

A MUSICAL NOTE OF LOVE AND AWAKENING

BUTTERFLIES

Twenty years ago, I signed up for an art class immediately after going through a divorce, a divorce that, thankfully, shattered all I had previously known about relationships. I'm referring to relationships not only to Other, but also to Self. Because it was the first art class I had ever taken, I found myself filled with that familiar combination of the feelings of excitement and fear. You know, that sensation of 'butterflies' inside? Hindsight taught me that the combination of those two feelings is my body's way of signaling an opportunity for *'personal transformation.'*

TEACHING THROUGH THE LOVING PRESENCE OF THE ARTIST WITHIN

This was an Impressionism Class, and we were handed all the painting supplies we could possibly want or need, while Sally Brown, the instructor, created a strong container out of unwavering love and respect for each woman present. She did not teach through 'instruction,' but rather, through her loving presence and skillful questioning, directly from the Soul of the Artist within her Being. We were free to explore, discover, and create in a safe and loving environment, free of judgment or expectation. That, in and of its self, was an invaluable gift that, to this day, teaches and influences my life and my work...my own creative expression.

SNAKES

I should mention that when I painted, I did so from my unconscious. I did not plan what subject matter I would paint, but instead, I followed that oh-so-subtle voice from deep within that would direct me toward a particular color of paint, and next, would guide my brush on the canvas, without words or thoughts. My unconscious urgently filled the canvas before me, and for an entire semester, I was faced with nothing but snakes. The dull, black shed skin of a snake laying lifeless upon the Earth; the red snake dancing in the flames of a roaring fire; the intertwined, tension filled snakes poised to strike one another at any moment, and so on.

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One day, Sally looked deeply into my eyes with that wonderful presence of hers, and asked, "Have you ever read about the symbolism of the snake?" Upon telling her, "No," she suggested, simply, that 'I might want to do so.' This is a perfect example of her profound influence in my life. She could have responded any number of ways. She could have told me her own understanding of the symbolism

of snakes; she could have told me what book to get; she did neither. She quietly walked away, leaving me with that powerful *'touch.'* It was as if she placed a *musical note of love and awakening* upon my sleeping self, inviting me out of my slumber, should I have that desire...which I did.

I journeyed out into the world, found a book on symbolism, and began reading about the snake, another ancient and powerful symbol of **transformation** and the **cycles of life, death, and rebirth**, amongst many other wonderful things.

RIDING ON THE CYCLES OF THE MOON

One year after my divorce was final, and *many* snake paintings, I was stunned to realize while writing a check at the grocery store one day, that the name I had taken from my husband as my last name was no longer *my* name. After a rather brief and powerful journey through the question 'who am I now?' I found my *new* last name. I chose to take my middle name legally for my last name. Jane Ellen. Ah! *That* felt true. With a deep sense of peace within myself, I made up an announcement to joyfully share my new name with my family and friends. As I sat down to design the announcement, I found myself drawing the Moon's phases, and writing, "As the cycles of the Moon, so too do I move." I had come back home to my Self, riding on the cycles of the Moon.

OUR PRACTICE PREPARES US FOR THE NEXT CYCLE

The opportunities for personal transformation visit the doorstep of our Life consistently, whether through the energy of the Butterflies, the Loving Presence of the Artist Within, the Snakes, A Musical Note of Love and Awakening, or through Riding on the Cycles of the Moon. These rhythmic, repeating cycles of Life, Death, and Rebirth pass through us each minute. Bringing our consciousness to them allows us to integrate the transitions of each into our Being, and our *practice* prepares us for the next cycle.

MAY WE WARMLY, BRAVELY WELCOME THE BUTTERFLIES, SNAKES AND MOONS AT OUR DOORSTEP, AND WITH PRACTICE, RECOGNIZE WHEN A MUSICAL NOTE OF LOVE AND AWAKENING IS CALLING US OUT OF OUR SLUMBER.

Written by Jane Ellen on 7-13-07