



Live Inspired

Laura Staley

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SECTION ONE

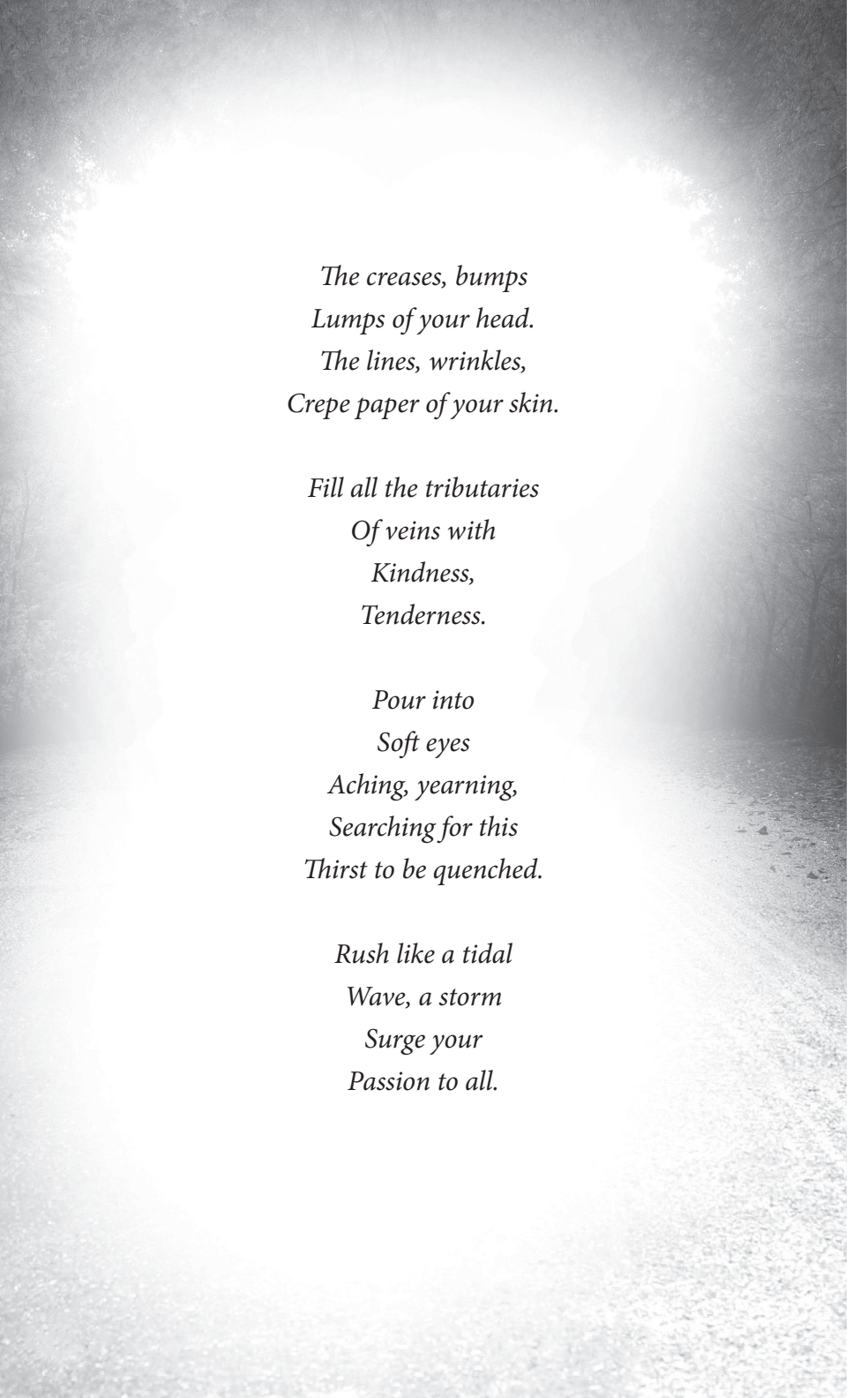
Living Awake

Open Spaces

*Remove the shards
Of shattered glass
From your arteries,
The heavy blanket of
Hot sweaty
Shame from your
Rounded shoulders,
The shackles of
Past betrayals
From
Your ankles.*

*Find your heart in
The empty, the full
Deep in desire.*

*Flow free this love
Like cascading waterfalls
Into all the broken open
Spaces of your soul.*



*The creases, bumps
Lumps of your head.
The lines, wrinkles,
Crepe paper of your skin.*

*Fill all the tributaries
Of veins with
Kindness,
Tenderness.*

*Pour into
Soft eyes
Aching, yearning,
Searching for this
Thirst to be quenched.*

*Rush like a tidal
Wave, a storm
Surge your
Passion to all.*

.

