

Relinquishment, rehabilitation and renewal, widow musings, continued ...

Today I pick golden rod from the edge of a country road. The mid-September day is radiant, the air dry, fraught with autumn smells, autumn colors just beginning.

I love driving country roads observing gradually coloring sumac, reddening berries, grasses drying plumed and terra cotta. I stop at a Starbuck's drive up and order green iced tea with lemonade. All the simplest pleasures of being out of the house on a day like this bring me to tears of happiness.

This morning from my 5th floor perch at Central DuPage hospital, riding the stationary bike, I can see a maple, tinged magenta, in the courtyard below. Physical therapy is an area of knee replacement recovery that has, from the beginning, gone well. I could be dismissed for what has been accomplished with Melissa, a therapist with a healing touch and the grace of an angel. I am glad I have a few more sessions with her.

I cry easily today and every day since the knee surgery. The surgery itself was textbook but the aftermath was rough, way harder and more painful than I would have imagined with my inability to tolerate narcotic meds to take the edge off. It is behind me now, and what is left is mostly positive. I've gained

an inch in height that I lost over the last years. I am walking without a limp and with excellent extension. (My kids have perfected a hilarious demonstration of my pre-surgery limp, coupled with an angst-ridden facial expression, eyes scanning for the nearest chair in all venues).

I cry for all kinds of reasons. I'm tired and vulnerable but also incredibly moved and grateful for the care I have had. Angels of mercy have ministered to me through painful nights, exhaustion, migraines, and nausea. I have had to completely let go of my own control – to trust, relinquish and rest. I've had back rubs and special foods, water at all hours, and needs met that I could not have anticipated. Phone calls, texts, emails. Flowers and plants and balloons to cheer me. Colleagues have stepped in. Clients have texted their good wishes and encouragement. To every angel unaware, my heart expands with thanksgiving.

Now I arrange today's floral gathering. Goldenrod from the fields, celadon hydrangea from my own yard, and crimson geranium from our deck. I still say "our" often because after a marriage of 57 years "we" and "our" will likely remain a part of my vocabulary. Indeed all through this last month, I have felt the dear and gentle servant heart of my husband in heaven looking down with grace, honored by helping hands. And I cry tears of gratitude and renewal. 🌿