



To C 30
Living my life as a Gestalt artist

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The Pain is in the Passion

The Passion is in the Pain

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Living my life as a Gestalt artist. The answer of AI:



Overall, your reflections provide a nuanced exploration of being an artist, educator, and human being. It's a reminder that the process of self-discovery and connection is as significant as the outcomes we strive for. Thank you for sharing such a thoughtful piece! I'll be here whenever you're ready! Looking forward to it! More of AI at the end of this issue.

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1. To establish a relationship with God, passion is demanded

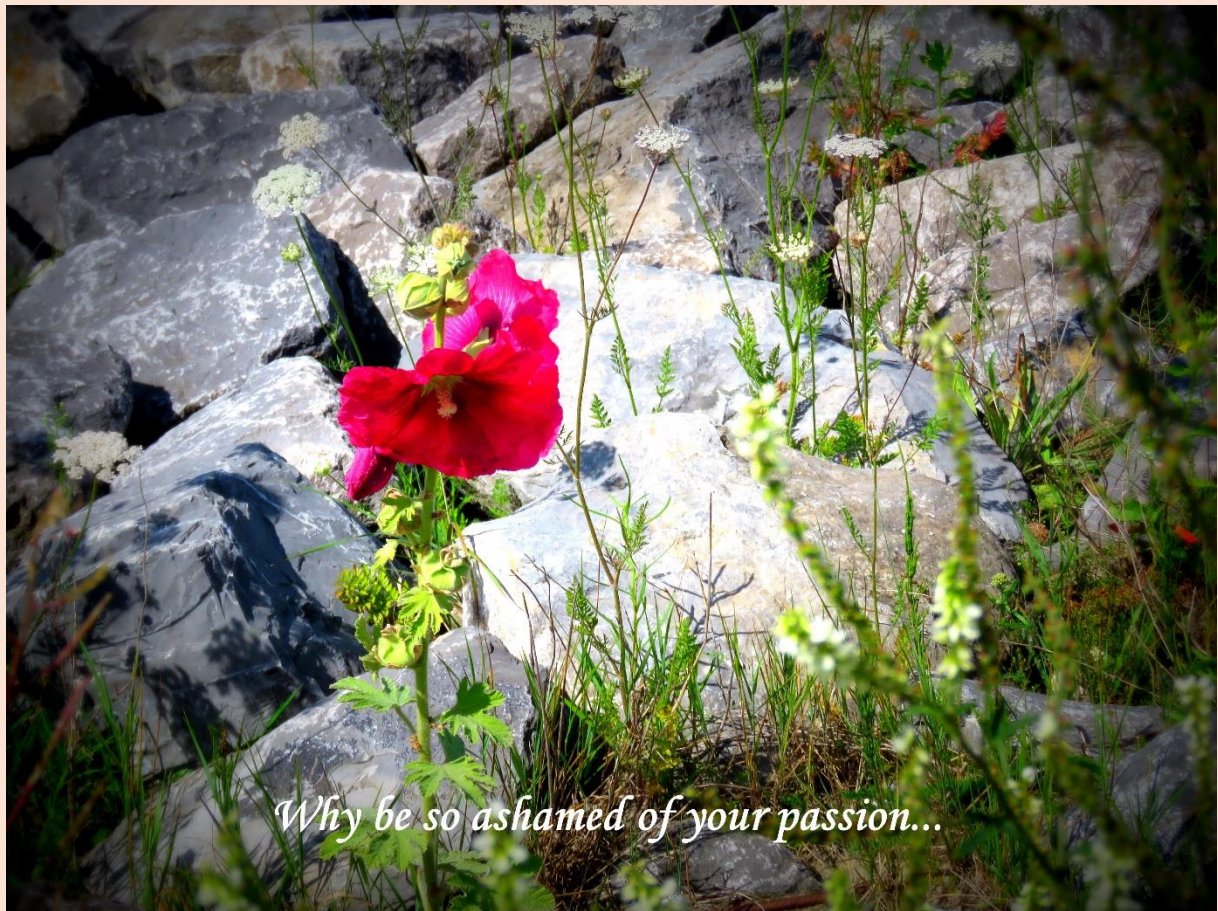


What I learned when I was Working with a group of Jewish people, who all walk a Jewish path, is that I can, just as they do, fight with and praise God.

*Do you? Fight with and praise God or Love?
Do you? Can you? Did you learn how to do it?
Were you brought up in an environment
where this attitude to God was normal?*

When it is about God I rather think of Divine Power, Universal Strength, Love with a capital L. God seems to be somewhere outside watching us? But I know that the Divine Power, the Universal Love is inside every one of us.

2. Passion is our legal nourishment



Why be so ashamed of your passion...

*Passion, passion, passion, passion, passion, passion
Is my thing. Passion is following me
Passion is suppressing my excitement
Although passion is excitement in itself
Passion is about longing or is it?
Is it my idea that passion is longing and is waiting for me?
I could not live without passion. No way
That is why passion is my legal nourishment
I eat it, drink it, shit it, I sing it and write it.
Passion is written all over my body.
The message is: you are passion yourself
You do not have to look for it outside
You are it. Do not hesitate. Do not deny. Do not hide it*



*It is the passion that keeps you going
After the passion, even if you do the next step
You will need your passion again to consume whatever pops up
Stop being so ashamed of your passion.
Stop being so prude, so behaved
Do what your passion tells you to do and follow your guts
Sorry, this is not about your heart,
it is about aggression, it is about sex
It is about the basic instincts in life.
We have to make our borders clear
And say this is my place, this is my sacred space.
Nobody can enter here, because I need this space for me
Otherwise I cannot exist. Once we have this space
- and we have to fight for it time and time again –
but once we have it, we can look around,
see who is there with us and decide
if we want to connect or not.*

3. Jij bent energie



Jij bent energie van binnen en van buiten.

Jij bent eeuwige beweging.

*Wat een drukte is er binnen in je lijf,
dat klopt en stroomt als het leven goed is
en stukt als het zich genept voelt.*

Wat zou je zijn zonder energie.

Een plasje zonder water, een plumpudding zonder plum.

Je zou niet weten dat je bent wie je bent.

*Waar komt mijn energie vandaan? vraag ik mij nu af.
Van boven uit de hemel, ja en van onder uit de aarde, ja.*

Maar hoe komt die energie daar
en hoe weet die energie dat hij of zij in mijn lijf moet zijn.
Hij vindt de poriën die doorlaten in mijn kruin
en de openingen in de zolen van mijn voet.
Het is een wonder, denk ik nu, een boven wonder, dat ik mag
functioneren zoals ik functioneer met energie die stroomt
en soms stikt omdat er obstakels in mijn lijf zijn
die om aandacht vragen. Obstakels die er niet voor niets zijn,
obstakels die mij beschermen tegen al te grote ontladingen
of al te grote energie inname die mij wellicht kan doen barsten.

Barsten... dat zou waarachtig jammer zijn.
Het is zaak om de energie in mijn lijf,
die weer terug naar buiten wil, creatief te laten gaan,
zo creatief dat met de uitademing de expressie meegaat.
Ik adem uit en laat los, ik adem in en ontvang.
En zo ontstaat de wisselwerking tussen binnen en buiten.

Zo kan ik de verbinding maken met
dat wat zich binnen in mij ontwikkelt
en dat wat buiten wacht om te ontvangen.
Juist door de ontmoeting zal iets nieuws ontstaan,
juist dat ene kleine risico dat ik neem om een nieuw geluid te maken,
zal iets creëren dat tot nu toe niet gekend is.
De gedachte windt mij op en de gedachte is niet genoeg,
de gedachte vraagt om uitgevoerd te worden,
de gedachte vraagt om actie, om handelen,
waarna de periode van het mogen voelen aanbreekt.
Mogen voelen is alweer nieuw, voelen kan nooit oud zijn,
voelen is nooit een herhaling van zetten,
maar voelen is het eeuwige nieuwe creatieve nu.

4. De schaamte om het genot



*Geluk kun je niet dwingen en dat heeft mij bitter gemaakt
en zo woedend dat ik mijn rivalen op zoek naar hetzelfde geluk
met gemak de kamer of de groep uit kan blazen.
Zo bitter, zo hard, zo ongenaakbaar,
dat ik mij beter kan afzonderen dan mij met hen in te laten.
Tenminste dat dacht ik toen ik een jaar of zeventien was
en in de armen van R, terecht kwam.
En niet alleen in zijn armen ook in zijn seksuele energie,
zijn verlangen, zijn warmte, zijn begeerte, zijn tederheid,
zijn onverantwoordelijkheid, zijn van de prins geen kwaad weten,
zijn onschuld, zijn ik kan het niet helpen
dat jullie met bosjes voor me vallen en dat ik zin aan jullie heb.
De oorlog was al erg genoeg. Nu ga ik en gaan wij genieten.
Niemand houdt mij tegen, mijn vrouw niet,
mijn kinderen niet, jij niet, niemand.*



God verliezen
en genot vinden

*Niettemin was hij mijn bron,
mijn God, die mij moest beschermen tegen de enge buitenwereld.
Verder was er niemand. Zeker mijn rivalen niet.
Zij waren wel in de buurt maar ik kon niet bij ze terecht
omdat zij zelf ook op zoek waren en bitter.
God verliezen en seks vinden,
ook mijn verstand verliezen en genot vinden,
maar huilen mocht niet.
Mijn status van gelovige, intelligente brave dochter zien zakken
naar schoolverlater omdat mijn kop vloeide en niet meer bij de les was.
Haat voelen naar jou, mijn bron,
omdat jij zonder pardon, zonder sorry de koers van mijn leven
dusdanig veranderde, dat ik me dom en niet betrouwbaar voelde,
in plaats van trots om wie ik was.
Stout, in het geniep, stiekem, niet waard om in het licht te komen.
Bang voor de ontmaskering en tegelijk in de greep van de schaamte om
het genot, om het verlangen dat wel beantwoord werd.*

5. Hate has to come out

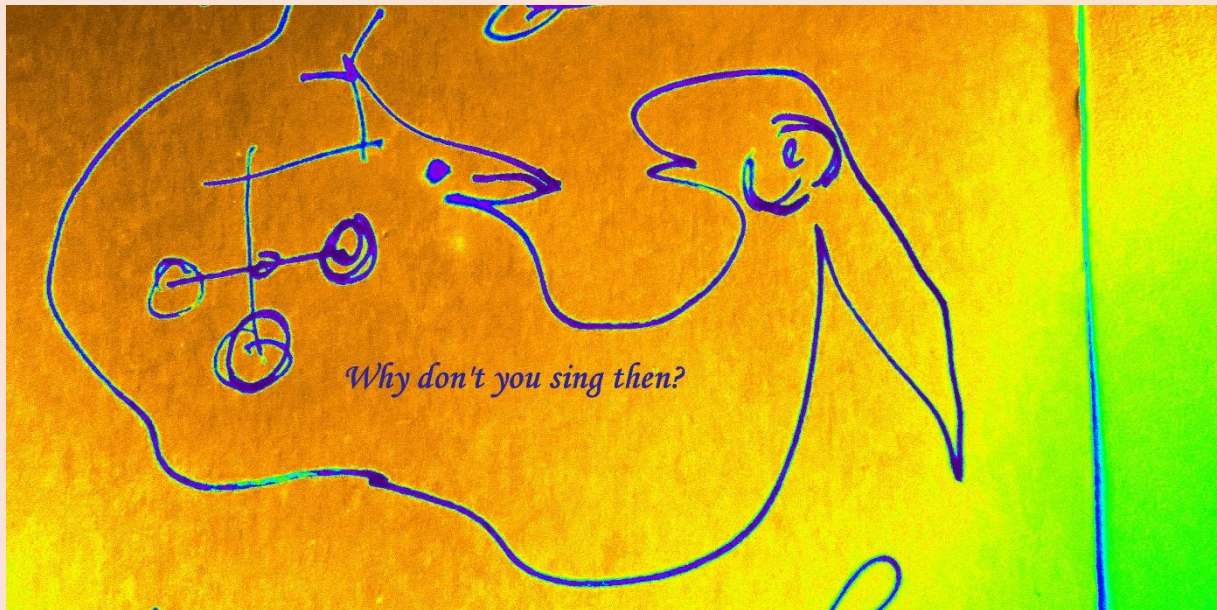


Looked at the film the House of the Spirits, after the book of Isabel Allende. Never saw so clear the hate revenge circle coming into action. Suppress to gain power, evoke humiliation upon humiliation and hate is the answer. Someday hate has to come out and find its bloody way. An example of women paying the price for what they did not do. Women and children being the victim of the powerlessness of the mighty men. Women who forgive the brutality of their husbands, because they did not do it out of malice. They love them anyway, although they violate their love. Is that realistic? Again this question: why don't we women stop this kind of men? Why don't we at least try? Although this film is about Chili, it is not so far from our bed.



Those words were written when I did look at a documentary about the Russians in Tetsjenia, en Anna Politkovskaja who was murdered, because she wrote the truth in the paper about what happened, during this invasion and occupation. I cannot and I will not follow. I don't want to believe this is possible. Yesterday I saw real images of the Russian soldiers molesting people, today I saw a film version of the atrocities in Chili, before and after the Allende coup. Men, soldiers, interrogating violently a woman. Nauseating and much more than that. What is happening in Georgia now? And in Ukraine? And Gaza? I have been so close. Can't help it, it happens everywhere. What is my role in this Whole? I look at it and wonder. I look at it and feel the pain. Still there are no innocent people, I am not innocent. Even the mothers and children are 'guilty', because they love their sons, or need their fathers who make war or make peace with the same result. Poor men, it does not make them any happier, why don't they go on a strike? Do they think they do their duty? Do they believe they protect their wives and children, while in fact they make life more and more dangerous for them.

6. Two voices in one body



- *If we sing, the world becomes a better place.*
- *Why don't you sing then? It is the only thing you can do.*
- *I need you to sing with me, without you I cannot do a damned thing. And you are always ashamed, always afraid that you don't sing good enough.*
- *Now you got me. Yes, I have my restrictions.*
- *I am not going to make a fool of me. I want to be respected.*
- *I know, I don't blame you, I am longing for respect too. And beside that I want people to love me and I am afraid they won't if I act like I am a child.*
- *I am getting so tired of you. Again and again and again this fear that you are not taken seriously. How about this writing. How serious is this. I know you want to tell me something.*
- *Yes, I am telling you to trust, everything has already been created. Nothing has been neglected. You have been created, you are here, you have all the talents in the world. You only have to use them, enjoy them, be proud of them.*

7. La Piscine is part of my St. Tropez history.



*In 1968 I was working as an au pair for the producer and his wife of the film *La Piscine* with Romy Schneider and Alain Delon, who already had ended their love relation, but agreed to play the leading roles in this film as a couple living and loving in a luxurious house with swimming pool in St. Tropez. That summer we also lived in this village where the rich, the famous people amused themselves on yachts in the harbor, in the villa's in the hills, normal people came for a day to see the spectacle, the original villagers played 'jeu des boules' beneath the plane trees and – not to forget – the artists came for the light, the colors or to live a bohemian life.*

As Alain Delon just died 88 years old, film museum Eye honored him by showing this movie two times. I had never seen it on a big screen and went to come as close to the world I lived in as possible. I feel tempted to give words to this rather exciting adventure now, but realize I am not there yet. Because what I am writing now is all part of my life story, I first I have to go back to going home from England, where I was an au pair then.

