



Living in the Balance

December 2015

Rex and I made a pilgrimage in November back to areas of Eastern North Carolina so that I could shoot photos in places like the Great Dismal Swamp and Pea Island Refuge. Traveling as a pilgrim rather than a tourist opened us up to changing our minds and our plans. Expectations exchanged for surprise. A sunset behind acres of cotton fields backing up to the Swamp. The Swamp being more of a woods. The Alligator River Refuge a sprawl of wide open flat fields. The small hamlets of my childhood Kitty Hawk and Nags Head lost to development. A cloud parting sunrise of orange and gold and gray across the ocean. Crossing the bridge to Hatteras bringing tears of memory as barren ocean beach and sound marsh opened for miles, untouched. Forty mile an hour winds blurring the best shots. Mind memory sufficing to hold the beauty of the Sound and of Tundra swans, geese and ducks. A high dune blocking the wildly blowing sand long enough to steal a perfect shot of ocean grasses and waves. The “wild” ponies of Corolla munching front yard grass and ignoring our curiosity. And on the trip crossing back inland, a break in the pouring, blowing rain at Lake Mattasmuskett offering every shade of gray and shape of cloud as backdrop to the small tree islands and the marsh beds filled with heron, ibis and ducks. The wind blew too hard to get perfect focus on the camera, but it was pilgrimage after all, not perfection, and that is a completely different lens.



Hand Dance Blessing....

“There is a vitality, a life force, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is, nor how valuable it is, nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open. You do not even have to believe in yourself or your work. You have to keep open and aware directly to the urges that motivate YOU. Keep the channel open.”

Martha Graham



Calendar considerations.....

Southern Dharma Center

Buddhist Wisdom on Preparing for our own death, December 9 – 13

New Year's Retreat, December 28 – January 3

For more information www.southerndharma.org

The Sophia Institute, Charleston, SC

Liberate your Creative Life and Soar, January 8 and 9, 2016

Sacred Crossroads, Connecting with your next Yes! Joan Borysenko, February 19 – 21

A Day with David Whyte, March 19, 2016

The Art of Living the Contemplative Life, Kathleen Norris, April 1, 2016

www.thesophiainstitute.org

Kanuga Conference Center

Iconography: The Gospel in Line and Color, February 13 – 19, 2016

2016 Christian Formation Conference, June 13 – 17, 2016

www.kanuga.org

The Anchorage

Desert Day, Friday, December 4 in Greenville

Praying the Scriptures, January 18 – 22, Mepkin Abbey

January Beach Retreat, January 29 – 31 and February 1

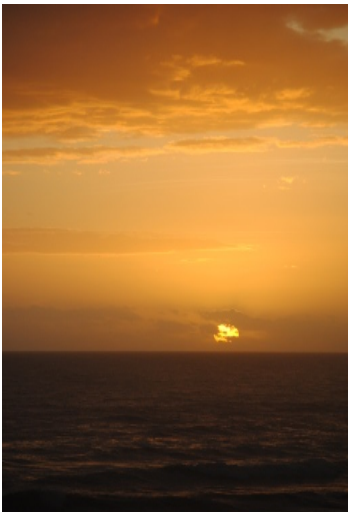
For more information see www.theanchorage.org

Today I will...

today i will give my desire for
permanence the day off
and sit in the chapel
made of twigs and spit
today i will give my desire for
certainty the day off
and dwell in the place
of not knowing
today i will give my desire for security the day off,
open the windows and
let in the breath of fresh air.

Stacy Stall Wills





Inner Hospitality

My own belief is that one regards oneself, if one is a serious writer, as an instrument of experiencing. Life – all of it – flows through this instrument and is distilled through it into works of art. How one lives as a private person is intimately bound to the work. And at some point, I believe one has to stop holding back for fear of alienating some imaginary reader or real relative or friend, and come out with personal truth. If we are to understand the human condition, and if we are to accept ourselves in all the complexity, self-doubt, extravagance of feeling, guilt, joy, the slow freeing of the self to its full capacity for action and creation, both as human being and artist, we have to know all we can about one another, and we have to be willing to go naked.

May Sarton

I am Going to Start Living Like a Mystic

Today I am pulling on a green wool sweater
and walking across the park in a dusky snowfall.

The trees stand like twenty-seven prophets in a field,
each a station in a pilgrimage—silent, pondering.

Blue flakes of light falling across their bodies
are the ciphers of a secret, an occultation.

I will examine their leaves as pages in a text
and consider the bookish pigeons, students of winter.

I will kneel on the track of a vanquished squirrel
and stare into a blank pond for the figure of Sophia.

I shall begin scouring the sky for signs
as if my whole future were constellated upon it.

I will walk home alone with the deep alone,
a disciple of shadows, in praise of the mysteries.

Edward Hirsch





About Spiritual Direction —

- Offers a space and time for you to explore, reflect upon, and deepen your relationship with God.
- Provides a haven from the daily busyness of the outer world and opens a time to be still and to reflect on your inner journey.
- Is a companioning relationship grounded in dialogue and discernment.
- Explores ways you may integrate spirituality into your daily life.
- Is not limited to any one spiritual practice or tradition.
- May involve one or two meetings or multiple meetings over time.

You may wish to consider spiritual companioning if you are —

- Longing for a deeper relationship with the Divine
- Looking for a place to dialogue about spiritual questions
- Seeking ways to connect with the Spirit in a more intentional way
- Discerning ways to live in a more integrated and whole way
- Standing at a crossroads in your life
- Exploring new or fresh ways to be in relationship with God

For more information about Spiritual Direction, please feel free to contact me by phone
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The photos are my work. The Great Dismal Swamp, the Pea Island Refuge on Hatteras National Seashore, Corolla ponies, a cemetery in Suffolk, Virginia, Kitty Hawk and Lake Mattamussett.