*Soak into your bones
Saturated, drenched
This flood that
Spills
Over.*

*Who do you want
To be in the open spaces?*

*Who will be there
When you arrive?*

*A
Vast
Luscious
Ocean of
Liberation.*

The Soul of Silence



“Words can make a deeper scar than silence can heal.”

—Unknown

As a child, I felt a cautious relief from walking on eggshells when my mother played the grand piano in our living room. Playing the piano seemed to make her happy while shifting her focus away from me. She especially enjoyed playing “Begin the Beguine.”

My older sister, who played the piano with similar ease and skill, took lessons with a music professor who was an accomplished pianist. My sister often practiced in the evening when I was in bed. The sweet music of my sister playing “Claire De Lune” wafted through the air, helping to soothe my anxious body.

One day when I was six years old, I danced around in my white tights and red corduroy jumper as my older sister played the piano. I yearned to make my fingers tap

those black and white keys. I asked my mother if I could take lessons. She said, “Well, you’ll never play the piano like your sister does!” I didn’t mind; I still wanted to learn. I asked again daily for a week. Finally, she told me she had scheduled piano lessons for me. I was anxious but also thrilled.

On the day of my first lesson, my mother drove me to the home of my piano teacher, introduced me, and left. The old woman, who was polite and kind to my mother, morphed into this terrifying witch toward me. “Sit down!” Her brittle words crackled around me as terror consumed my body. I complied with her order. Sitting on the piano bench, I barely took a breath.

She grabbed my left hand, turned it over. Smack! A ruler stung my palm.

“Curved fingers over those keys!” She grabbed my right hand. Thwack. Bowing their heads, my trembling fingertips timidly pressed on the keys.

White and black blurred as hot tears bubbled out of my eyes. My body imprisoned my terrified, wailing self as the saltwater streamed down my cheeks. The piano teacher bellowed, “Stop crying and play these notes!” This continued until my mother returned.

I pulled on my coat when my mother arrived. My red, swollen hands clutched the piano book I was told to take home with me to practice. My fear moved to my belly.

In the backseat of the car, the cold vinyl seeped through my tights into my thighs and bottom. My mother's words swirled around me.

"Your piano teacher is such a wonderful lady! You should be so grateful getting to learn piano from her. You know you'll need to practice every day..."

I squeezed my eyes shut to dam the leaks. I knew I had to remain silent about my experience with the mean piano teacher. My mother wouldn't have believed me. She would have accused me of being ungrateful, and her reality ruled.

Somehow my burning desire to learn to play this instrument percolated to the surface the next afternoon. I sat at the piano to practice. My mother appeared out of nowhere at my left shoulder.

"Sit up straight! Curve your fingers! Don't push so hard on the keys! You're banging on the keys! That is not playing! That sounds awful! You will never play like your sister! Didn't I tell you that? Now practice!"

Tears streamed down my face. I didn't feel my fingers on the keys, but I heard strings pinging as she continued to holler. After what felt like eternity, she walked to the kitchen.

From the moment I returned from school each day until she heard me playing the piano, my mother stalked my resistance. No matter where she was, her scolding, nagging words filled the house until the tiny gauze-wrapped

hammers struck the strings of steel deep in the belly of the piano. My body dragged itself into the living room for days of this ritual.

After several weeks of this torture from my mother and piano teacher, I walked into the foyer of our home after school and was met by my mother.

“It’s time to practice piano, Laurie!”

Feeling like I was moving through mud, I made my way to the piano bench and sat dead still. Her chiding turned to rage as she stormed into the room.

“We are paying all this money for you to learn how to play. Shame on you for not practicing enough, you ungrateful, selfish, shithead of a child!”

Weeks of hurt and fear erupted out of me as anger. I jumped up from the bench glaring directly at her hate-filled face.

“I don’t want to take piano lessons. I won’t go anymore, ever!”

She yelled louder. “You are a failure, a worthless piece of shit, a disgrace to our family!”

I ran from the room, not feeling my legs.

That night, I buried myself under the covers of my bed, ready for sleep. My dad came to my bedside, pulled the covers back from my head. I knew what he wanted; we had done this drill many times.