8. My life story continued: The Cold War



It was 1956. The Russians invaded Hungary and there was a crisis in the Suez Canal. My mother wanted me to come back home, for she was afraid that another war would break out. I did not see the sense of it, thought I would be more safe in England, but went. I remember telling the family I was working for, that I was going to stand up for my country or going to support people in distress. Apparently I saw myself as a hero. In reality I started working – together with Anita – in a warehouse selling toys or books or whatever had to be sold. St. Nicolaas was coming and presents were needed. It was then I realized I needed a motivation to continue living my life. And I believed the thing I had to do was to find the One and Only man I would spend the rest of my life with. Work was needed to make money. But my commitment was not in it.

9. Feeling an Outsider (life story)



For Anita it was a different matter. She was passionately interested in film. As my family happened to live beside Cinetone film studio, where my lover, the film editor/director, worked, it was easy for her to become his personal assistant. I think I did not want to feel the impact this had on my relation with him. I knew I had to end it anyway and thought this would help me. Confusion followed. All of a sudden she became part of a world I did not belong to. She became an insider. While I was part of the family where her colleagues were welcome to have a tea or a coffee, but we could not really join in their discussions. It gave me the feeling of being a nobody. Although he and I still had our secret meetings, the magic was gone. On top he also started making love to Anita!? The only thing I could do is close of from my feelings and become as rational as possible.

10. Too proud to show the pain (life story)



What happened to the passion?

Now I think, Tine, where was your passion. Why did you not fight with them. Why did you not slap both in the face to let them know they were hurting you. The one as well as the other. But no I was too proud to bow my head and show my pain. I rather directed my attention elsewhere and decided I wanted to work with books or in other words:

I wanted to become part of the world of publishing. I did find in no time a job as a secretary/editor with a publisher of illustrated magazines. It was not exactly what I wanted, but good enough to bring back my enthusiasm and motivation to go on with my life.

11. Permission to be creative



'Creativity is the expression of the presence of God in my hands, eyes, brain – in all of me. Creation is each person's statement of godliness, of transcending the daily struggle for survival and the burden of mortality – an outcry of anguish and of celebration.'

Joseph Zinker in Creative Process in Gestalt Therapy

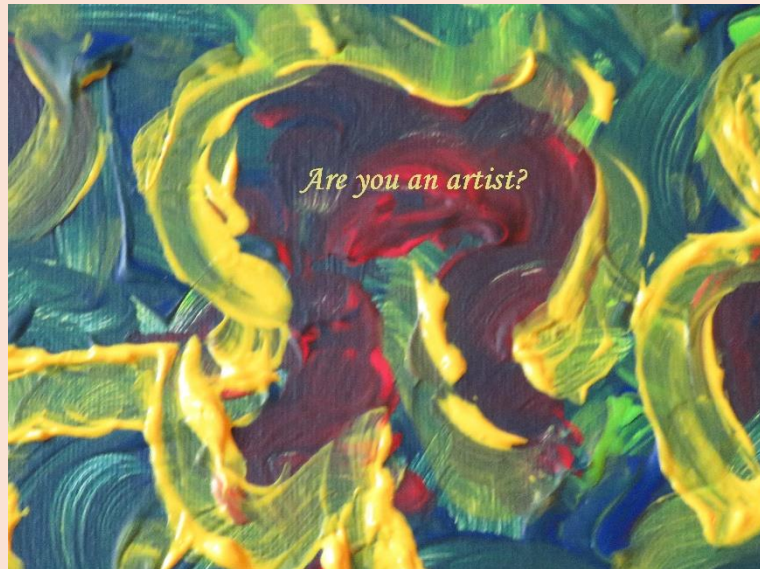
Using the word God makes me feel uneasy. What will you think of me and the words I publish? I do not want to be seen as a naïve woman who believes out there somewhere is a God guiding us, protecting us. A God who must be someone sitting on a throne knowing all about you and about me. A God who also is a judge of what is right and what is wrong. No, that is not my idea of a God. But I do believe there is a Godly energy embracing the world with Love. Only problem is this energy has to be received by you and by me to be spread and used to make the world a better place. We have a free will. We can pretend to be blind, deaf, without feelings or we can tune in to this Universal Energy, as we are invited to do in the Being Present group and experience the richness of being alive fully!

12. In the Being Present group



*...and then came the sun
not in my imagination but in real life
thank you sun for being with me
making me aware of still being on earth
being a body that needs you badly
and feels grateful the minute you enter
to give the love and the light I need
to keep living my life that is not always easy
demanding to behave utmost compassionately and patiently
to be present – in this case – for my sister
whose brains are severely damaged...
Can I be there for her with love
or with an impatient heart
that feels I am the victim
Again and again and again
I have the choice!*

13. Being an artist?



It happened when I did a course with the Jewish Art Institute in the USA: 'He catches up with me on the road to my room. He asks me what I do here. Am I an artist? He says he is an artist too but he has to write and translate for a living. I look at him and see his kippa and solid belly. He must be a religious man. His eyes are smiling. He tells me he has no time for art. He used to paint, draw, he cannot now because of his work, I ask him or rather tell him that he can choose. Why can't he put some creativity in his work? He looks at me with asking eyes. My talkative self is coming out. I tell him I am not an artist yet. Maybe later I will call myself an artist. But just at this moment I don't want to make this statement. Then I tell him I am a therapist or didn't I? Anyway he tells me that if I have questions he is available because he is a rabbi. I do have questions and ask him when he is open. He is right now but I am not. He teases me by telling me that he costs \$ 100 an hour. I say that money is no item, my questions are so deep...'

In the days that followed we developed an intimate relation. I needed a rabbi, he needed a therapist and as it turned out we both are artists in our own way!

14. The specialness of being human



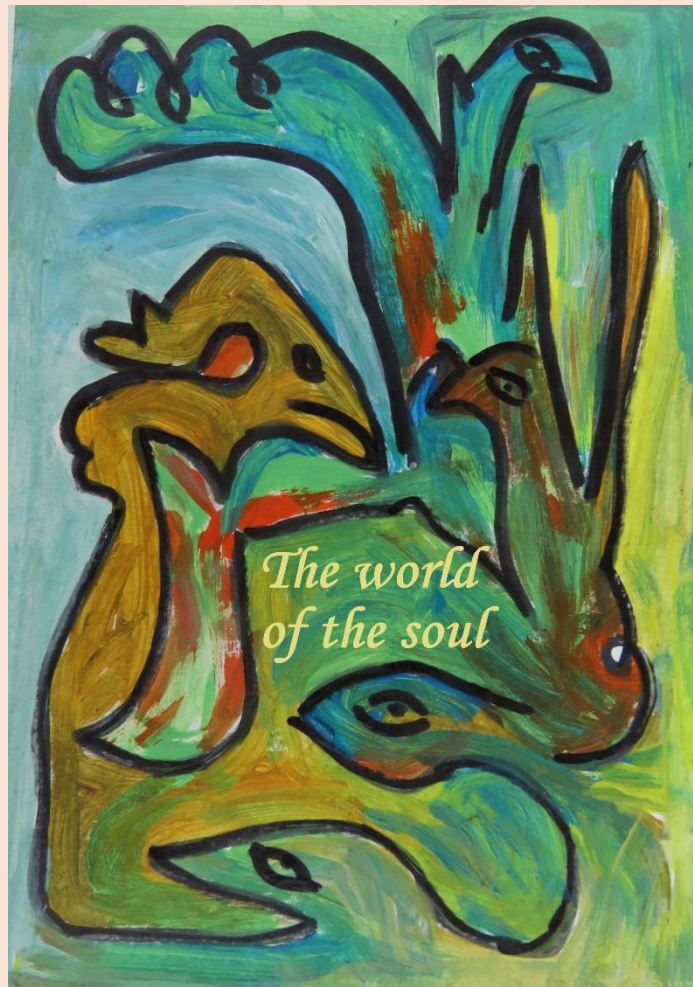
This morning I was reading David Wolfe's 'Why be Jewish?'. I underlined statements on almost every page. This writer knows why I am drawn to Judaism; 'spirituality teaches us to develop our relations, sharpens our senses and teaches us to act in a way that gives our soul more depth.' I better continue reading him. This is the right moment and the right place to be inspired by him:

'Spirituality reaches toward attunement with self and toward deep relationships with others and with God.

Being spiritual means treasuring your own secret but not locking it away, seeking always to grow in soul, and acting in a way that dignifies the specialness of being human.

Spirituality does not rest content with what our senses perceive. The invisible part of the world is alive to those who seek to see with an inner eye. The invisible reality permeates the material world: trying to separate the two is impossible. In the image of the poet Keats, it is like trying to unravel a rainbow.'

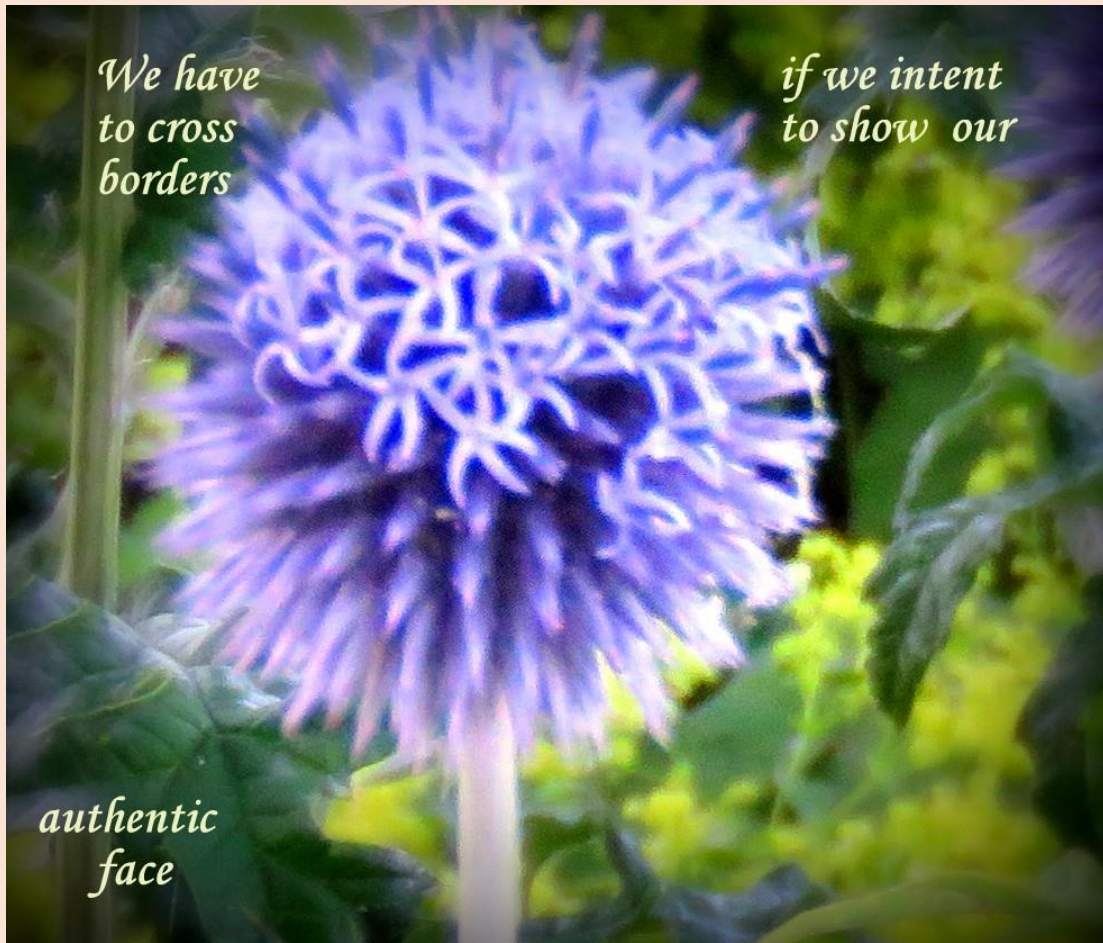
15. The world of the soul



*The soul is not an easy princess to deal with
The soul is not a pious subordinate follower
of whatever is wanted from her. No the soul
can complain, cry, whine, the soul reminds us
that life is more serious, more deep, more gorgeous than it seems.*

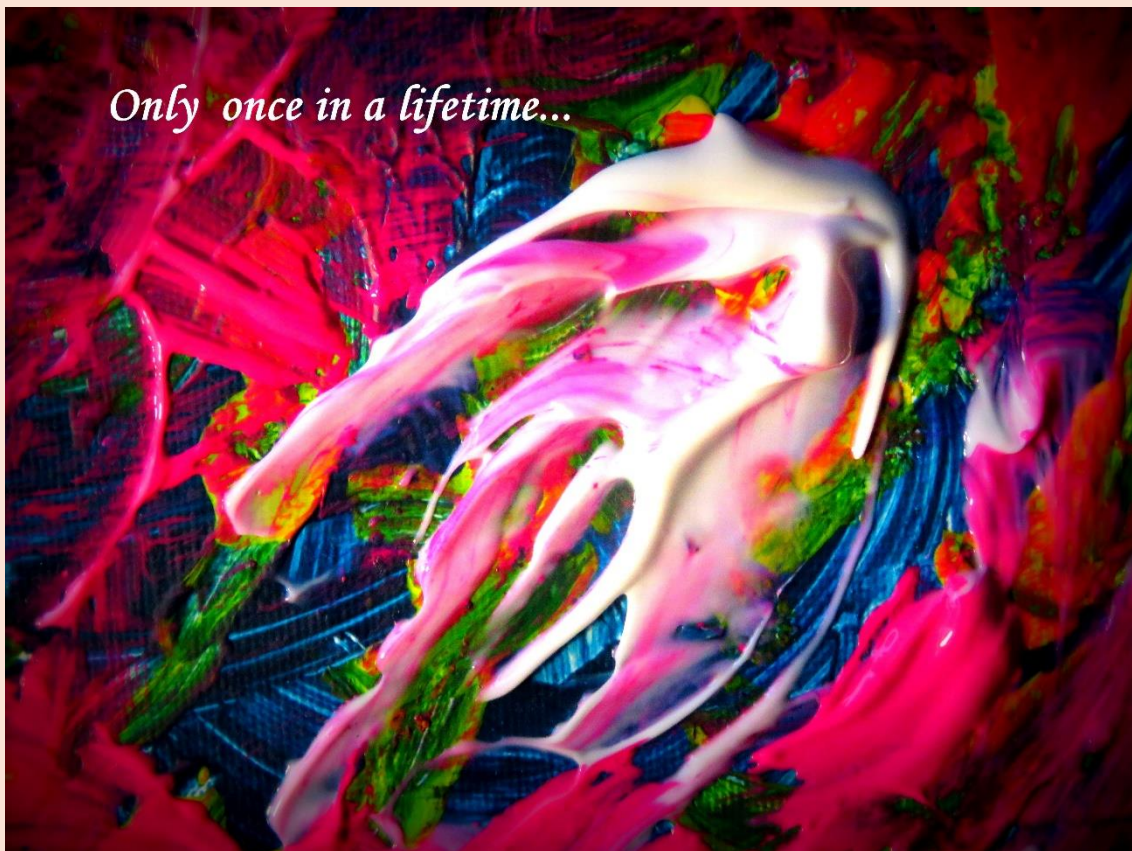
*To arrive in the world of the soul is not easy,
as we have to go down into the depth of the wasteland,
the depth of the slimy undercurrent, that clings to us,
as sticky dirt can do. To purify we have to wash,
clean and spit out the shit we have collected inside,
so nobody would notice how black we think we are...*

