chooses against one's Self. My friend says: *It's not the helping that matters, it's the spirit behind it*". That may be true - if the spirit is behind it!

Right now I feel angry at myself and the world. The WORLD? The world's done nothing to me. I'm doing something to myself. I'd like to be still and discover. We're all hungry. Dinner time.

My friend arrived with her children. We were together. We enjoyed. She brought us chicken. I forgot to give her some money.

One thing - coming back from the agistment paddock, the sky was a glory of gold clouds on blue twilight - a tapestry of the ever-fleeting moment. In that instant of loving and pain, the tightness in my chest eased. Sometimes I get a bit tight when I drive; have done for six months now. 'Why' doesn't matter as much as it used to. Very gradually, with support, I'm getting back into driving again. (I don't TRY anymore - just go - with someone). I'm lucky. I'm surrounded by beautiful people who don't condemn or ridicule my present 'frailty'. Though few in number, their enormous un-smothering love and caring are helping me to live again.

Eileen Caddy, Fritz Perls, Krishnamurti and many others advise something like: "Don't consider. Jump NOW. Change NOW". I'm not too sure about that just yet. Experiencing fear, I leap forward to the day when . . . and then I've gone out of the "here and now" and it's all become a fantasy. Perhaps I 'should' be glad I recognize that. I've 'decided' to be glad. **I am glad I recognize that!** WOW!

Went to get the clothes out of the dryer. The kids were watching a movie about child abuse. As I folded the clothes, they kept me up on the story. My hands worked; my ears listened; my mouth spoke words; but I was switched off. I didn't want to know. I often don't lately. Leon is cleaning his football boots and school shoes for a special game tomorrow. His team represents both school and State. He is twelve. Sometimes I feel scared for him and even more scared for myself. What if he's injured? *"That's a risk you take in any game - in life"*. I know. I don't like it. I want to feel positive about it. I don't. Fantasy again. NOW he is O.K. NOW is where it's at. Sure! And when tomorrow becomes today, he plays football !!! That's how my head goes, STOP! COME BACK HEAD. No 'sense' is non-'sense'. My gut is aching. **I think** the writing is helping; **I feel** like going on. Right

hand is tired, but willing. Kara hugs me goodnight, and responding feels extra special.

The clothes are finished for now. Sitting on the chair near the kids . . . talking about the story on T.V. They understand; they listen to their instincts; the beauty of their intuition and spontaneity jumps into my knowing. I love them. Heidi has a cold; she doesn't complain much. Stoic. She guesses that the house in the movie will catch fire. The actress child is in her room alone. The curtains catch fire, Heidi states: "I told you".

Retreat to the corridor, blocking my ears. "*Uuk! Don't want to watch this*", my mouth says to memories hidden deep. Leave them there undisturbed in their pain. I'll continue writing in my bedroom.

"Throw out your garbage". "Let go". One day. "NOW". How?

Leo comes in and wriggles into the bed. I stop writing. He doesn't want to watch any more of the film. Says it bothers him because the mother hurts the child all the time. "*Do you understand why?*"

"Yes - she's unhappy and lonely. My head hurts". (Empathy.)

He was eight when his father and I split up unexpectedly. We all miss his big brother, who lives with his father. Leon weeps inside.

"You need a good sleep. How about having your shower?"

Arrangements are made for tomorrow. Make sure he has ten cents to ring me on his return from the interstate school. Clip his SOS bracelet in place

He's back, ready for bed.

"Gee you write fast. Mum. I wish I could write like you".

"You will man. Takes time".

Eying my spidery scrawl, I silently wish him more legibility! We kiss goodnight. Our smiling eyes meet deeply. In our house, there is a lot of warmth and movement. Heidi comes in - tired - going to bed. Bear hug. She feels hot. I take her temperature. Normal. Thank whoever. We laugh. Feels good; close. She is drawn back to the movie.

My hand is really aching and wanting to stop right now. My ego tries to push it. There's so much going on - so much to record. My right foot is hanging in space, tapping up and down. It's telling me to go to the loo. OK .. OK

Ah! Relief. Now I'll rest my wrist. I want to come back to this shortly.

I **am** back. I can't stay away. Almost an obsession to go on. I've put more clothes in the dryer; made Leon's lunch for tomorrow. He is cranky in the mornings and this is a special treat for him - not to make his own lunch. The lettuce was very crispy. I finished off the inner core in one big crunchy mouthful. Yum! Made myself a cup of hot milk (not before the milk boiled over). Movie's finished. Heidi came through the kitchen and remarked: "*Sad*".

No comment. I think the mother - I don't want to finish this sentence. More painful bells.

"Toss out the garbage". One day. *"THIS day"*. Not yet -Soon.

The lights are all out, except mine. Leon stirred in his sleep when I took his lunch into his room. I spoke aloud to him. "*Good luck, my darling. Keep safe. Sleep well*". I heard somewhere that talking to a sleeping person does penetrate, so I give messages to the children that way sometimes. Like the time Leon learned his multiplication tables in his sleep. Every night, ten minutes after he fell asleep, I read one table to him slowly, five times over. He still never makes a mistake with them - and yet I was told seven years ago that he was, and would be always, a slow learner (this from a very eminent psychologist). Rats!

The house is settling into its night noises and the dryer is tick-tocking its way round the dial - loudly it seems, in the sleeping quiet of the kids' dreams. My friend once asked if I put my cutlery in it. The whole of me smiles at the remembrance. A zip or something is rattling against the steel drum. We laughed that night - separately together.

The milk is warm and comforting. My stomach growls appreciation. I feel happy. I feel NOW. I want to be still. It is 11.05 p.m. My hand has stopped hurting. My throat is suddenly sore and scratchy. Is this awareness? Even a little bit? There is no-one to tell me, except myself. I have 'decided'. I AM. In this moment, I am me, all of me and I am one with the universe. What I do not remember, I do not deny. What might be ahead, I do not surmise. Simply me. Stillness.

Luxury. Half an hour of silence; no past - no future. Not even any 'now' going on in my head. Refreshed. Recharged.

I've written enough. Tomorrow I want to get on with the day. Live. Act. Stay in the moment. Sometime I may write again. Not now. Goodnight

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