“You need to apologize to your mother, Laurie. You made her cry. We’re really disappointed in you.”

My anger whispered in my head: *When did she cry? I never saw her cry. If she did it would come out as either steam or icicles!*

Then guilt and remorse flooded my body along with hurt and confusion; my brain disconnected. I trudged down the carpeted stairway and stood outside the open door of my parents’ bedroom. My feet felt bound to the wood floor.

“I’m sorry, Mommy.” I stared into the black opening like wounded prey at the mouth of a vicious bear’s cave. Stillness. I didn’t even hear her breathing.

After this, the piano lessons with the mean old lady ended. The icy silence from my mom deepened as she withdrew from me. I became invisible to her, completely shunned until her next unpredictable tongue lashing. The piano in the living room glared at me as guilt, shame, and terror entombed my shattered desire.

Understandably, knowing when to remain silent, when to speak up, when to let another’s words not slice into my heart became a painful learning curve throughout most of my life and eventually a healthy practice over time. Learning to trust, discern, and lean into my own experiences rather than what adults told me I was supposed to think and feel about reality took years. I often doubted my own

truths because they were constantly denied, rewritten, or questioned. I grew up with “Navy Seal-like” training from shape-shifting adults, unpredictable in their interactions with me. It’s a lie that only sticks and stones can hurt you. Rage-filled words can do great harm to children, especially those who are tender-hearted and introverted.

Some of you may have learned to be silent, but on the inside your mind and heart fill to overflowing with words and feelings. You know all too well the experience of stuffing your words, “biting your tongue,” or burying your honest emotions. Did you create a safe place to purge thoughts and feelings, or do they still chatter or burn inside of you right now as you read these words?

In contrast, you may observe that you talk incessantly with no filter, no internal editor sitting with her red pen at the desk of your voice box. Any thought that bubbles up inside of you comes bouncing right off your tongue. There’s no dress rehearsal or pause button. You notice you’re reactive. You’re quick to speak your mind, to express your feelings.

Cultivating an ability to listen deeply becomes an exquisite gift of unconditional love you give to another human being. Listening from stillness with an open mind and an open heart allows infinite space for another human being to weep, to breathe, to hear themselves, to uncover their own truth, to be broken and whole, lost, and

The Soul of Silence

to be exactly who they are in that moment. To listen with presence can make another individual feel like they are the most beloved being in the entire Universe. Wrapping them in a warm, soft blanket of your undivided attention, you become a sacred gift given from the soul of silence.



*May you become this rare and wondrous treasure for
yourself, for others, and for our world.*

A Pathway to a Quieter Mind



“Let silence be the art you practice.”

—Rumi

W*hy have I been so exhausted? Why didn't I get invited to that social event? Why did I ask that clerk such a stupid question? She looked at me with such disdain after I spoke to her! Why can't I ever remember to say or do the right thing? I am such a dumbass, a sh*thead. I can be such an idiot! Did I pay the electric bill? I really am a worthless piece of s*ck^!*

In graduate school, my internal chatterbox became powerful and mean. One evening my parents and my boyfriend's mother came over for dinner. As we sat eating our meal of broiled chicken, green beans, and wild rice, the topic of our living together got spoken about with fierce judgment from my mother.

“When are the two of you getting married and putting an end to this disgraceful situation?”

From the day we moved to our apartment, my mother began mailing me pamphlets and books about the sins of living together, the evils of having sex outside of the sanctity of marriage. Sections of the books were underlined with exclamation points in the margins with demeaning words about me.

The man I was “shacking up” with and I looked at each other. We put down our forks. He began a thoughtful, reasonable explanation of our choice, one he and I had discussed many times. I chimed in with my thoughts, which included that I was a grown adult and capable of making decisions for myself. I also added that she had a right to her point of view, that I had known her perspective for a long time. My dad wanted to know my boyfriend’s intentions. His mom spoke up before he could answer my dad.

“I think they have every right to choose what they choose. I love your daughter, and I love my son. They are both adults, and their living situation is none of my business. My son is a good man with a good heart. Please refrain from questioning his intentions.”

Then all hell broke loose as my mother unleashed her poisonous righteousness, mostly directed at me. His mom stood up, put her napkin on the table, and announced she needed to leave. My boyfriend and I both stood up. My boyfriend’s mom walked over and hugged her son. Then she looked at me.