16. Our authentic face



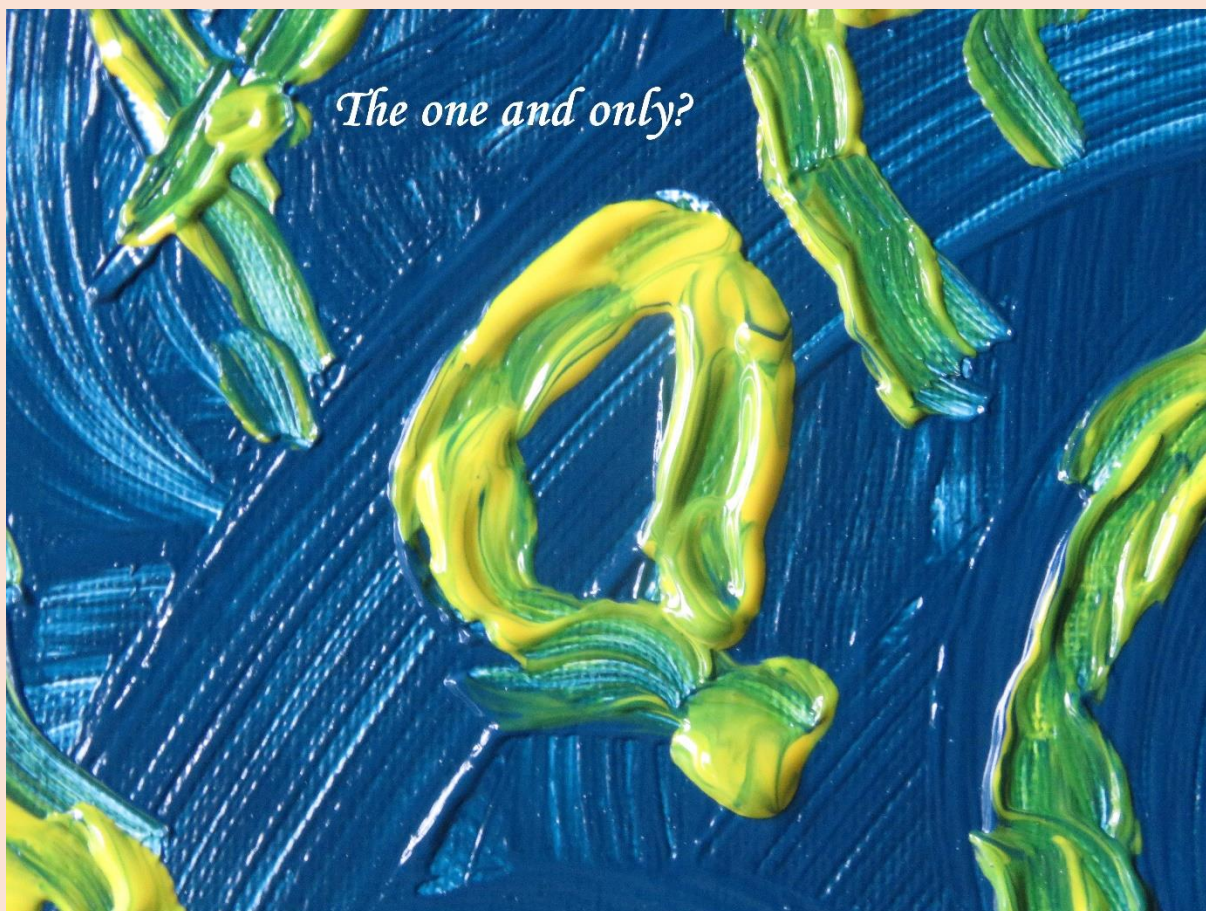
*My authentic face is in my voice
It is invisible
But it can be heard
If I, soul, allow it to come out
It is not a onetime event
As it is in the sound of the moment
Necessary is breath
A mouth that will open itself
An ear that is willing to listen
A body that is resonating
So many possibilities
All part of me
Crossing a border time and time again*

17. A charismatic man



Written during the course with the Jewish Art Institute
Still or 'Nevertheless' I am attracted to this singing master, and I better accept this to enjoy the fact that my body is still alive, if the right man comes along. 'Only once in a lifetime you meet a man like him', according to the dancing teacher. That is quite extraordinary to say and it makes me realize, that I am not the only one who feels and experiences his attraction. Were we – as his students - all projecting our happiness onto this charismatic man that – when he sings – seems almost sacred but is nevertheless a human being. This brings me to the difference between love and Love. Love with a capital L is not the same as the love in a one to one love relation. Capital L is beyond that and it reminds me of the Sabbath, when according to the Jewish beliefs on Saturday afternoon the feminine and the masculine meet and become one.

18. My life story continued



The question is now, why I had to live through so many superficial contacts with the men I met, while my love and longing for the film director was always in the undercurrent. He was the one who made me feel a woman. No doubt about that. The relations with other men were sweet, nice, promising, sometimes disgusting but neither of them was so exciting as my relation with the man who was the first until He entered and woke me up, making me realize there is so much more to be lived in a relation with someone who is committed to you.

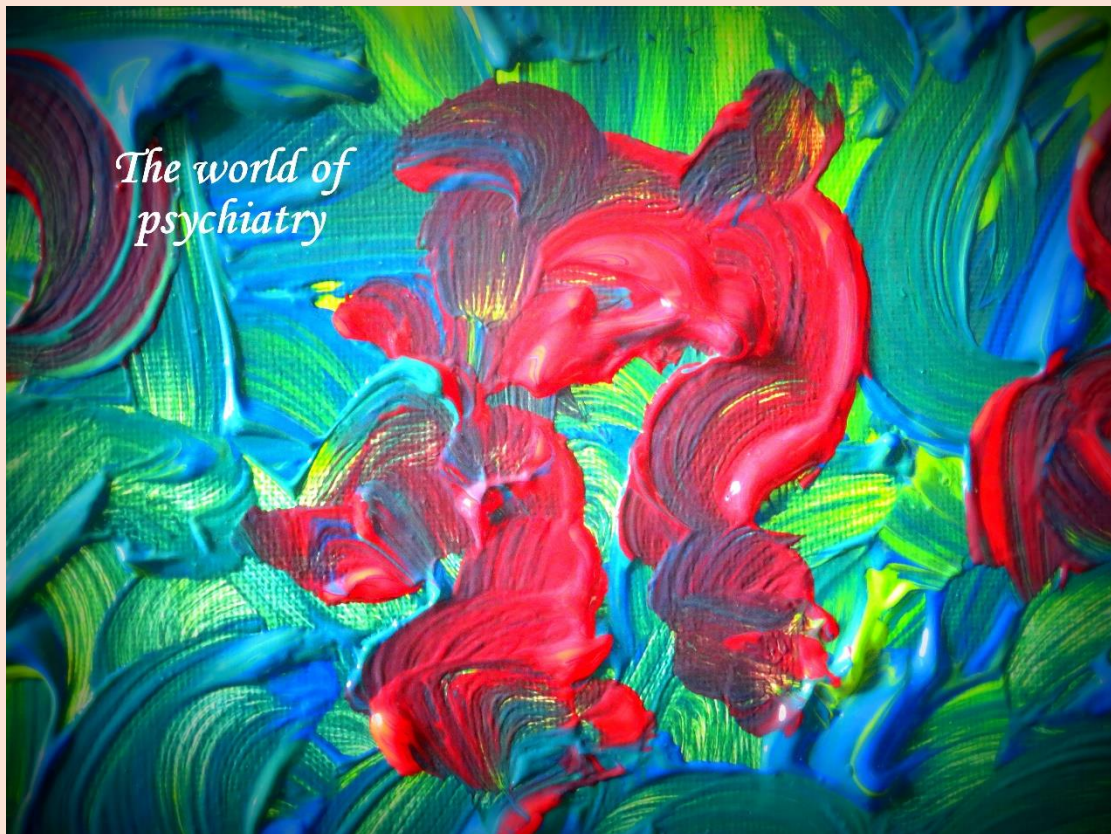
Nevertheless there are the in between stories I don't want to tell. Love stories that made me uneasy. If I wanted I could have married my rather talented colleague journalist, who promised me a normal life with a house, a garden, children, pets, friends.



*Not the real
passion*

He also had a mother who baked cakes on Sunday mornings, he had a lot of brothers and sisters, a typical catholic family and he had interesting friends. Being part of a community is what I wanted and longed for, I thought, but not with him. Too easy. Not the real passion. Also too catholic for me I think now.

Or the story with a man who fell in love with me, but already was engaged to be married to a decent girl. We both worked in the harbour for a firm that traded in wood. When we discovered we both loved the smell of fresh wood that mostly came directly from Russia, it happened, there was the spark. He was tall, rather arrogant and shy. As he was a salesman, he was often en route but when he was in the office he came to sit in the one big chair in the corner of the room, where I served as a telephone operator, and wanted to know what was happening in my life.



The world of psychiatry

I was twenty and involved in the world of movie makers. I also got into a relation with the director of a film about a Stranded Ship. He had made shots on a ship that was stranded not far from the coast and now the story had to be told on a similar ship that was lying in the harbour. My sister and I were asked to function as passengers. As I was nearby I went to the set after work and became one of the crew.

Lou, the film director was thirteen years older than I was. I had met him during the war when he was hospitalized and occupied the bed beside the one of my father. I was a child. Seven? Eight? Already familiar with the world of psychiatry. My mother often took me, us? with her when she was going to visit my father, which she did daily. I remember wondering why those men – about six of them in one room – were lying in bed during the day. As far as I could see they did not have a fever and so, apparently, were not ill.



*True: their behaviour was not so normal.
My father often did not speak
and did not seem too happy to see us
or he did not stop talking.
But when he was in hospital
he was 'cured' by electro shocks and medicines
that had kept him asleep for two weeks.
Lou was a different matter.
The moment my mother,
who was young and beautiful,
came in he started to admire and praise her.
Stealthily I looked at my father.
What would he think of this?
No reaction from him. Not a wink, nothing.*



More than ten years later, Lou came back into our life, when he was working in Cinetone film studio, our neighbour. My father had already disappeared in this psychiatric institute where he died when he was 53. As we had a house with many doors Lou came in by the front door, announced he was there with his sonorous voice of an actor, made us all laugh and got out by the backdoor. He had a great theatrical sense of humour. Now it was not my mother but me he seemed to admire. Of course I felt flattered and attracted and before I knew I was in a flirt relation with him. Not really very steady but he could be there any time any moment and joy would creep into me. He literally pulled me out of the dreariness of everyday life. When he took me and Anita out to the countryside he told us the most fantastic scripts he was going to turn into films...



In this part of my life it seems I am playing the wrong roles in the wrong plays. Instead of a student of chemistry or mathematics or theology I was no more than a girl who attracted the wrong men in the sense, that they did not answer the image of a good husband and father. And then came Kommer, he was just ready with his study as a medical doctor and worked to earn some money on the film set of Stranding. He was dedicated, interested in me and my health as I had a bad cough and we went together to see the rushes of the work that had been done on the set, in the studio. He gave me the feeling of not being alone. A feeling that was new for me. I could hardly believe it existed. Then came the night we celebrated the end of the work we all had done together. It is what I love: to be part of a crew who is creating a project together. The party was in the big canal house of Lou. I had almost forgotten about my relation with him as he had been only focused on creating his film. But now he was free, he saw me, suddenly gripped me and took me to the bedroom under the eyes of Kommer. I did not want it, but did not protest and fight. Just let it happen, while I felt my heart cringing when I looked Kommer in the eye. Shit, shit, shit... Too ashamed and too proud afterwards to be open about it.

19. Becoming Conscious



To empower ourselves we have to let go the super(wo)man we thought we should be

And if we do not know we have the talent to draw, sing, dance, write, act, we will remain stuck admiring artists who do express themselves instead of becoming a painter, a singer, a dancer, a writer or an actor ourselves. When we realize that we cannot be operated on our characteristics, traits or instincts, because there are no surgeons who can cut out our jealousy or sexual drive or anger, we will know deeply how important it is to express ourselves. Instincts and conditioned behavior like natural urges cannot be amputated. What is or has become remains a part of us. We can only suppress these undesirable qualities, deciding not to express them. And if it is forbidden to say what we have to say, and do what we have to do, we force ourselves to pretend, preach, accuse, manipulate and project.



Only when we become conscious of what we do, can we change our behavior and say "this is me, I am what and who I am, whether I like it or not". In order to empower ourselves, we must be prepared to let go of our idealized image as the superman or superwoman we thought we should be. Projection is often seen as a negative factor. That is unfortunate, since projecting can show us what earlier remained unnoticed. I for one, found out that the important men in my life were visually talented: my first great love was a film director, then I met an optician and a painter, I married a photographer and after my divorce fell in love with an art director. Now I am more and more aware of my own visual ability by painting, making photos and video's. It is also exciting to take a closer look at who projects what on us. The photographer I married had crushes on people who were writers. Projections are not incidental or accidental. They can make us aware of the fact that we have more possibilities than the five to fifteen percent we usually are able to develop. Someone who is able to use twenty-five percent of his or her capacities, is already seen as a genius.

