

Newsletter April, 2009

Dear Friends,

This is the time of year when I most appreciate living in a place with radically changing seasons. The snow is almost all gone, and the daffodils and crocuses are sending out tender green leaves. The days are longer and driving does not require the constant white-knuckled vigilance to navigate drifting snow and black ice. Everything reminds me that all things change, that where there seemed only to be darkness and stagnation, there can again be life.

And so it is with my life. After more than a year of an incapacitating relapse of acute Chronic Fatigue, with a lot of help from both doctors and alternative health care practitioners, I am feeling well. I have more energy than I have had in years, and I am deeply grateful to wake up in the morning without a headache, feeling capable of getting out of bed and enjoying the day. I don't know if there is anything sweeter than feeling healthy after months of illness. And, corresponding to this renewal in physical energy, my dreaming with the Grandmothers (those wise old women who appear in my night dreams) has led me to make some decisions about my immediate future.

A couple of months ago I awoke from a dream hearing the words, "Go back to university, do the studying you love, and finance it by writing a series of novels."

My first thought was, "Oh, I'd never get away with that! That would be like having fun and paying for it by having more fun!" Subsequent dreams kept nudging me in the same direction and, as my health recovered, I took the first step.

This week I take possession of a small apartment in downtown Toronto, and May 11 I return to classes in the philosophy department at U of T. I will spend three days a week in Toronto and four here in the country home I share with my husband Jeff. I am excited and more than a little nervous. I wonder if my fifty-four year old brain cells are up to studying and essays and exams. I listen to the dire economic news and wonder at the wisdom of increasing my overhead at a time like this. And will my health hold? Some of this is about knowing who I am and deepening my self-acceptance. I love the solitude and quiet of the forest that surrounds our home, but I also love studying ideas with others, and participating in the diverse community the city offers. So, I'm taking a deep breath and following the bread crumbs left by my dreams. I'll use the summer courses to (hopefully) get back into the rhythm of studying and writing papers, and (for more fun) continue writing the novel about Isabel and the dreamers' circle. I am mulling over offering sessions for individuals seeking spiritual direction in the fall and facilitating a small group when I am in the city. Will send out updates as this becomes clearer.

I will be facilitating a weekend September 11-13 at Kripalu in the rolling hills of western Massachusetts (see link below) where we'll explore what it means to find the courage to keep opening to life when we are tired or frightened and all-too-aware that uncertainty and change is the nature of reality. Hope to see some of you there.

May we all step into the new life spring brings.

With deep gratitude for the emails and prayers of support that were sent during my illness,

Oriah