“Thank you so much for cooking this delicious meal, for inviting me to your home. I’m so sorry to have to leave abruptly, but I will not sit and listen to this.”

I walked to get her coat, relieved to have a task, to remove myself from my mother’s toxic energy field. As I walked into the foyer, my mother yelled, again, “I did not raise you to be a whore!”

Burning with shame, a familiar nausea in my belly, I handed his mother her coat. I barely looked at her as I mumbled, “Thank you for coming over.” She hugged me briefly and left.

Somehow my dad managed to shift the conversation to politics with my boyfriend as they made their way to the foyer to get my dad’s and mom’s coats. From the hallway, I observed my mom walking into our kitchen with the dishes. She obviously saw the bumper sticker on our fridge “Arms Are for Hugging,” because she spoke these words in her fake syrupy voice. Then she turned and walked to the foyer with arms opened wide towards me. I reluctantly acquiesced, feeling her fake hug, while hearing more cruel words spoken into my ear. I wept bitterly after they left.

A few days later when I felt terrified about having thoughts of putting a gun to my head, I knew I had to deal with my internal bully. Breaking the fierce rule of “what happens in our family stays in our family,” I bravely walked into the Ohio State Health Clinic and booked an

appointment with one of the mental health counselors. This began a long journey of disconnecting from the bully that lived in my mind, eventually healing the trauma that resided in my body, and ultimately choosing to be unresponsive to my entire family of origin.

Maybe you also have an internal bully who makes you feel like you aren't good enough, or maybe in your case it's a chatterbox who nags you about every little thing. The bothersome inner voice may be an anxious worrier who reminds you of every bad thing that could happen in even the happiest situation, or this voice may be self-pitying or martyr-like. For some of you, the voice inside is an over-thinker who must explore everything from multiple angles, even if you're trying to sleep or complete a task. For many people, the inner voice is a mix of many of these. Maybe you wish, as I did, that there was a way to take a vacation from the activity in your mind that makes it difficult to focus on things you need to do or who you want to be.

What if you could just notice your inner voice? What if you could cultivate a "fly on the wall" – the part of you that notices your thoughts, body sensations, and feelings? This part of you can grow and expand a capacity to quietly watch you do you. Shifting to this silent witness allows you to pay attention from a broader perspective, from the seat of your awakened self. Over time, a transformation

A Pathway to a Quieter Mind

can take place in what you see including things, thoughts, people, and places.



*May you find a quieter mind that creates breathing room
for this moment that you are alive. May you find your way
to your heart to listen to the wisdom that lives there.*

Listen to Your Body



“The body says what words cannot.”

—Martha Graham,

The Mother of Modern Dance

Walking up the flights of steps during my senior year in college to the 4th floor dance studio in Edgar Hall, I anticipated the expanse of time and silence to move in my leotard- and tights-clad body to the inner rhythms of my being. Sunlight often streamed through the bank of windows on the south facing wall. The mirrors on the east wall reflected this light which cast my body in a moving, flowing shadow on the floor. I watched in wonder as a witness to my own movement and shapes. I experienced delightful shadow dancing in the warmth and quiet of this space. I stopped, sat down, opened my notebook, grabbed a pencil, and sketched diagrams of these body movements as a dance unfolded through my beating heart, breath, and

imagination. A theme of hand movement emerged. Hands had fascinated me for a long time.

These moments of quiet permission to create a beginning, middle, and end of an artistic expression reunited me with my middle school self, who danced in this same studio with Dale Scholl's modern dance classes. With Ms. Scholl's gentle, yet passionate guidance, one of my best friends and I found a place, a respite of empowered connection to our awkward, girl-changing-into-young-lady bodies.

This second opportunity to choreograph arrived after three years of being selected to be a member of the Orchesis Dance Company, directed by Dance Professor Mary Titus. Ms. Titus, a fireball of energy, believed passionately in the artist inside of us dancers. She demonstrated this gift of silently noting a lack of self-worth that showed in our body postures and choosing purposefully to speak to the heart of movement, the power of potential in releasing what might be holding us back. She remains an adult woman in my life who saw my goodness, beauty, and raw potential through eyes of compassion, a heart committed to the birth of my confidence. The desire to spark her enthusiastic cheers matched the unbridled liberation I experienced in creating and teaching my dancers this new dance.