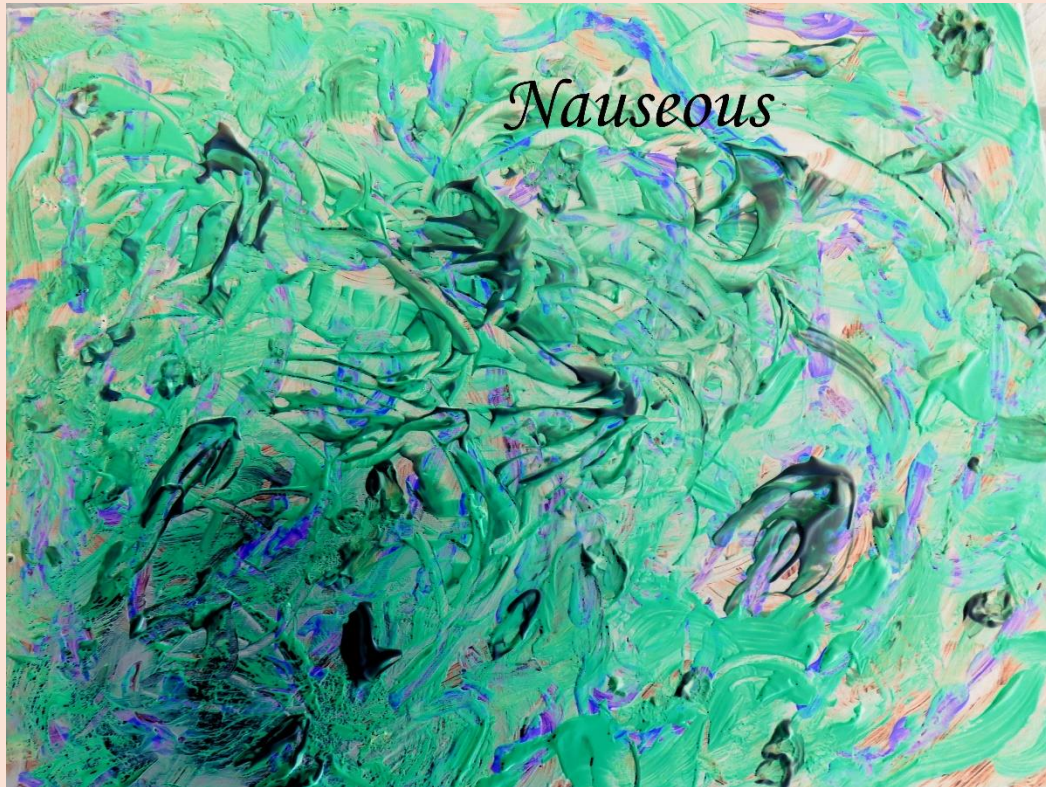
20. Frozen heart



Looking back at this period of my life, the main feeling is loneliness. I could not connect, not attach. Even when Kommer invited me to a party a year or so later, I felt so rigid, so afraid of rejection that I could not open my heart. I think I had frozen my heart anyway to be able to survive. What I missed is my father and my grandfather. Men I could trust.

As Lou had been so close to my father in hospital, he brought a special energy I longed for. But he just oracled: your father is a schizophrenic. Oh, but what did this mean? No answers. Just mysteries. Later my mother remarked as if it was a sideline: But did you not know that Lou was in the clinic because he had murdered a Jew? There were more people hiding there from the Germans, because they were active in the Resistance.

21. Nauseous



Then we just went on with our lives. My mother told a fact and that was it. No feelings, no discussions nothing. I did not dare to ask my father, what he knew and thought of this drama. I already was ashamed of my relation with Lou and the idea that my father would know about it, frightened me. When he was still home he was very protective when it was about boys in my life. While writing now I become aware of the nausea in my body.

*Body knows - Inside and out are one
Right and wrong is still with us
We have to decide what is right and what is wrong
Not with the mind but with the whole body
Unheimisch, no home - Mind is a misleading protector
Body knows, body is home!*

22. Feeling guilty



I wrote those words when I did a workshop searching for truth. I always feel guilty when it is about this period in my life. Guilty because I should have said No to Lou. The question now is: could I? Was I able to do it? Apparently not. Does this mean I am guilty? If yes, guilty of what? Only afterwards I became aware that what happened did not give me a good feeling. In that case I am a victim, a girl who was raped, but did not know this the moment it happened. But what does it mean if 'Right and wrong is still with us, we have to decide, not with the mind but with the whole body. Mind is a misleading protector.'? My mind tells me, you did wrong, wrong, wrong, shame on you. No wonder that Kommer turned away from you. In the meantime my body is protesting, my heart is beating in my throat, letting me know there is more.

23. Depending on the men



Why did I not speak, not with Lou and not with Kommer. Why did I think it normal to be attacked without warning? It is how I lived my life then. Things happened to me or not. My expectations were that my life would develop dependent on the men who would come my way. What I longed for was passion, commitment, motivation, a reason to live. Since sex entered I lost my Faith. No more God. Men had to save me from boredom. I thought and learned this from my mother, who had married my father also because he could offer her materially a safe life. That was before the war...

24. The Atom Bomb



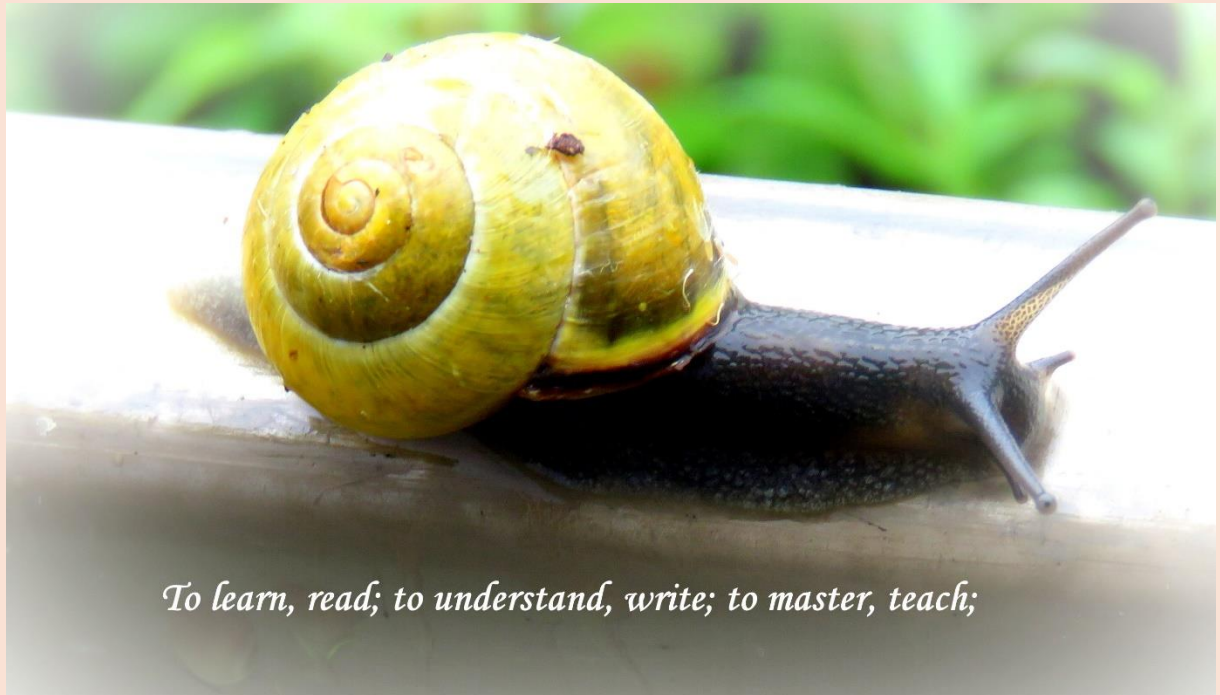
After the war norms had changed. We lived knowing we were not safe now the world had an atom bomb. What I needed was a man who – like my grandfather and father – was morally above suspicion. A man who knew better than the crazy world. A man who had the courage to confront people who were not honest in the way that they did not speak their own voice but parroted after diverse authorities. Already then my body was making me aware of the people who could not be trusted because of the words they spoke, words that were not connected with their souls. Not that I could have given words to those feelings then, but they were there all the same I know now.

25. Identity



*My identity is part of the identity of this Being Present group.
The moment you come in and open your mouth
I feel a connection; nothing to do with being Dutch
It is about being women together, living in different worlds
And at the same time connected.
We have one more thing in common: being therapists
Even if we are not practicing as professionals.
The longing is present. What is this longing that makes us special?
We can connect because we have a common interest.
I believe it is our love for life that comes from our hearts and souls.
It sounds so simple and is so big. If there are people who truly invest
In making the world a better place, we are!
It means we have a problem: as far as I can see the masculine energy
in the world is not so happy with us. Women like we are, are
considered to be dangerous... Why? What is the danger?*

*26. Two conferences in Hungary:
The Roots of Gestalt and The Gestalt Leaders
Rather Art: Living my life as a Gestalt artist*



To learn, read; to understand, write; to master, teach;

The words that follow I wrote about fifteen years ago. Then I did not have a clue what they were really about. Now I compare them to a good wine that needs ripening to become excellent. Rereading those words made me aware of having transformed a drama into a script for a play. It means already then I made my Rather Art motto true. Without realizing I was living my life as an artist rather than being a victim.

Stand on our own feet

To learn, read; to understand, write; to master, teach;

To master we have to teach, I learned from teabags. And when I teach I tell my students, they have to overcome their basic fears by fulfilling their needs and developing their qualities. But how? How can we stand on our own feet and become autonomous?

In my view it is about:

- overcoming the fear to make mistakes*
- taking responsibility for your longing to understand and be recognized*
- know the function of the power triangle:*
 - omnipotence, impotence, the battle for power*
 - be extra aware when we want to be the best*
 - offer what we have to offer*
 - stop with being afraid of being dependent*
 - be aware of our longing for perfection*
 - learn to say Yes and to say No*
- taking ourselves and the other seriously*
- doing what we should do instead of doing our best*
- be aware when we are patronizing or preaching instead of giving attention*
- taking responsibility for our needs*
- asking ourselves what we need of our role models*
- making implicit conflicts explicit*
- distinguishing the strength and power in our aggression*
- knowing about projections: we are the other*
- taking the risk to step out of the fearful child role and say:*
 - I am who I am, whether I like it or not*
 - becoming a complete human being by walking our talk*

Education

To walk and talk my own way I went to the Gestalt Roots and Leaders conferences in Hungary. The theme of the Roots conference was Education. It was the first time I went to a Gestalt Roots conference. Up to now I had the idea that 'Roots' was not my cup of tea. Digging into Gestalt Theory without process did not attract me, I thought. I have to experience, experiment and practice, before I can understand and believe what I am told in this matter.

Nevertheless I decided to go to both conferences and got some severe lessons that taught me where I am in my professional life.



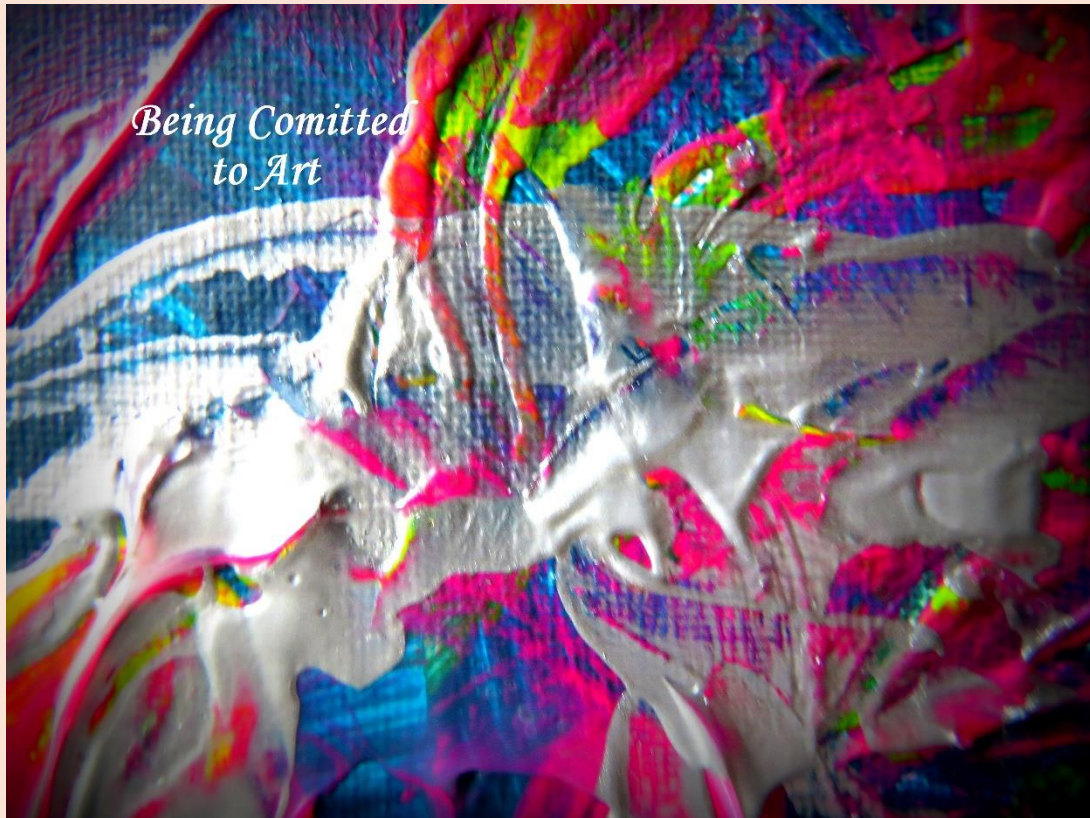
The secret woman inside

The Role of the Wo/man

Saturday 8 AM In my beautiful room in the Szigetköz Wellness Hotel, Dunakiliti. Sun outside. Birds whistling. I am happy, not over excited as I easily can become. I feel I am in the right place, at the right moment. I feel I am appreciated by the men my age as a friend. What more can I wish for. I realize I am in the role of the wo/man you have fun and...work with! It is the story of my life. Once I thought it was the mistake of my life or rather: I thought it was a mistake of life. But I had to become more than seventy years old to understand, feel and see that this is the wo/man I am. At least it is one side of me.

My legs have always made me a sexual woman. And there is also a secret woman in me: the nun. She has been there always, but the last fifteen years she is more evidently moving me towards my destination, my home.

