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# Living in the Balance

November 2012

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I shut off the clock alarm a minute before 6:00. I want to start the day in silence. I peek out the shutter, the streetlights standing sentry for sunrise.

I don't linger over my cereal or the newspaper. I put on enough makeup so I won't scare someone when I stop, pull on my traveling hat and head out the door. Daybreak is coming quickly as I slide into the driver's seat and put my camera beside me. I don't want to miss the morning light.

My only plan is to drive toward Asheville through the Greenville watershed via an old twisting road riddled with missing asphalt, narrow bridges and frequent signage banning stopping or parking. I have driven the old road dozens of times and I always relish and revel in its winding and deserted possibilities.

The main highway north is more congested than usual with people pushing to get to work. I turn onto the watershed road as sunrise starts to crest the hills. The tomato and eggplant fields lie barren now. No plowing or pickers. Just the stubbly remains of the crops. At first light, the trees beckon with backlight. Orange, golds and reds dancing with dawn.

I pull onto a new-to-me side road just to chase the light. On my left, I'm surprised by a small, public park. The swings, picnic table and nearby benches sit silent. I wander the grounds, snapping pictures and imagining picnics. Two low, wooden benches look out on a winding stream. I run my finger over "Nick loves Deborah Ann 4ever + always" printed carefully across one of the picnic table boards.

Farther down the road, a weed-covered, weathering sign situated below the street sign for "Miracle Making Lane" announces "God's House of Prayer." I turn the car around and backtrack toward a series of what look like, but are not, abandoned buildings that declare, "Danger Zone" "Watch for Land Mines" "Booby Traps" "And Land Owner Sam Turner" with a caddy cornered caution, "Violators will be shot and survivors will be shot again." I aim my camera at the buildings from my rolled down car window. The engine running. I pull away as the "Beware of Dogs" sign makes good on its promise.

I continue my meander, turn left on Green River Road, go under an overpass and see a sign. "Pavement ends in 6 miles." The sun shines at an early morning angle, offering backlighting and shimmer. I stop half in and half out of the narrow road to shoot tall, wild grasses still wet from fog or dew. A friendly hound appears in front of my car, sniffing and snooping as I ease back in the lane. Farther down I spy hay bales in a cleared field. A solitary tree stands golden leafed in the shadows of the mountains' fall foliage. I take a chance and pull in someone's drive to shoot a small covered bridge and a loamy lane.

The sun edges up to high morning and I know I will soon be fighting the noon time light. The sign for Skytop Orchard appears in the curve. I have never stopped, but I do this time. I turn left and ascend the steep rise traveling a couple of miles to the entrance. The orchard is alive with seniors and school kids. Pick apples yourself or buy them all sacked and cinched. I sample the varieties knowing I will grab the galas. I ask to take photos and snap the goldens and reds. Pumpkins, gourds and cornhusks complete the orchard grounds. A hand painted notice sits on a counter declaring, "Caramel....an apple's best friend!" Fat pumpkins make their home in a very large, repurposed watermelon box.

I head back down through the watershed toward home. The wind has picked up and the sun skips through branches as the trees rain their leaves down in a golden cascade. I do the forbidden and stop in the road to take a photo. The leaves spill and fall over the edges of the rocks and spin across the road. Fall. Fresh...fragile... glorious...and bittersweet. Fall. Winding down the road, like me, toward winter.

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How  
beautifully  
leaves  
grow old.

How full of  
light and  
color are  
their last  
days.

*John Burroughs*



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## *Calendar considerations.....*

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### **Dreams as Windows to the Soul: A Personal Journey**

A dream workshop with Hardy Clemmons

Friday Evening, November 9, from 6:30 until 9:00 and Saturday, November 10 from 8:30 until 12:45

First Baptist Church, Greenville, SC

For more information contact Michelle McClendon at [m.mclendon@firstbaptistgreenville.com](mailto:m.mclendon@firstbaptistgreenville.com)

Complete details are available on the flyer attached to this journal. THIS IS EVENT IS AVAILABLE FOR CEU's

### **The Power of Opposite Strengths**

A workshop with Hardy Clemmons

Thursday, November 8, from 8:45 until 4:00 at First Baptist Church, Greenville, SC

For information contact Michelle McClendon at [m.mclendon@firstbaptistgreenville.com](mailto:m.mclendon@firstbaptistgreenville.com)

Complete details are available on the flyer attached to this journal.

THIS EVENT IS AVAILABLE FOR CEU's.