Honored to have my dance piece be the final one of our annual performance, I stood off-stage by the curtain as my

dancers took the floor of the main stage of the Chappellear Drama Center. The lights came up, shining on the dancers' amazing sculpted bodies. Their colorful, simple leotards of beautiful shades of red-like fingernail polish caught the eye without distracting from the shapes as they moved together and apart. I took deep breaths as they deliciously executed what had just months ago existed secretly inside of me. Towards the end, a little boy burst out laughing at their movement, which seemed to give the entire audience permission to belly-laugh. The movement was utterly comical, which inspired the title "Out of Hand." Oh, to be off-stage knowing that something I created through these beautiful, skilled dancers' bodies brought joy to an entire room full of people felt like an utterly humbling joy, an awakened light of gratitude. A few years later I wept when I learned that Mary Titus died.

For years in my adulthood, I walked around like a disconnected talking head, sometimes a bobblehead, seemingly devoid of a torso, legs, or feet. I'm not quite certain what anchored me to the ground. If someone had asked me to feel my feet without touching my toes with my hands, I would've looked at them with my "WTF!?!?" face.

Living seemingly only in my mind, I attempted to solve ridiculous riddles that had nothing to do with anything, visited many past conversations with "I wish I had ...," muttered mean things about myself, worried, or simmered.

All this busyness in my headspace kept me distracted from feeling the clothes on my body or my abdomen expanding when I inhaled. Did I even know if my feet got cold? In my rigorous efforts to cope, I had forgotten the tiny dancer, the choreographer inside of me.

What is your body saying to you? What are your feet, knees, or neck whispering? What are your eyelashes communicating? If they could speak, what would they say? What's gurgling in your intestines right now besides your breakfast or lunch? What's in your throat? Does the cat have your tongue right next to the catnip? If your heart held a megaphone, what would it declare?

An important and empowering relationship exists between the body-mind, which includes the heart, and consciousness, that part of you quietly noticing the screen of your laptop or holding this book in your hands. The nervous, muscular, skeletal, digestive, respiratory, and endocrine systems miraculously salsa dance together inside of you every day. Experiencing life through your body can expand your capacity to heal, to enjoy life, to be here in this sacred moment, to discover new information about being human. Your body wisdom can guide you towards deeper realizations, truths about who you are, who you are becoming, and transformations.

Can you right now drop into your body? Are you able to relax all parts of yourself from your clenched jaw to

Listen to Your Body

your curled toes? During your next meal, can you taste and savor the food you place in your mouth – the textures, the temperature, the spice, sweet, or savory? What if you stood up, stretched your arms up in a V for victory? What might you observe? Do you notice the cool air entering your nostrils? Can you trust your body, your inner emotional GPS to inspire your next actions, even if you have no idea what might happen tomorrow?



May you find that life force inside your body where you can sit quietly to listen. May your body wisdom lead the way to wholeness, fulfillment, joy of the integrated kind, and to where words cannot venture.

Liberate Yourself



“Every aspect of your life is energetically anchored in your living space, so clearing clutter can transform your entire existence.”

—Karen Kingston

It was New Year’s Day. Now married to my second husband and a mother to two young children, I drove our family vehicle loaded to the hilt with all kinds of objects that my parents had given me over the years. A teakettle, a robe, small pieces of furniture, some appliances, artwork, books, videos, tapes, magazines, skirts, dresses, jewelry, and sweaters all rode with me. My parents’ house was thirty minutes away. I pulled up their driveway, got out, walked onto their porch, and rang the doorbell. I returned to the van and began unloading. My parents opened the door and walked onto their porch. My mother spoke with a certain joy.

“You’ve left your second husband! You are moving home!”

My dad looked confused, lost.

I silently grabbed items and walked them up the steps and through their front door. I placed them in the foyer. My dad finally realized that he could join me in the process of unloading my Honda Odyssey minivan. We worked as a team. I tuned out my mother's prattle. The last action I took was to hand them a thank-you letter I had written before I left my home. I hugged them. "Happy New Year! I love you." I scampered off the porch and reversed my van down their narrow driveway.

Earlier that day, I sat in my recliner that I called my peace chair, reading a passage in *Conversations with God* by Neale Donald Walsh. A huge "AHA" rose up inside of me...his discussion of unconditional love, that it is an experience distinct from conditional love, that it is an energy experience...in this moment I knew the energy field of every single object my mom gave me was toxic. Gifts were weapons in my mother's arsenal, and she used them regularly. The promise of a love gift became a twisted game of bait and switch. She'd ask what I wanted. Next, she'd tell me I did not want whatever I had said. Then she'd deliver a "gift" that consistently created a profound confusion inside of me. "How dare you think you'd get what *you* want!" landed loud and clear.