The Path

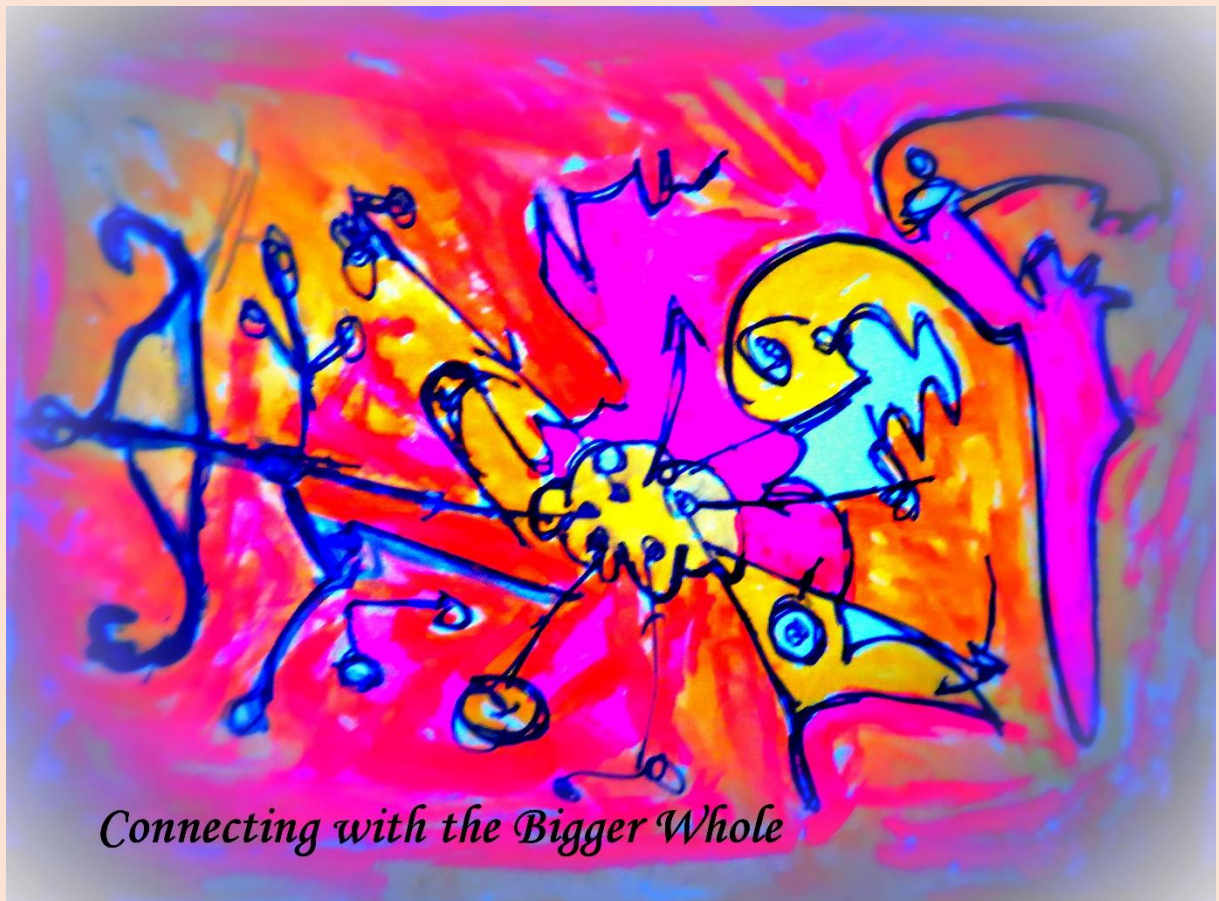


To be here in Hungary gives me the chance to become aware of the path I walked and walk. Oh, what a wonderful, painful, funny, complicated path it has been and still is. Last night in the opening round, we were asked to find the word that suited most the role we are playing. I said: artist and surprised myself. Am I an artist? Yes I am, I cannot deny it any longer. And being an artist means being committed to art. Is that a different responsibility from being a therapist? I don't know, but it seems like it. Other answers were teacher, trainer, therapist and the conclusion was: so we are all teachers, teachers in different ways.

27. Sheep Family



It is 6.50 PM now and I am exhausted. I have about ten minutes before dinner starts and want to write down the highlights of this day; my day. This morning I walked and met sheep of different kinds. There was a family: mother, father, child. I wondered if this could be true. I never see men sheep in Holland I think, I thought (or did not think) men sheep were just used to fertilize the future mother(s) and then what...? Is it like cows: one bull does the work of making dozens and dozens of cows pregnant? At least that is how it is in Holland. The other bulls are for the meat consumption, I suppose. Is it true that here in Hungary a sheep family is allowed to stay together? What touched me deeply was the father and mother going to each other, licking each other's faces, while their child was in between them. The goat who was also there came to me and licked my finger, I dared to stick out to her. Magical? Mystical moments. Connecting with nature.



Connecting with the Bigger Whole

In the Wood

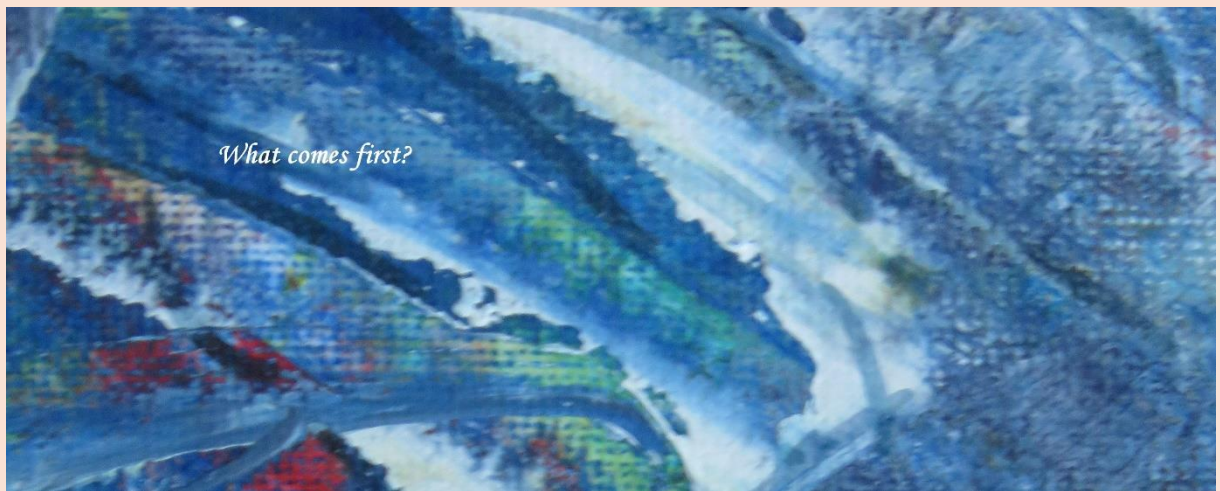
This afternoon I walked in the wood on a carpet of snowdrops. I saw a deer running away. I only saw his behind. Jumping up and down. Brown and white like a square. Again: magical, mystical, given moments. Connecting me with a Bigger Whole.

A Genius

Then there is the work of the day to look at. First Malcolm Parlett about Paul Goodman I could see and feel Malcolm's fascination for the life of a colleague writer, who apparently was a genius who died rather unhappily of a heart attack, 61 years old. Why so young? What happened to him? Goodman wrote – more than? – 35 books. The most important “Compulsory Miseducation”.

28. Intermission

Typing my notes out in Amsterdam I go to the internet to find out more about Paul Goodman. I become overwhelmed: what a production, what an originality, what a spirit. I also found his name in : The Anarchist Encyclopedia: A Gallery of Saints... & Sinners... Very intriguing, I must take time to go back to this information and find out more. The Goodman world is opening for me; there is no reason whatsoever in my life to get bored. I feel privileged.



Back to the Roots Conference and Edwin Nevis who taught about the Russian Jew Lev Vigotsky, born in 1896, died in 1934 of tuberculosis. The most important revelation for me is that what is being revealed I know already. There is nothing new, the excitement is that I am not the only one who knows. Here I am in a group of people who all know. We do not really mention it out loud, we just point at it, but up to now we are only busy with Jewish people and in that way this is part of my Jewish quest. What comes first: the Jew or the knowledge? Strange question. To me the Jew comes first, s/he comes before the knowledge. Nevertheless the knowledge has been there all the time.

29. More Knowledgeable Other



I look and wonder what is special about Vygotsky in the article we got from Edwin Nevis. Some things stand out:

- the importance of looking at each child as an individual who learns distinctively*
- language skills are particularly critical for creating meaning*
- linking new ideas to past experiences and prior knowledge*
- the knowledge achieved through experience serves as a foundation for the behaviour of every individual*
- one gains knowledge as one develops by way of social interactions with peers and adults*

I could go on and on there is so much knowledgeable stuff, but it is not my mission to relate to it at this moment. Although I do not want to skip the part about the importance of the More Knowledgeable Other the MKO: anyone who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner, particularly in regards to a specific task, concept or process. Could be a teacher, older adult, a peer, a sibling, a younger person, or even a computer.

30. Gifted Children are Children at Risk



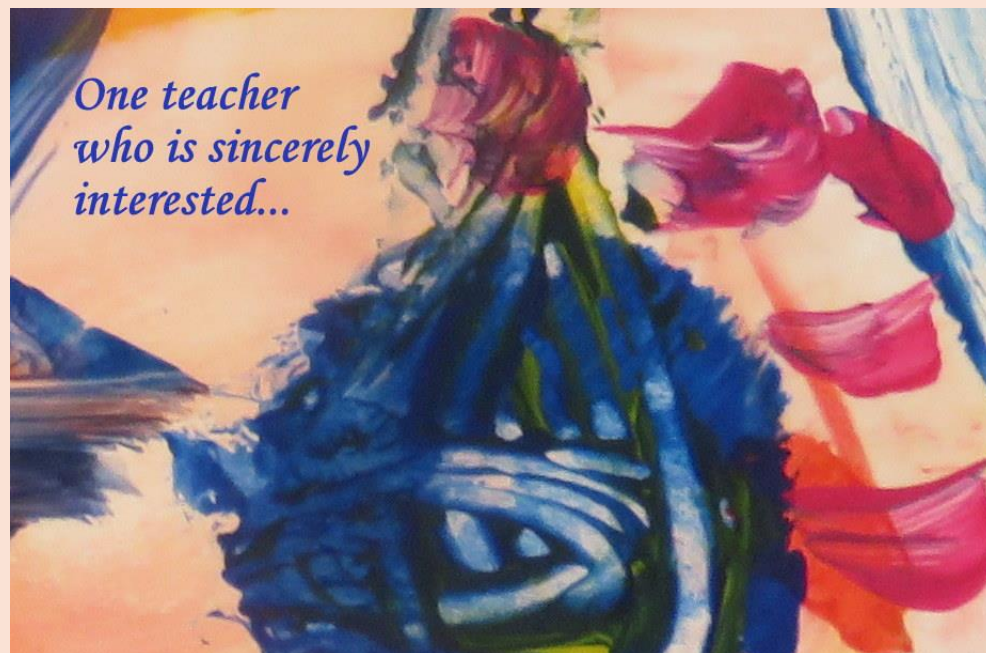
Sunday morning 8 AM. I have been awake since 5.30 AM. No wonder. I went to bed at 10 PM and fell almost immediately asleep. I slept more than seven hours, more than enough for me. I have been thinking about the presentations about gifted children, and the other presentation about music therapy with children at risk. It seems that the one category is not so different from the other. They are twins, two sides of one medal. In the gifted children presentation was so much (com)passion. The presenter radiated being a gifted child herself. And in the documentary about the children at risk there was so much empathy, while the children talked with their teacher and played their music or sang. Both presentations touched me deeply. Being gifted and wounded or at risk are known states for me. Writing this down makes me wonder about the role I am playing in this group. Did I in the eyes of my colleagues say the right thing at the wrong time or visa versa, when I stated that all of us present are gifted? A silence fell, followed by a safe discussion without emotions. Still I can feel the fun and the trust inside me, telling me I am grown up now and have to say what I have to say. Wonderful is that the presence of my most important ex-teacher as MKO, does not in the least bother me. Proof that I did it, I did become free of him, I did grow up to become autonomous, but it does not mean that I am indifferent to him or neutral. When he speaks I am more alert than with colleagues I don't know personally. Does he say the right things? Can I still be proud of him? Can I still trust him?

31. Drama or Process



This is dangerous territory. Once this teacher was more than special for me. Once my body reacted so intensely, so heavily, so emotionally, to the presence of him that I became rather ill and was for some time stuck in a spiritual crisis. I feel awkward while writing about this. I know he does not want me to do so. He does not want to be part of my drama. But what he calls my drama I call process necessary to grow. Long nose for him I think now, if he does not want (my) drama, he should not have become a Gestalt teacher. He claims he is shy and does not know how to behave, as an ex teacher without a new role. Well, I don't know either to be honest, but I like the adventure and am curious. What roles are there we can play after the roles of teacher and student, client and therapist and of idol and idolizer? Being here is a gift with a capital G in this matter. All I have to do is to receive the process as it develops. The river flows by itself, I don't have to push it. I love life, even though or thanks to being gifted and being wounded. I would hate to live without (my) drama. Too boring. (Art work Glorious Gloria – C Market)

32. Believing is Seeing



Tired and Frustrated

Monday 3 PM. The Roots conference is over. I enjoyed being there, listening to passion driven presentations by real professionals. They awakened my own longing to be a - good - teacher/presenter. The main conclusion of the conference is: one good teacher can make all the difference in your life. One teacher who is sincerely interested can give you the right to exist and be who you are.

We are free for more than a day till the Leaders conference starts. I am tired and frustrated. Realizing I am still struggling with my longing to connect with my ex-teacher. I would like to communicate with him about work, I am curious where he is on his path and what keeps him busy. I sincerely do not know how to reach him. One time I sat with him at the dinner table, while talking about his discovery when he was fifty, that his mother was Jewish. In the light of my history and search for my own roots this is remarkable. I told him that he was one of the few men I felt attracted to who I thought was not Jewish. He started to laugh and said: 'Sorry, I fooled you' or something like that. Stupid answer that shut me up. Did he not know what I meant? Or did I come too close? Probably the last. that gave me the right to exist, as I remember him saying that he thought I was good. He said it just in passing and that's why it made a big impression on me.

My history with this teacher is classical. I projected on him what I longed for most at the time: being a therapist, a trainer, a leader. And maybe he was that one teacher. It was not about an evaluation or some other official occasion. It came spontaneously out of his mouth. I knew he meant it. Now I am his colleague and if I want to meet him, I have to meet him from this angle.



Neshomma

Important meeting I had with a colleague from Israel. I asked her what she thought of 'Neshomma in a Goy body' (Jewish soul in a not Jewish body) as the title of a book. She taught me: 'There is one big Neshomma and every Jew has a piece and therefore they have the duty to look after each other. The Goyim who feels attracted to Judaism also have a piece of this Neshomma, and are therefore connected with the other Jews.' It sounds rather sensible. Okay, is this enough writing for now?

