



January, 2008

Volume 8, No. 1

POETRY

An Unexpected Visit

Katie Meara

Making my way through my journey down here in New Mexico. I haven't written any thing "on purpose," but wanted to share my experience last week with you.

I work as Director of Operations in a medical clinic in a little mountain town in northern NM called El Rito. I'm walking down the hall last week and am stopped in my tracks by one of our patients. The man's jeans were hanging from his frame, his back bent as he took each painful step. Uh, oh... looking just like my husband, Kemet, looked in the weeks before he died. But it was the look in the man's eyes, that look that says "I'm tired of this pain and I'm scared" that pushed me over the abyss.

Emotionally, mentally and even physically, I was back with my husband in June of 2006, watching him struggling to walk to the back deck to enjoy the sunrise with a cup of coffee that he couldn't even drink anymore. I knew that Grief was fast on my heels. Thinking to myself "maybe I can outrun it, I'm having a great day... this can't be happening today." As if Grief was throwing the cherry on top of her creation, my boss then calls and asks me to phone the funeral home (same one where my husband had been taken) to check on services for a co-worker's family member. Tah-dah! I'm now officially at Grief's mercy.

When I got home, I again grieved the loss of Kemet. It also happened to be Halloween, his all-time favorite holiday. I decided to meditate and hang on to the happy memories of Halloweens past. After my meditation, I was in the kitchen warming something up for dinner, when I felt a shift – viscerally and spiritually – about how I looked at grief. And I wrote...

I'm pretty sure this came from Creator. I figured I should share it with anyone who has Grief come visit their hearts and souls.

Blessings to us all!
Katie Meara

The will of God will never take you where the
Grace of God will not protect you.

An Unexpected Visit

Katie Meara

My Old Friend, Grief, tapped me on the shoulder today.
 "Hello, Beloved" she said, "I haven't visited with you for a while.
 Recognize me
 Honor me
 Love me"

My Old Friend, Grief, is beautiful.
 She is soft and yielding,
 A changing form of ethereal light.
 She is sacrifice.
 She is compassion.
 And She can pack one hell of a punch.

She has soothed my exposed, soft underbelly.
 She has held me tight when my body was racked with the sobs that come all the way from my toes.
 She knows me as no one else knows me.

And what lessons and gifts She has shown me.
 I know that my heart truly loved.
 My faith tells me to have no fear, knowing there are blessings ahead.
 I have more compassion for myself and others.

And She says to me,
 "I remind you that you are, and always have been, loved."
 "I have shown you what grace looks like"
 "I will always be here when you need me."
 When you need to visit that deep place within and mourn it, I will protect you."

My Old Friend Grief will be a lifelong companion.
 Her beauty and compassion will come to visit at my invitation or Hers.
 I have made my peace with Her.
 I hug myself and embrace our union.

October 31, 2007

Ric Masten Words & one-liners

FLAGS



She comes on like a Mack truck!

she dresses in flags
and comes on like a Mack truck
she paints her eyelids green
and her mouth is a loudspeaker
rasping out profanity

at cocktail parties
she is everywhere
like a sheep dog working a flock
barking
nipping at your sleeve
spilling your drink...
bestowing wet sloppy kisses

but
I have received secret messages
carefully written
from the shy quiet woman
who hides
in this bizarre gaudy castle
+++

AFTERWORD — When it comes to people, "What you see is what you get!" is wrong more times than not. I used to know this pushy, loud, annoying, brash woman. I tried to stay as far away from her as possible when we met on one of my tours, but she always managed to run me down and corner me. And then later, when I had returned from the road, she would send me letters that in perfect penmanship poured her heart out, describing the divorce and how terribly hurt she was.

I've also met a woman online who is an excellent poet. For quite a while we exchanged poems weekly. This dear soul's works was full of soft whimsy and empathy. We were soul mates. Then on the road we met and I found her to be a driven, high-strung, dominating personality. But you know what? Her behavior didn't really bother me that much because I already knew her mind and loving soul from our many exchanges on the internet. No, when it comes to people what you see is not what necessarily you get.

TOO MANY KISSES



You don't throw rocks...you blow kisses

You don't throw rocks -- you blow kisses
Don't throw rocks -- you blow kisses
Sticks and stones used to break my back.
Now just because my skin is black
You blow kisses Jack,
Too many kisses.

You bring me wine -- bring me water.
bring me wine bring me water
Filled my glass a hundred times.
Act like you're guilty of some crime
You bring water Jim,

Too much water.

You're asking me to be your lover.
Asking me to be your lover.
I feel your arms hold me so tight
But Jack, I think if I were white
You'd find another
Brown skin lover.

You say you're blind to my color.
Stone blind to my color.
You claim that you are color blind
And then you talk about it all the time.
You see color Jim!
Too much color!

You don't throw rocks -- you blow kisses.
Don't throw rocks -- you blow kisses.
When you threw stones at this man
At least he knows just where he stands
But you blow kisses Jim
Too many god damn kisses!
+++.

AFTERWORD — I performed the above song lyric to a freshman Sociology class in Sacramento City College. This, in the late nineteen sixties. The racial make up of this particular class was about one third white, one third black and one third Hispanic and Asian.

As soon as I finished reading TOO MANY KISSES a white kid jumped up and addressed the black students, "Aren't you offended that this honky has taken the position of a black man in his song lyric?"

What followed taught me much about the kind of poetry I write. A young black student stood up and responded to the pointed question in this way.

"Mr. Masten was not taking the position of a black in his song lyric. He was telling us what his observer observed him doing in the presence of black people." The student went on to say, "I have an observer also, we all do, and in Mr. Masten's song lyric his observer was communicating with my observer and this kind of communication rises above the things that separate us such as race, gender, age, etc. Mr. Masten's kind of poetry is simply his observer attempting to communicate with our observers."

And thinking about this incident years later I realized that this is true of about 80% of everything I have written. When my observer catches me in some odd or stupid action, a report will always be handed in at the end of the day and the subject matter of these reports often becomes the theme of the next thing I write.

I frequently find myself wondering what ever became of that bright young man. Somehow, I just know he went far in his chosen profession.

THE LAST PERIOD



The last period...

back when I turned forty
 I came dribbling out of the locker room
 ready to start the second half
 glancing up at the scoreboard
 I saw that we were behind
 7 to 84
 and it came to me then
 we ain't gonna win
 and considering the score

I began to be damn glad
 this particular game
 wouldn't go on forever

but don't take this to mean
 I was ready for the showers
 take it to mean I planned to play
 one helluva second half

now, I told this to some kids
 in the court next to mine
 and they laughed
 but I don't think they understood
 how could they
 playing in the first quarter
 only one point behind

these days
 well into the last period
 I have discovered
 that winning the game
 is not what is important

what is important though
 IS
 that I look good while losing
 +++

AFTERWORD — I wrote the first part of this one right after I turned 40. Then I added the last two verses when I turned 50 beginning it with the line "Deep into Autumn" Now I'm "Well into Winter" and the last lines still ring true.

I'm trying to look good while losing even with my wife in Westland Rehab with a broken hip and wrist and me with problems "down there" where a urologist will take a biopsy to see if the lump is malignant. And I must admit the older I get the more difficult the "Looking Good" punch line becomes. And I guess that is why Bette Davis said, "Growing old ain't for sissies!"

Ric Masten's weekly
WORDS & ONE-LINERS
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The International Journal of Healing and Caring – On Line

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