The demand to be thanked showed itself as a terrifying storm including the inevitable tongue-lashing of my

character. No matter how often or thoroughly I flooded appreciation her way, she consistently assaulted me with the words, “You are an ungrateful, selfish bitch!” When my mother visited our home, she regularly roared ever-changing use and care instructions for these belongings that I unknowingly completely failed to follow. The realization rose up inside me: I can give them all back to her! Every one of the “gifts” contained painful associations. These belongings had never been given freely and unconditionally from the heart.

With these items gone, the house we lived in could begin to feel like our home rather than an outpost for belongings that triggered my mother’s cruel outbursts. Over the next few hours, it slowly dawned on me that I never, ever had to accept a “gift” from her again. Not ever.

On this new day of a new year, I drove away as they opened the envelope with the letter that said, “Thank you so much for all of these items. It was so generous of you to allow me to have them. I am so grateful to have had them in my life, but I no longer need any of them. I realize they were never given unconditionally, so you can now have them back. Thank you, again! Happy New Year! Love, Laura.”

Clutter can show up in your physical space as unused belongings. The items might be associated with emotional stories that you struggle to resolve. You may think that

you are your past and all the objects associated with your past. These belongings may have wonderful associations or heartbreaking meanings, but these items are not you. They tell stories about your life, but they aren't *you*.

Sometimes staying attached to things seems easier than remaining connected with people in your life. Like a child clinging to a stuffed animal, sometimes you make a deeper emotional investment in inanimate objects than in people. These objects usually don't talk, yell, rage, cry, bully, or cruelly shame you. Holding a book can seem more comfortable than holding someone's hand. You might avert your eyes from people and look for a long time at your cell phone.

Your emotions can show you what you actually care about. You wouldn't have all these feelings if you weren't committed to something or someone. The intensity of your grief, loneliness, or shame associated with clutter often points to the depth of your commitment, your love, and your desire to belong in a meaningful, healthy way.



I wish you deep and enduring peace as you take those gentle actions to clear your life of clutter as best as you can in this moment. May you liberate yourself!

The Importance of Unravelling



“...feelings like disappointment, embarrassment, irritation, resentment, anger, jealousy, and fear, instead of being bad news, are actually very clear moments that teach us where it is that we’re holding back. They teach us to perk up and lean in when we feel we’d rather collapse and back away. They’re like messengers that show us, with terrifying clarity, exactly where we’re stuck. This very moment is the perfect teacher, and lucky for us, it’s with us wherever we are.”

—Pema Chödrön

While engaged in transformational work, I distinguished a part of myself that felt like a psycho bitch from hell, my rage. I named her Lois. Most of the time I could be patient and loving with my young children until I just wasn’t. The constant buzz of hypervigilance and high anxiety raced in the background of my being until it didn’t. Home from grocery shopping, I carried our son in the Baby Bjorn and walked with our

three-year-old daughter into the kitchen. She chatted with me about pre-school, clapped her hands, covered her eyes, uncovered them and said, “Obbghfutf,” making our son laugh.

“Baby! Baby!” she chanted.

I lifted him out of the carrier to crawl and sit as he pleased on the floor. My legs became a Maypole as the kids weaved in, out, under and around my legs and feet as I put away more groceries. Yet despite this playful interaction, I felt the inner rumblings, the brewing of that psycho bitch rage. Lois roared to the surface.

Like a bolt of lightning of alien invasion, Lois, now on full volume, electrified my whole body. I barely noticed my then husband, standing in the doorway, bearing witness to this cartoonish, monster metamorphosis. Snapping and clawing at the air around her like the truly tortured being she was, Lois blasted our kids for being kids. A fear of running into my mother, the bright lights, loud noises of a busy grocery store, and the constant touch, chatter, and gurgles from two little ones seemed to send my screaming nervous system beyond that one last frayed nerve.

In the aftermath, my husband took me aside and said, “You are terrifying our children. You are scaring me a bit, too, but you are *really* terrifying them!”

I yanked my arm and stomped away saying, “They are supposed to see what anger looks like!!!”

In the lingering moment that the last word spit from my lip, I thought “Does my anger really teach them anything?” Fortunately, his words and this thought mingled with my defensive warrior body.