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### **The Lure of Divine Love**

Six Monthly Half-Day retreats beginning Saturday, November 3

For deepening and sustaining a life of contemplative prayer

Offered by Oasis of Wisdom, Asheville, NC

For more information, contact Emily Wilmer at [info@oasisofwisdom.net](mailto:info@oasisofwisdom.net)

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### **Amazing Faiths Dinner Dialogues**

Offered by Interfaith Forum, Greenville Forward and Nexus

Thursday evening, November 15 from 6:30 until 9:30

Groups of 8 to 10 people of various faiths and outlooks will gather in homes throughout the Greenville area to enjoy a simple meal and engage in a moderated discussion about the role of faith and spirituality in their lives.

**The event is free, but registration is required by November 5**

To register, go to [www.interfaithforum-sc.org/register](http://www.interfaithforum-sc.org/register)

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### **Southern Dharma Retreats, Hot Springs, North Carolina**

Transforming the Judgmental Mind November 2 – 7

Buddhism and the Twelve Steps November 14 – 18

New Year's Retreat December 27 – January 2

For more information contact Carol Meyer at [southerndharma@earthlink.net](mailto:southerndharma@earthlink.net)

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### **Mountain Top Lectures**

Dr. Brian McLaren

November 9 and 10

Amicalola Falls Lodge, Dawsonville, Georgia

<http://mountaintoplectures.org>

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### **World Religions Symposium at Furman University**

The World Religions Symposium at Furman seeks to provide space for religious traditions to tell their own story, no matter how complex or challenging that story may be. This year, they will focus their attention and conversation on Islam in the First Person.

This lecture series continues through November.

For information about the series including topics, speakers and dates go to the Furman Chaplain's website at <http://newspress.furman.edu/?cat=54>





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## *Calendar considerations.....*

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### **Deepening Understanding of Sikh and Baha'i Traditions....**

#### **Two Women's Journeys**

Offered by Interfaith Forum and the Lilly Center at Furman University  
Tuesday evening, November 27 at 7:00 p.m. on the Furman campus

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### **2012 Lake Junaluska Peace Conference, Love in Action: The Transformative Power of Nonviolence**

November 8 – 11, 2012

2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Ms. Leymah Gbowee will headline the conference.

[www.lakejunaluska.com](http://www.lakejunaluska.com)

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### **Creating a Church for All People....a Multicultural Conference**

November 29 – December 1

Lake Junaluska

For more information: [www.lakejunaluska.com/multicultural/](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/multicultural/)

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### **Advanced Centering Prayer Retreat**

Becky Hannah, facilitating

Sunday, November 25 – Sunday, December 2

Valle Crucis Retreat Center, Valle Crucis, NC

[www.highsouth.com/vallecrucis/](http://www.highsouth.com/vallecrucis/)

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### **Lillian Daniels preaching at Peace Congregational Church – Clemson**

Sunday evening, November 25 at 5:00

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### **Looking into 2013!**

#### **Engaging Faith – Brene Brown and Yvette Flunder**

Offered by Nexus and held at Furman University

Friday evening, February 22 and Saturday, February 23

CEU's available for this event

[www.engagingfaith.org](http://www.engagingfaith.org)

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#### **Transforming Trauma: Contemplative Approaches to Spiritual Healing**, Friday, April 12, 9:30 – 12:30 p.m.

Led by James Finley at St. Michael Archangel Catholic Church, Cary, NC

**Through the Narrow Gate**, a silent retreat led by James Finley who will let the mystic teachings from Christianity, Buddhism and other traditions be the guides.

Friday, April 12 at 5:00 p.m. until Sunday, April 14 at noon.

St. Francis Springs Prayer Center, Stoneville, NC.

<http://jamesfinleynorthcarolina.org>

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#### **Iona Pilgrimage with Jungian analyst Jerry Wright**

September 20 through October 1, 2013

For more information contact Jerry at [jwright@morrisbb.net](mailto:jwright@morrisbb.net)

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#### **Other websites of interest that offer on-line courses:**

Abbey of the Arts <http://abbeyofthearts.com>

Spirituality and Practice [www.spiritualityandpractice.com](http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com)

Asheville Jung Center <http://ashevillejungcenter.org>

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## 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

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For more information about Spiritual Direction, please feel free to contact me by phone  
864-246-3960 or via email at [wmeade@meadellc.com](mailto:wmeade@meadellc.com)

Wanda Meade, M.Ed., Licensed Professional Counselor  
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*All of the photos in this month's journal are my work and were taken on Thursday, October 25, at various locations in northern Greenville County, South Carolina, and southern Henderson County, North Carolina. The photo on the front page was taken while I stood in the middle of the old Greenville watershed road. The apples and pumpkins came from Skytop Orchard near Flat Rock, North Carolina.*