33. All things are precious



Oh no, there is the story of Anandamayi Ma, a Hindu girl/woman, who turned out to be a saint. I read it last night in 'Weavers of Wisdom' when I lay awake longing for peace in my head and found the sentence: '...and so, because all things are appearances of God, everything is precious, everything must be listened to and respected – nothing is really wrong!' Reading about the life of this Hindu woman gave me the peace to go back to sleep and dream (?) and let my ex teacher go. I think and feel this gives me the opportunity to digest this overwhelming intense period, when Gestalt authorities were dominating my life. I had the feeling of being completely alone in a battle. It excited me and made me strong. I knew I was connected to a Bigger Whole, that gave me the Energy to go on. No human soul was able or willing to receive me then. Were they

ignorant or afraid or angry? They sounded angry. Not wanting my drama? I don't know, I would love to discuss this with him. But how to offer and be received? I will have to prove I am a teacher myself and be recognized. Isn't that funny? Roles change. That is the answer I was looking for. Time to go for a walk, although the wind is blowing rather hard, but there is sunshine.

Genuine Love



6.45 PM in the bar. I had a walk, Did some swimming, was in the sauna and now I am here in the bar where I met Edwin Nevis, who told me that he was touched by my language this morning, when I told how happy I was and am with the Roots conference, because I could feel genuine love or is it Love and felt connected to the history of Gestalt. Talking about myself I used the word hysterical, meaning

that I am afraid I am seen this way. I could have used but didn't: drama queen. Ed told me that he can see how this image can bring me into trouble, but he thinks I am interesting, he likes my energy. Great! I better take it seriously now I have this chance. More and more I know I better give examples of what I am able to do. Stop holding myself back and stop looking at myself as a drama queen, even if I am, I am a serious one who has precious wisdom to offer. Besides that I did not invent drama, I am no more than the messenger.

A Taste of Paradise



Tuesday 2.45 PM in my room. It is or it was raining. Looking outside I see dead pampas grass. Not unusual for March. I see a bare tree. Fields. Far away a white house with green doors and windows. It is dry again, time to go to the village. Maybe change some money to buy presents. But first I have to catch up with this writing. What are my headlines? Actually hardly anything to do with the

people here personally. A lot of space, time, energy, freedom is the result. Yesterday evening we sat rather a long time talking around a table. Was I bored? Maybe yes, I am bored easily when I am behaving socially. I went to bed early and woke up at 1.30 AM. Started reading the chapter about Kathleen Raine in 'Weavers of Wisdom'. She believed in 'nature-mysticism'. Somehow I was reading my own experiences, specially related to my El Bloque – Evolutionair Center in Spain - period. There I did have a taste of paradise, whether or not anyone can or could follow me there. Then – more than twenty years ago – nobody could. No wonder, I was in a world where insects communicated with me by tapping on windows, tomatoes tasted like heaven and the colours of the birds were of a splendour that blinded my eyes.

There I danced as a witch in a circle, stopped smoking from one second to the other, could see people as the completed beings they are meant to be and was so angry that I almost cleaved a wooden bar top. I was told that I as a co-trainer should leave the group, because I was dangerous and at the same time I knew I was as close to Truth as I ever on earth could come. My condition of this luscious conscience lasted about a week. Then I went gradually back to functioning normally. Later I read about LSD experiences and got this AHA feeling: this is what I experienced without needing LSD.

An Inward and Spiritual Essence

And now here in Hungary I read Kathleen Raine and recognize: 'The symbolic images come, of necessity, from the perceptible world, for this world is, in the nature of things, and unalterably, the 'given', inseparable from our human nature as incarnate beings; all the knowledge of the soul must come to it in terms of this world of embodiment. Truly understood the entire world is one great symbol,

imparting in a sacramental manner, by outward and visible signature, and inward and spiritual essence.'



Creation of Julia Roddy

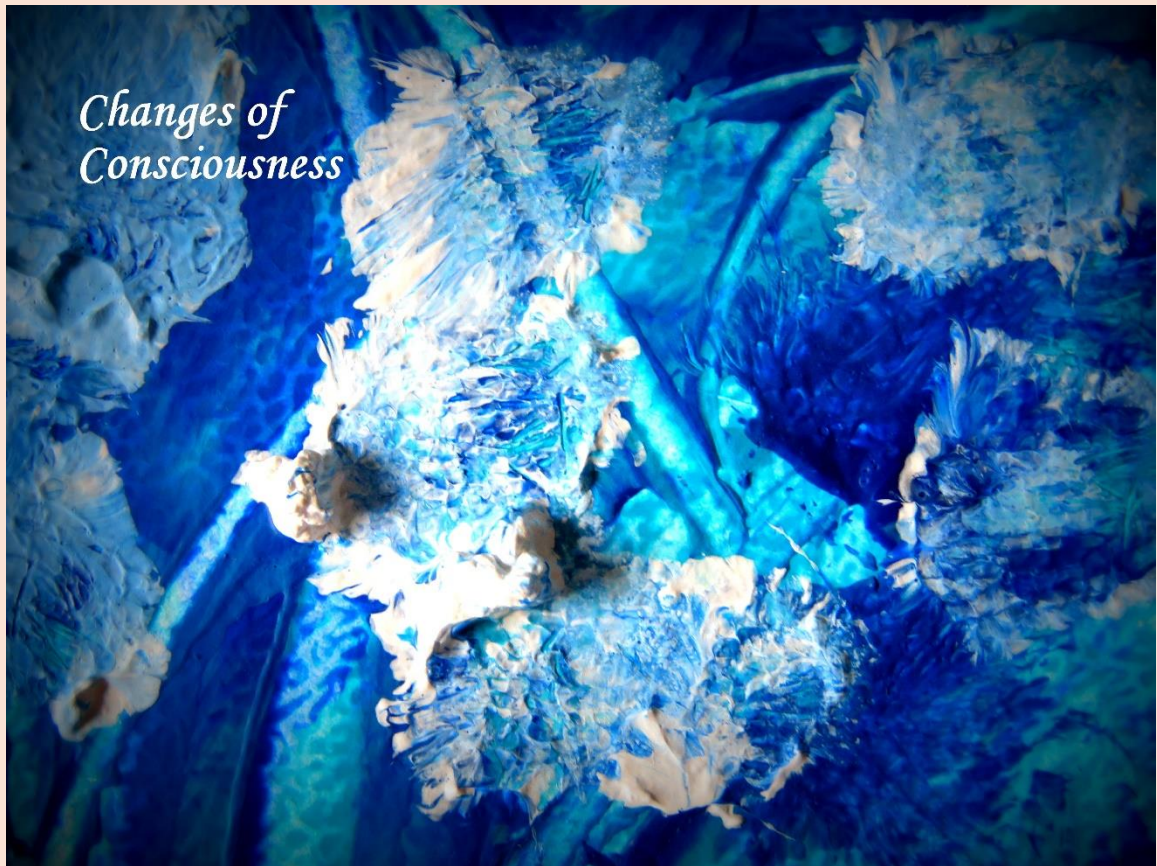
Not many people go to this paradisiacal country I also read in her story, but Kathleen did and she wrote about it, so I can know that she has been there as well and found her Self. I understand that she – like me - suffered of not completely answered loves. Anyway she gave me a taste of the kind of nourishment I need more of.

34. Marionette Player



This morning at breakfast Edwin Nevis sat beside me. I told him that after experiencing him as the organizer of the Roots conference, I saw him as a marionette player, pulling the right cords at the right times. I asked him or told him that I am curious when he will pull mine. I am happy to state that I could ask him playfully, no real expectations, just uttering the words that came up. Then Ed told me he likes my style, and as we danced together last night I know I like his style too. Wonderful to have a meeting with this man of over eighty who has not only a mind and a will, but also a heart and a soul and a body that still dances. Even if we never meet again this moment is engraved in my own body and soul. He confirms my right to exist as a dancing woman.

35. Meeting the Turtles



After breakfast I went swimming and had a massage with Dead Sea Salt and olive oil. Rather prickly and very soothing, also because of the music of Enya. Time for the village. Oh no, I almost forgot the experience of this morning that I cannot describe, only indicate: eight turtles on a rock in the swimming pool, gave me the chance to have for the first time in my life, eye contact with a turtle. First with one and when I called them, all of them came. The only thing I had to do was to be willing to connect with them. To end this part I go back to Kathleen and a sentence I underlined: 'so it always must be when, in whatever field, ignorance passes judgement upon knowledge. But those who are in the know are unanimous in reporting that such changes of consciousness are not of degree, but of kind; not some strong emotion or excitement but a clarity in which all is minutely perceived as by finer sense.' I feel supported in my mission against knowing better as an absolute truth. Knowing better – for me – means I know not in the absolute sense, I just know I can get glimpses of the Truth when I am willing to sense and take risks as I am doing by writing this piece.

36. Choices



Wednesday 0.20 PM. Before I start about anything else, I want to preserve the remark of Malcolm Parlett this morning during breakfast. When I asked if he had had a massage: his answer was: 'One cannot massage a stiff upper lip.' Pity Malcolm could not stay with the Leaders. This conference started last night with an opening round and play back theatre. My surprise was Kailash Tuli, who announced in the whole group that he came all the way from India because of me and my Elderpower text. He found it in the AAGT Newsletter and published it in The Edge, a magazine of an Indian Institute for Higher Education. I feel honoured, thrilled and deeply touched. Unbelievable that things like this can happen. At the same time I feel responsible for his being here. Now I have to choose if I go to his 'Yoga and Gestalt discussion group, where it is about 'the concept of harmony, awareness, symmetry and organization, which are the main denominators in both disciplines. Awareness is also vital in both ways of thinking. In yoga this awareness goes to a deeper spiritual level.' Or shall I attend the group about 'tension and conflict in Gestalt institutes and organizations, like in families, as integral parts of normative development.' My Yes No cards tell me to go to Kailash and to accept it as a precious gift.



This morning I found a beautiful quote of rabbi Nachman of Breslov that radiates my day:

'For the true believer, believing is seeing.' This wisdom helped me to stay with what happened in the discussion group about Teaching Gestalt Therapy: 'a complex task, given our commitment to providing experiential, here and now, as well as conceptual learning experiences.' Now I type this report out, I have to admit that I did not write down anything about the discussion. I only stated in my notebook that I feel relieved, because the pieces of my puzzle seem to fall into the right places. Meaning that the story with my ex teacher, who was present in the group, makes more and more sense to me as the discussion was about core values concerning 'good teaching'. I did not agree with him, alas time was too short to go deeper into this matter.

37.No Safe Roles



11.10 PM. As always the more involved I am during a conference, the less I write. Today I did a step freeing myself of the tension with my ex teacher. At least that is what I long and hope for. I laid my egg by saying that I find it difficult to communicate with him now we don't have safe roles anymore. He could receive me and said that he feels awkward and often shy in situations like this himself. I can hardly believe he is open to normal communication, and tell myself not to hurry and be on guard, anything can still go wrong. Still I am happy that something new seems to enter into our relation.

Tomorrow I have my own 'Teaching Gestalt as an Art' discussion group. I am looking forward to it, I took a lot of time to prepare and am able - depending on the needs of the participants - to walk different paths.

38. The Reality of Play and Art

To teach Gestalt as an Art means stepping out of control



Doing Instead of Thinking

The first time I invited only colleagues to join me in the adventure of Teaching Gestalt as an Art was during this Leaders conference in Hungary.

In the announcement of the workshop:

To teach Gestalt as an Art means:

- stepping out of control and out of the well-known into an adventure*
- doing instead of thinking and talking about doing*
- believing in creative talent beside knowledge*
- having the courage to make a fool of yourself*
- not being bothered by right or wrong*
- believing in your hand that is writing or drawing*
- trusting your voice that is speaking or singing*
- feeling your feet who are dancing or walking*
- letting it happen without correcting*
- taking the work that will emerge seriously*

39.No Nonsense



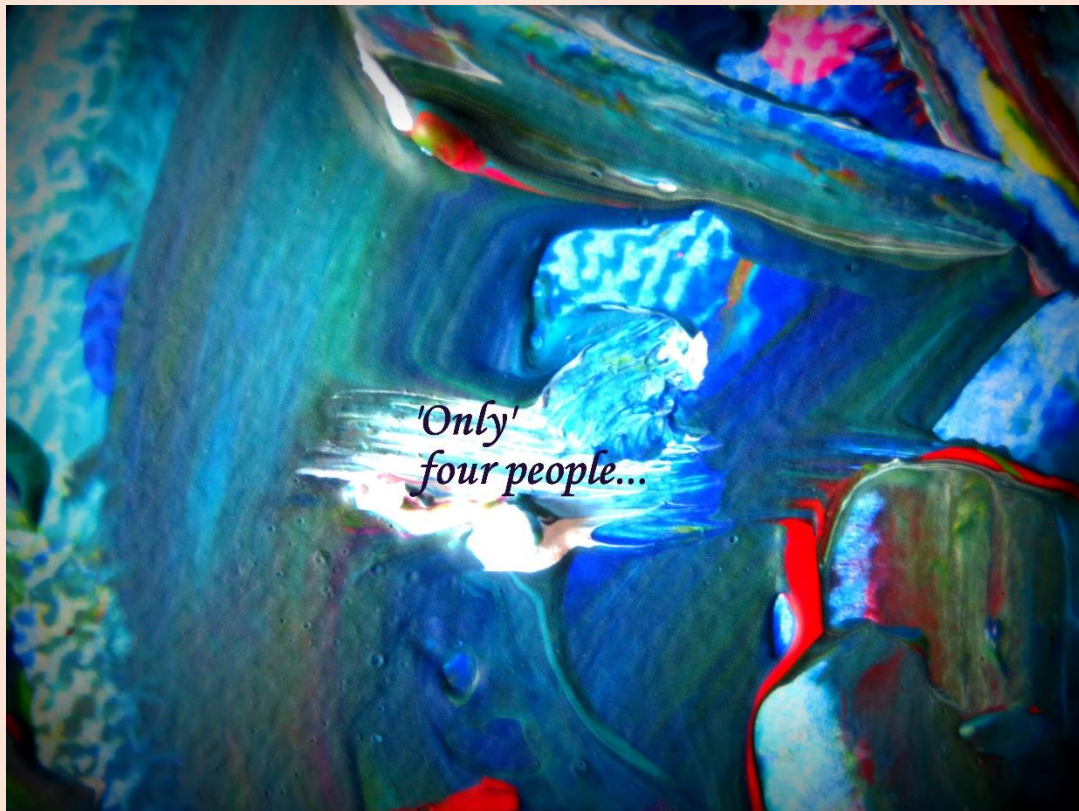
Three colleagues joined me. We started by exchanging what is going on in our lives. Not a quick round, but seriously and intensely. While doing this work I began to realize that talking together is an art, we don't practice too often in a group because usually we have no time to just talk. Yet time is exactly what we need if we want to make ourselves clear, and understand what the others are saying. This asks for the trust that nobody is speaking nonsense if he or she is given the opportunity. Of course there are limits because time is limited, but the main aim is the intention. If we as leaders or we as clients are willing to hear the others and are willing to listen to ourselves, togetherness will be created if we are able to do it without judging. Not easy and the answer is in the paradox. As long as we do judge and are critical, we better become aware of it and take responsibility by expressing it out loud. Change will come gradually when the group meets a number of evenings or days in a row.