A couple of days later, Lois returned. My whole body flamed with her presence, head expanding, and cuss word vomit-exploding. The heat of her, this psycho bitch rage, burned pathways from my diaphragm straight up my torso. Waist, legs, feet like a huge boulder permanently grounded to the wooden dining room floor. Agitated arms flinched and flicked in spasms. Inside myself I heard the roar of her words. Streaks of light flashed. The walls of my body continued to roar as the blazing fire of her heat intensified. My face cooked with her furnace-blasted air. Brow deeply furrowed. Eyes squeezed into tiny slits seeing little as this rage, this Lois psycho bitch, blinded me in darkness. A roaring intake of breath; her blackened cloak over my face lifted. As the smoldering smog drifted upwards, I opened my eyes and looked.

My brain registered the faces, the little, beautiful, *terrified*, pale, saucer-eyed faces, staring, mouths frozen open, sitting, statues on the floor: my two children. Silence enveloped the room. No one breathed as I felt my heart pound. My face reddened with shame. I turned, stumbled into our bedroom with my hot pounding heart and head, flopped down onto our bed and sobbed uncontrollably into

our cream-and-blue wedding ring quilt. I finally saw what my husband saw. My heart broke open. I called the next day for my first of many Cranio-Sacral appointments and sessions of Somatic Trauma Resolution. The passionate and rigorous journey of releasing Lois from my body, our home and our lives, forever, began.

Lois wasn't me, but an act, a front, a pretense, a grotesque inside-out costumed character. She raged with the F word; a word forbidden in my childhood home. For years she simmered with many flavors of fury deep in the lockdown pot of my body. She bubbled, vigorously boiled, and blew the lid right off especially in the early years of mothering my children. Lois splattered hurt all over these precious ones I treasured the most. Had I created her to cope? If I had, I succeeded in making one nasty creature.

Even though this psycho bitch rage, Lois, oddly fueled a distorted sense of courage for which I felt pride, I carried deep shame, too, realizing only cowards or deeply troubled people lash out at small beings. When you don't know the pathway out and you don't understand Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, reacting like a madwoman fools you into feeling powerful. Lois took over my body at the slightest provocation, when something in my immediate environment looked or smelled like a trigger from the past. I didn't invent her. She was my body screaming, *trauma lives right over here!*

The Importance of Unravelling

Out in the world with new people, different environments, and life experiences, I often perceived threats everywhere; I lost my ability to discern true danger from what only seemed dangerous. Anything that appeared remotely like the caldron of my childhood morphed into a threat. My system had automatically reacted mostly with freeze, of the fight, flight, freeze survival modalities. Now in a grownup body, I fought back, fueled by fury and the bottled-up hurt and anguish of all those years of numbly sucking it up. The fight response, while mostly unavailable in childhood inside the heinous dynamics of my parents' home and other so-called "safe havens," lived for years dormant inside of me.

Scenes from my past still visit me in moments when I'm in the shower, or running, and during times of quiet aloneness. These moments feel poignant as I honor all my courageous younger selves who endured persistent and heinous traumas. Waves of grief still come. Rather than pushing the sadness down inside of me, though, I allow the tears to fall. There remains much to grieve.

You may not have lived through trauma, yet you notice the waxy buildup of unresolved past hurts or heartbreaks. Maybe no one taught you how to deal with difficult emotions or experiences. Maybe you learned to bury your emotions, but they leak out sideways, unexpectedly. You might walk around ready to explode or you live disconnected, numb,

anxious, lonely, or depressed. You go through the motions of living, very busy in your mind, but not really feeling your body, struggling to hear your heart. Barricading the hurt, you also wall off passion and joy. Emotionally flat-lined in your fierce protection, you can barely breathe. You seek refuge in food, busyness, shopping, technology, and distractions of all kinds to avoid feeling or resolving anything.

Then another difficulty happens in present time that sets off an unravelling of all related past challenges that look and smell like the current one. Falling down a rabbit hole of DVR memories all opening up seemingly simultaneously takes you to your knees. Consciously choosing a different response in current time takes great courage because you see that you can no longer deny or avoid. In a ball of complete pain, you finally scream, “Uncle!” You know you must take the time to feel the shame, grief, rage, and hurt from all those past experiences. Feeling the emotional pain lodged in your heart and body becomes the price of your freedom.



*May you find safe ways to resolve past emotional hurts.
May you discover the joys, the freedom of healthy
emotional expression. May you know that you
are whole and well in your heart and soul.*

End of Excerpt

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