



Hello Friends-

Have you noticed the pastel drawing hanging in the Meetinghouse kitchen? It's by the doorway leading to the vestibule. A woman looks down at the mug of coffee held tightly in her hands. She is about to bring the mug to her lips to sip.

I drew this image in 1993 and I'd like to tell you how this piece came about and why I have given it to our meeting.

As an artist, the studio has always been my place of industry -the place where my spirit dreams, where reflections, observations, and emotions meld and magically manifest as visual work or objects.

As in any art form, whether composing music, writing poetry, or performing dance, a concept is transformed into a tangible offering from the artist's heart and being, an invitation for others to enter into the space and moment that captivated the artist, composer, writer.

I drew this piece in 1993 following the death of my then husband, Richard Henkels. Weeks after his burial here in the Meeting graveyard, after all the children, family and friends had returned to their lives, I was aimlessly pacing the emptiness of my home, bereft of another cherished relationship. Where was I and where was I going? My spirit was crushed. I was bewildered finding myself widowed a second time, the first time, thirteen years before. Then I had my sons to raise. Nurturing them kept my spirit intact. This time I felt terribly alone. I drank lots of tea to soothe my tired soul.

One afternoon, making another mug of tea, a question returned that I'd been mulling about for weeks. Might I feel better if I were in my studio? But I was far from motivated to go there. Would I feel better, feel something other than lost if I resumed work on a drawing I'd let go, or start a new one? Mug in hand, I walked to my drawing table wondering where to begin when I saw a long-gone flower arrangement, a drooping, yellowed assemblage of dried, paper thin blooms, leaves and sticks, quite dead. In all the hustle, someone had unknowingly plopped it atop a drawing I'd begun and forgotten. This was the last straw! I picked up the basket that felt like the weight of the world and headed out through the snowy path to the woods alongside my house. Teary-eyed, I threw the whole thing with all the strength I could muster into the trees, letting out a feral howl that loosened showers of snow from the their branches, some on me.

Walking back to the studio, I was suddenly energized. I carried another hot mug of tea to the studio; I sipped and looked around, then, putting it down, swept my arm across the drawing table clearing the remains of detritus and earth to the floor. Grabbing a broom I swept and wept but when the chill that had set me in motion wasn't leaving, I became fiercely determined that I wouldn't capitulate to my grief, but acknowledge it. Let it know I wasn't giving in but was taking it on! There sat my mug. I went for it. You know how comforting a cup of tea can be in the very saddest moments. This was one of those. I put down the mug, picked up my pencil and began drawing it. Sipped, drew. In the bright winter light streaming through the glass doors, I saw my reflection in a mirror I kept in my studio. I moved it closer. The heart ache wouldn't leave but I was still there. Sipping, now tasting the rich pomegranate tea.

Since Phil's death in April of 25, I've been reflecting on the odd path my life has taken -loves and lives lost, dear husbands gone, all remembered, close to my heart. Going through the

studio, I've been digging into the past, seeking and finding meaning in memories, sifting through photographs and projects, Phil's work and mine, our collaborations. Having known love and grown love, I still find love and sustenance surrounded by the richness of souls in my life - my family, friends and Meeting Friends.

Serving on Care of Members this Spring, I became more acutely aware of the number of losses Friends were dealing with. Losses other than one's own remind us of this limbo land of grief for which there can feel like there is no exit. I asked what do we as Friends offer those in our community after the Memorial service has ended? How can we support Friends processing their grief over time? Bonnie Schorsch and I were led to form a spiritual support group for members and attenders processing grief and loss. During these past few months we have listened to Friends share their experiences. A recurring theme that comes up is the existential - who are we once the loved one is gone- or leaving, what holds meaning in this new place of living, what will sustain us, and what comes next?

Which led me to think about this drawing. Done at a moment when I felt so terribly low and had to find my way through. I often think that so much of life is about this- recovering from one loss or another - whatever the size or impact - we are often restructuring our lives, renewing ourselves through our journey with loss, unknowingly being the catalyst for others and self. How I came through that time was largely due to channeling my heartbreak into taking action, a return to making images that allowed me to record the moment when grief led me to accept and restore what was alive in me.

This was the perfect time to give this drawing to the meeting. One evening, a question arose in our bereavement group - how does one get through the sadness. Talking about it, I replied. For me, it was drawing it, I went on. This drawing of the woman tasting life again came to mind. I was subsequently encouraged to hang the drawing in the kitchen as a reminder that as often and as deeply as we may encounter grief, as a part of life, we can remind ourselves that we are here and we are meant to keep tasting, to take in all of life's goodness and beauty, to savor the gifts of nurturing kindness we receive and give each other - often in the meeting kitchen. Just as our kitchens are the heart of our homes, so too, our meeting kitchen feels to me the heart of our spiritual home.

I hope that this image of that moment when spirit restored in me will resonate with you.

Carol Moore