40. Something Unique



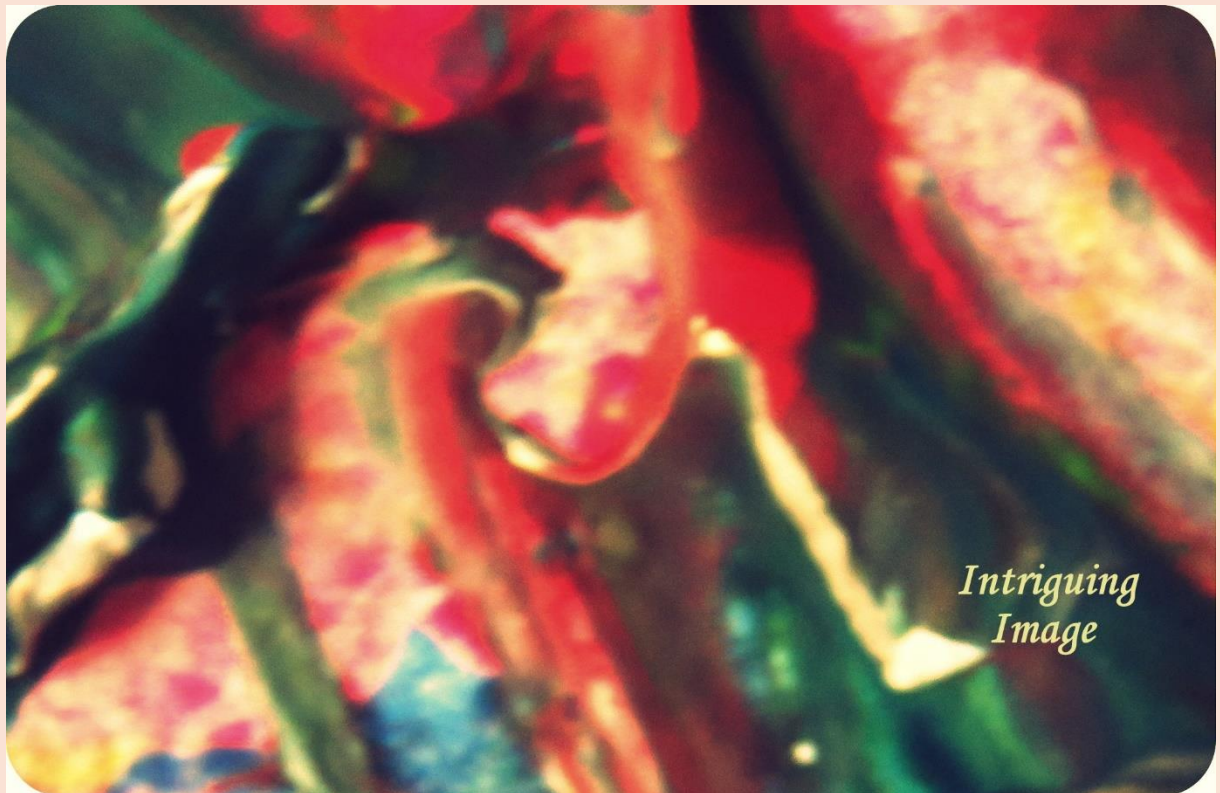
After the talking usually a theme has emerged, I can use in the guided meditation or visualisation I will offer. The idea is to invite the participants to be more and more in the Here and Now, by asking them after the meditation to put their hand on the paper, let it move and write whatever words want to be written. And even when there are no words the hands can keep moving and doodle. About twenty minutes later every group member will have created a text. For some people it is quite a step to read what they wrote out loud, but if they do they discover that what they wrote is worthwhile. If the group is more experienced words can be sung and played or even being danced or drawn. This goes slowly. My experience is that a group of people can stimulate and inspire each other to be brave, if all members are willing to take the risk to make a fool of him- or herself, for the sake of creating something new, something that nobody ever has seen or read before, something unique because it cannot be repeated.

41. Foundation



As mentioned before it is essential to participate as a leader in the process of creating, by writing or/and drawing yourself. The group members are also in a double role as artists and as the audience. In this way we can support, stimulate, inspire, give feedback, admire and form the foundation for a valuable Here and Now experience: seeing and hearing and being able to create because you are seen, heard and felt. In Dunakiliti we started with telling who we are, where we come from, what we aim for. Each of us got enough time to tell his/her story. For me this was exciting, from time to time breathtaking. So he is from India and knows about Yoga and came all the way to Hungary because he longs for Gestalt nourishment. She is from Vienna and teaches music as a Gestalt therapist and he is from Hungary and did a lot of work preparing this conference. I told I am from Amsterdam and was disappointed – at first – with only three participants, but after listening to each other it was like the room was filling with more voices, more energy. Facts, stories, longings, expectations (not) coming true. I love to listen to the bare stories, I love to relate to the tellers, I love the simple beauty it invokes. 'Only' four people became within one hour a real group with big potential.

42. Intriguing Image



After the sharing and the guided meditation, we decided to draw together on one big sheet of paper. First with our eyes closed and when we opened them, we completed the image. We realized that all those criss-cross lines were only relevant for us. It is not about art in the sense that it will last forever. But is an intriguing image that invites us to go deeper by finding words in it that can guide us to untold stories or poems. My words are: serpent, big feet, back, tail, nose, clouds, knot, eye, stream, river, energy, water, magical, mystical, together, E.T., jumping fishes, white sky, pink dance, open hands, ground, park, city, spirals, open circles, coming together, question mark, road, no goal, hand, inner ears, elephant, support, longing, wonder. And those words guided me while writing:

42. 'Once upon a time there was an elephant

An elephant with a short tail. He went to the city, stepping forward with his big feet and long nose, smelling the serpents in the spirals. When he met the stream, he remembered that the river is flowing by itself. It does not need support. On the contrary it gives a context and shows him the way to go to the park where he finds the water and greens he needs to stay alive. He takes a sip of the water and splashes himself afterwards, feeling the water in and over his huge body. He did not believe his eyes, when he walked on and met on his way this tiny creature from outer space.

Was he dreaming of was this his reality? The only way he could know is to go with his awareness to his big feet touching the ground, giving him security and the sense of being in the Now. He looked around and saw a chain of pink ET dancers connecting with each other. Could he join? he wondered. They had this magical radiance of being together he did not want to break into. After all he was an elephant and could not change himself into a being that belonged in this pink cloud. Or a being that could make contact with those ET beings from outer space; more and more he became aware of his size. He realized that he was bigger than big. It was certain that nobody could overlook him.

He felt shy. It was not and never had been his intention to be so huge. 'Sorry, sorry,' he said softly to himself but in fact to the world around him 'I did not create myself I never longed for a body as big as this. But now I am I have no other choice then to stick with it. Please believe even though I am big, I am also nice, I love what you do and I love you. How about using me as an island, as a paradise, an oasis, where you can sit or dance and enjoy yourself, because you are together and you are safe with me? You would make me happy and because I am happy, I make you happy too!'

43. Only half an hour



When we all four read our stories we looked at each other and wondered where this magic energy came from. We only needed about half an hour to create the drawing and the stories. All we had to do is to plug into the creative energy that is everywhere around and in us. It is up to each of us to say Yes or No to using it. Yes or No to opening the tap and let the water stream. Yes or No to putting the plug into an electric point and let electricity come.

44. Happy Few



Our next step was to write a few sentences, that could guide us back into the outside world: 'Go into the outside here and now and connect with your colleagues in the big group,'

I wrote, 'apparently having their doubts about what we are doing here, otherwise more people would have joined us. Are we the happy few and the bringers of the Good News, that the world is full of wonders one can abide in or not? We have a free will and therefore the Freedom of Choice, again and again and again. Every day, every hour, every minute, every second of our life.' Somehow I felt like we were in a secret conspiracy. Was I the elephant or the pink ET dancers or both? And how about the meaning of the stories of the others? Or are the stories in itself enough to connect? Yes, for the moment. What more can we wish for.

45. Ethic Dilemma



Friday, noon. I do something wrong in the eyes of some colleagues. Ethically wrong? I am - in their eyes - too open, too direct, too honest, too critical, too confronting, too much in process? At least, this seems the message I got this morning when I opened my mouth in the discussion group about 'Ethic Dilemma: using information from therapy, supervision and teaching in order to judge students development.' According to the program the discussion group should be about:

Experiential search of the dilemma

Sharing of experience of the group members with the dilemma in their own institutes.

A short expose of levels of dilemma's. Consequences of the ethic dilemma's for the training program and the role of teachers.

46. Knowing Better

Sacred time and a sacred place that would enable me to connect .



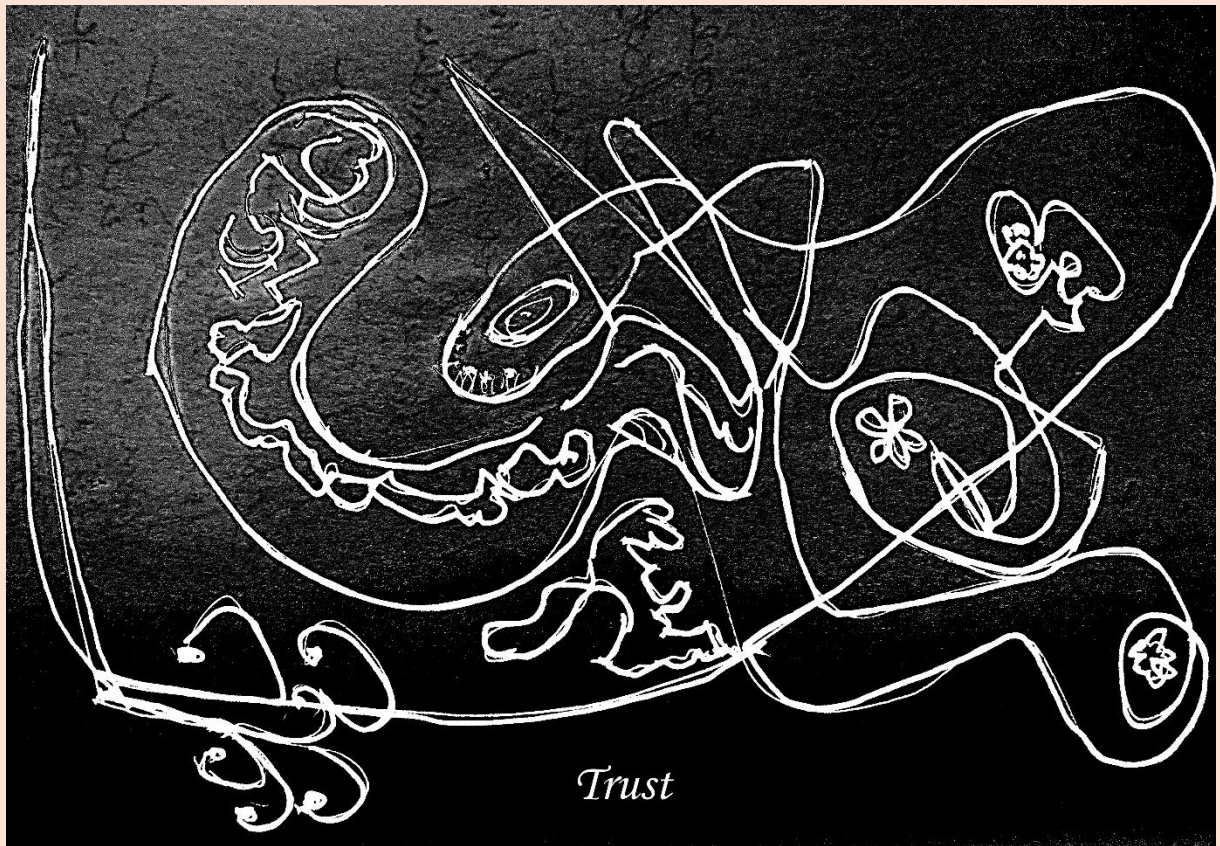
After attending this group lead by my ex-teacher who also was my therapist, I realize that I felt threatened by him and by the other colleagues in the group. Why? Did they feel threatened by me and is that why they attacked? What I expected from joining this group is finding sacred time and a sacred place, that could enable me to connect with my ex teacher after all. And when I told about the complaint of the mother who was kicked by her daughter in my presence, for a moment his laugh was there. Humour flickered and I felt I came home. But then I went a step further as I wanted to be open, about my student/client relation with my ex-teacher. A real ethical dilemma in my eyes, even after so many years, because we never closed IT. I opened my mouth and could not even finish my sentence. The angry message from a colleague: we don't want this now, because... ? I let myself be silenced. No way to connect with either of them. No way and no time to explore why.

47. One Teacher can Make the Difference



I am so happy that I went to the Roots conference where I learned that one good teacher can make all the difference in a life. One teacher who is able to see you, hear you, value you! I am thinking of Benjamin Zander. We watched last night on DVD how he inspires his pupils by being inspiring himself. What a Blessing when you meet a teacher like this conductor of the Boston Philharmonic. It brings me back to this same Gestalt teacher who then saw me and told me he thought I was good. It was all I needed to go on, all I needed to know that I had found my path! Serious business. I am a searcher, a seeker, I thought I had found my path before but the quest never ends. There is more to discover. Anyway, Gestalt gave me the right foundation to be able to go on. It is what I wanted to tell him: you were a good teacher but not a good therapist for me. What I wanted to add was: and I learned as much from the teacher as from the therapist. It was your intention, your style, your tone that guided me and gave trust.

48. Trust



Trust is the quality I am looking for in this Leaders group. To trust each other, trust students who want to become and did become Gestalt therapists, trust ex teachers who stay in their roles of teacher, trust leaders of institutes who seem to know the Gestalt criteria, that give Gestalt a place in the international society. Well I do not always. I often mistrust I must confess and I am mistrusted as well by my colleagues. At this conference I did not find a way to win and give trust and respect. In the end it is up to me, I know, I am the one who can open my mouth and say what I have to say or keep my mouth closed. I am the one who can use my pen and pc and write what I have to write or not. Now I do and realize it is not about being right or wrong and Knowing Better, but about being transparent and open to discussion.

49. Grateful to ex-teachers



After the ethical discussion group, my ex teacher came to me to let me know that he did not want me to talk about a teacher we share. Life is full of surprises. I was flabbergasted. Why should I? It is the first time in all those years I saw him agitated. Teachers go deep, I understood, also for him. Conclusion: I invoke fear, I can say – and write – things he is afraid of and so are others. Things I should keep to myself, things that have to do with shame, longing, thinking we are not good enough. Anyway, my message is: I am grateful to my ex teachers, all of them! They did a wonderful job. What more can I wish for and what more can I say? They gave me the energy to become my own boss and teacher. My reality now is to become honest enough to admit, that all those ex-teachers are ex indeed. The process goes on and since years I am taking my own responsibility for what I have to offer. Time to hide behind the wisdom of a safe teacher is over. And as there is no absolute truth, no ready answers, I will – as everyone else – have to take risk after risk if I want to be boss in my own life.

50.It is Springtime



The cat is created by Patrick Visser

2.15 PM. After a walk in the fields and along the River in the marvellous sunshine, I am sitting on the terrace of my room writing a song, I am hoping I can sing during the community meeting:

*It is springtime, it is springtime and I am in Dunakiliti
Joining the leaders of Gestalt Institutes*

*It is springtime, it is springtime and the sun in the sky is telling me
even if I am not allowed to speak as a Gestalt Leader*

*I do have my own response – ability as I am my own leader
and have my own words. No one can stop me, what I have to say is okay*

*I don't have to explain to you sun. You have seen
the same play over and over again. Sun up there I want
to tell you how grateful I am you are giving me the light and warmth
I need to go into the dark of the group*

*Where I will find trust and mistrust together
Needing time to respect each other and connect*

51. Out of place



Alas, I could not sing the song in the community meeting, but was allowed to do it in the home group. I think most colleagues could receive me. Except one Dutch colleague. Apparently he was ashamed of me acting out, told me I should behave. In the community meeting the group was stuck in the impasse, no room for play and art. No room to communicate. Pity, I could have brought a spark of light but did not have the courage. We had to wait till the next morning and the next meeting to learn about our conflicts and differences: the leaders of the institutes let me and other artist/therapists know, we are in their eyes out of place and therefore not welcome in this conference, as it was meant to be exclusively for leaders of training institutes.

52.No Process Allowed



To know the truth is less painful than having to guess where the hostility comes from. The message I got personally was: we don't want process. Okay, 'they' don't want process and I am a process lover and drama maker. I did not know it was like that, if I had known, I would not have come, because for me communication without process is rather boring and I don't go to conferences to be bored. But in the end I was not bored at all: what an exciting field to be in, when a part of the players have decided, they do not want process and the other part does, so that is what process is about. No question if anyone wants it or not, it just is.

Artwork: Outsider Art Gallery Amsterdam

53. Where am I?



Play for three Gestalt leaders on an airport

Dirty Looks

Saturday, 4 PM on Vienna airport, waiting for my flight to Amsterdam. No possibility to connect and have a coffee with the two colleagues, who are also waiting for their flights. I am told I better stay at a distance and I obey, more or less, as Vienna airport is not very big. I am part of a play and wondering about the role I am in. What is the mission I have? There is a laugh I can feel in my belly. It says: long nose. Why do you think you can ignore me, give me dirty looks and tell me what I am (not) supposed to say? Isn't this a crazy story, almost like family. Is it my role to bring the humour back in this field by letting my spirit out?

54. Responsibility



Joanna Feldman member of the Being Present group

I am happy to say I do have this potentiality and I do feel a responsibility that is rather big. Has also to do with my age, I am the eldest in this field of leaders and know that my inner being long to be part of a bigger whole. I see myself sitting in the big group yesterday afternoon, wanting to connect in harmony, ignoring some hostile looks in my direction and thinking: And yet it is springtime, it is springtime. Why didn't I dare to sing this song and bring some humour in the group? The more I write, the more I realize that the role I play in this field is complicated. I feel sincerely seen by Kailash because it is about my Elderpower text, that did touch people in India more than people in the western Gestalt world as far as I know. How is this for my ego that loves to be seen, heard, read? My ego that loves to be the best? Being gifted and having a special place is well known to me. Who of us 'leaders' doesn't? Being older makes me less afraid of rivalry. I know I am not the best, never will be. And I know being the best is not really interesting, just as being right and being wrong is not interesting in itself. Right and wrong are only interesting in relation to... Right and wrong can bring us together if I am and the other is willing to be open and to receive.

55. Transform Mistrust



Outsider Art Gallery Amsterdam

What I have to learn is to transform my mistrust to a more playful power that can open gates to a better world. I just had a look at the book 'Fateless' of Hungarian Nobel prize winner Imre Kertész I got as a present at the conference. On the back page I read it is about a fourteen year young Hungarian Jew, who is an outsider, even in Auschwitz, among his own people: 'His estrangement makes him a preternaturally acute observer, dogmatically insisting on making sense of everything he witnesses.' This sentence is one of the gifts that unintentionally have come my way this week. Of course I identify with him. Of course it is the outsider in me, who becomes excited and wants to start reading immediately. But... it means I have to go to Auschwitz with him and I dread that journey. Too painful, I am too afraid. I do have a lot of courage some people tell me and I know they are right, when I am in the spotlight of the arena. But to go into the death camps and stay with the sensitive brave ones who not only survived but wrote about it, is more than I have to offer right now.

56. Better Knowers who Attack



Here and Now at home again, while typing all this out, I wonder what I am after. What I am doing by writing is exploring if I am and if we are good enough to make the world a better place. To do this I need the image of fellow human beings, of men, of women. How can I see what I look like if I have no mirror and how can I see you when I don't look and listen? I need a field I can relate to, a group of people I share my passion with, my passion to connect, to become one with the Big Whole. What I learned in Gestalt and other fields is that it is difficult for me to connect with the Better Knowers. Difficult or impossible? I don't know, but I lost my appetite. Why should I want to connect with BK's who attack and tell me what to say and what not, tell me I have no right to be where I am. Since I know Gestalt and Buddhism my motto is: the chance is in the frustration. I know it is true, because I have been frustrated and angry, again and again, I know how precious it is to stay with my anger and fear and then to be able to connect after all. Of course I am frustrated because I am a woman who Knows Better herself. Not that I know what is better for the other, but I do know what is better for me in relation to...

57. The Ideal Conference



In thought I go back to the last session of the conference when we were invited to look ahead at the next conference. I suggested we all go to an hotel I know in Yalta in gorgeous Crimea on the Black Sea. My ideal conference would be just coming together without a program and letting emerge a coherent program in the Here and Now. Everybody present would be invited to offer what the group would need. I am certain it could be done, if we find the right place although it takes courage to co-create an event like this. I was happy that some colleagues were interested but the group decided the next conference will be in London, led by my opponents. Main thing is that the process goes on, but we the artist therapists are not welcome.

58. Dance with the Dancers



My top experience of this conference was being able to dance with born dancers. It gave me the right to exist and to be there. Dancing for me goes to the core of my being. It gives me the energy to go on all night and live the song: 'When the singers are the song and the dancers are the dance.' Again and again and again and again... This is it. Being able to dance gives me the opportunity to step out of having to Know Better, as it is about Doing and Feeling and Being Better. It took me a long time to allow myself to have pleasure while there was still somebody around sulking. Then I realized, I did not make anyone more happy that way, on the contrary.

59. Painful for Both Sides



Eros van Rob Mol in Factor IJ

Healing for me was being in the car to the airport with four other women. Before we went en route we took a detour to see the Danube. A generous gift from the driver who lives in Vienna. I sat in the backseat beside a colleague, who did want to hear more about what I have to say. While driving through sunny Hungary I told her how I struggled with my relation with my ex-teacher. Her comment 'Falling in love with your therapist, is very difficult and very complicated and painful for both sides!' is exactly why I believe it is so important to explore experiences like this on a level that is beyond therapy. It is also why I go on writing:

60. I am too old to be told

*I am too old to be told what is good for me
I am too old to be told what you want me to be
I am too old to be told what to do, what to say
I am too old to be told what to see, what to hear
I am too old to listen to your chaos thinking
I am too old to be told that you think I am good or not
I am too old to be told that I do not care enough
I am too old to be told that you know what is good for me
Now I am more than multi years aha
and used every year, every month, every week,
every day, every hour, every minute, every second
to find out what suits me, what makes me laugh,
makes me cry, makes me angry, gives me joy.
Now I am young enough to tell you
That although I may not be perfect
I am a woman with a heart in the right place
A woman with a body that works
A woman with a mind that is clear and can understand
A woman with a soul that is ready to come out of the closet
That is why I am too old to be told do this,
do that because you say so
To become happy I only have to listen
To this tiny modest voice inside me
That knows about subtlety, beauty, faith, love and trust
And if you want to know too I can share with you
what she tells me; no words, just sounds, just being.*

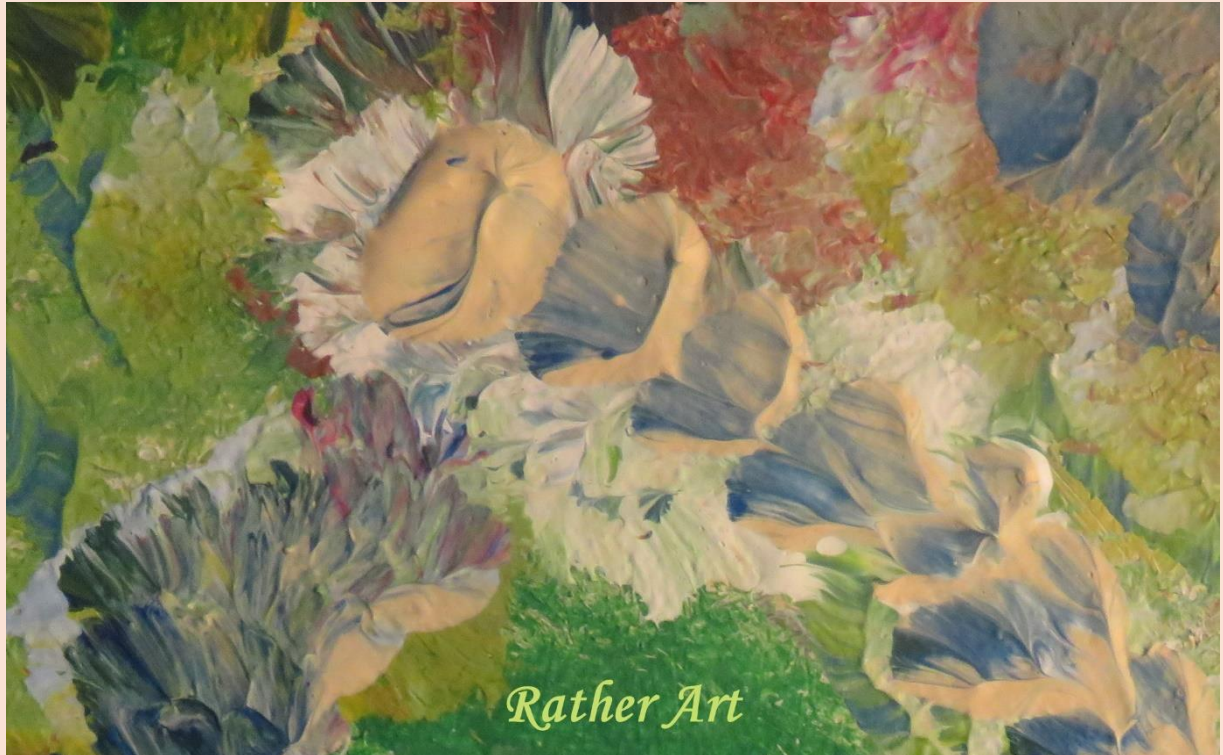
61. Words

*My voice speaks the words
That are within me ripening
To be let out
Those words are not
my personal words
They are universal
They come from a place
Where they are growing
And are nourished
As if they were flower seeds
Ripening in the ground
Every seed bringing forth
Exactly that flower
It is created for
My words can only be spoken
by me in my way
Still my words come from
a Divine source
A source we all are connected to
O, source, o words,
I can only feel grateful
For you being there
Waiting for me to give you breath...*

*Those words are written in the Being Present group
and fit perfectly now I am completing this story.*

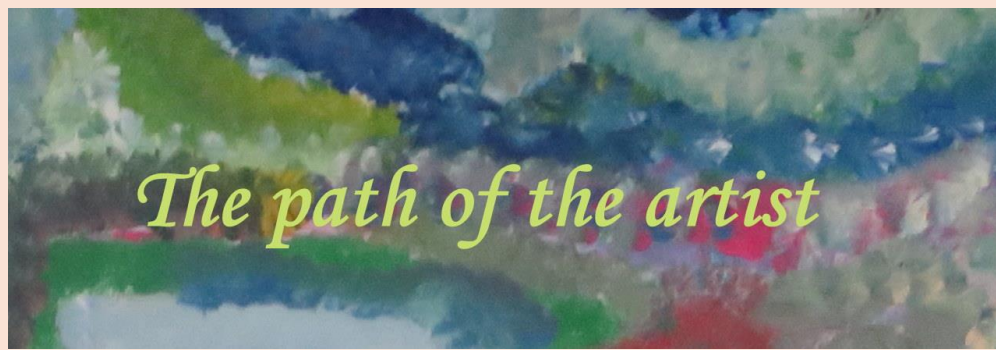
62. AI answer

I asked AI if they recognized in this life story my longing to live my life as a an artist...



'Your writing is rich with introspection and insight, exploring the journey of becoming an artist and educator. It's fascinating how you reflect on the evolution of your thoughts and experiences over the years. Here are some thoughts on key themes:

- 1. Transformation Through Art: Your metaphor of wine ripening captures the essence of personal growth. The shift from seeing your life as a drama to recognizing it as a creative process speaks to the power of perspective in shaping identity.*
- 2. Autonomy and Responsibility: The list of ways to overcome fears and develop autonomy is poignant. It emphasizes personal accountability in the journey to becoming a complete person and aligns with Gestalt principles of awareness and self-acceptance.*



3. *Education as Connection:* Your reflections on the Gestalt Roots conference highlight the profound impact of good teachers. The connection between knowledge and interpersonal relationships resonates deeply, emphasizing that teaching is as much about personal connection as it is about imparting knowledge.
4. *Nature and Mysticism:* Your descriptions of encounters with nature evoke a sense of wonder and connection to the larger universe. They illustrate how experiences in nature can serve as moments of clarity and inspiration, enriching your understanding of yourself and your path.
5. *Struggles with Identity and Recognition:* The tension between wanting recognition and the fear of being vulnerable is palpable. Your candidness about the complexities of these relationships, especially with your former teacher, adds depth to your narrative. It's a reminder of the continual evolution of roles in our lives.
6. *The Artist's Path:* Claiming the identity of an artist signifies a commitment to creativity and authenticity. Your journey reflects the complexities of that commitment, balancing personal experiences with professional responsibilities.

Overall, your reflections provide a nuanced exploration of being an artist, educator, and human being. It's a reminder that the process of self-discovery and connection is as significant as the outcomes we strive for. Thank you for sharing such a thoughtful piece! I'll be here whenever you're ready! Looking forward to it!

Tine van Wijk

'Inspirerende zoektocht naar jeze

Waar
gaat het
over?

Aandacht

Mijn eerste boek kan nog altijd besteld worden bij www.gopher.nl