

## There's No Place Like Home – A Ukrainian Woman's Journey



### Raccoons and All, Part 1

By Daniel Hooker

I met Olga as I walked into Island Lumber here on Vashon Island (a place I've called home for many years). Olga's bright smile and courteous questions immediately caught my attention. As I walked on, the faint accent registered. I turned and asked Olga where she was originally from. She said, "The Ukraine."

My heart went out to her, and I said, "I'm so sorry for your country's loss of over a million people during the last three years. Will you be able to stay and work here?"

Olga replied, "I hope so."

As we all know, we have a new president, and many people – here legally and illegally, and including refugees from war-torn countries – are wondering if they'll be able to live and earn their livelihood under this new political term.

The next time I was in Island Lumber doing my usual thing that is my habit (bringing the jokes, and the laughter follows) there Olga was, helpful, with her sincere smile.

I told her my latest joke, one of which was the fruit of my labor while shopping at Thriftway, where a few employees now reciprocate with their own humor and

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We at the Loop are grateful to storyteller, humorist, and Island Voice, Daniel Hooker, for introducing us to Olga. In addition to Daniel's story above, this issue also features a companion interview with her.

Read "Olga and the Ukraine War" on Page 3.

## Struggles of the Supermajority, A Legislative Soap Opera

By Caitlin Rothermel

This spring's 2025-2026 session of the Washington state legislature has pushed the envelope in terms of how much state government should spend and how little the public needs to be involved in the process.

The final 1,366-page 2025-2027 proposed operating budget totals \$77.9 billion and was released with barely a day to spare on April 26th, with support only from Democratic lawmakers. No public witnesses were called, opportunities for public comment were limited and brief, and there certainly was no time for average voters to reflect on a budget that will affect every aspect of their lives.

The budget would impose the single largest tax hike in state history, representing an 8.2% increase over the prior budget and translating to \$12.5 billion in additional state and local taxes over the next four years. Based on quick calculations, the budget is 78% higher than WA state's corresponding budget from eight years ago. WA's inflation rate over that same period? About 35%.

If you prefer to look on the bright side, the Democratic majority initially proposed an additional \$21 billion taxes. This was rejected by Governor Bob Ferguson.

The public is largely not on board with these increases. A poll of 800 registered voters, conducted by Napolitan News Service, found that 80% preferred slowing government growth over raising taxes. Just 12% supported increasing both spending and taxation. In a separate poll of 600 residents, conducted by EMC research, 74% said the current legislative majority had no effective plan to solve the state's most important problems – defined as homelessness, housing affordability, public safety, and education.

Included in the proposed budget are \$1.6 billion in property tax hikes, to be obtained through local levies (HB 2049); \$2.6 billion in sales tax

increases (SB 5814); \$5.6 billion in expanded business and occupation taxes (SB 5815); and \$680 million in additional capital gains and estate taxes (SB 5813). Dead for the time being are proposed new payroll and intangible wealth taxes.

These increases are substantial enough that even the Seattle Times has editorialized against the budget, calling for Governor Bob Ferguson to veto tax increases that would fall hard on working families.

There is a narrative that the proposed property tax increases are dead, but this is not strictly true. Here is how that story unfolded: The first relevant bill of the session (HB 1334), discussed in the February 2025 issue of The Loop, would have increased the annual cap on property tax from 1% to up to 3%. Briefly – and stress-inducingly – an alternate bill (SB 5798) was introduced that would have removed the 1% cap altogether, with the upper increase limit tied only to inflation. The people wanted none of that, and a record-breaking 43,153 state residents registered against SB-5798.

After this backlash, conventional plans to increase property taxes were shelved in favor of a measure that shifted control to local school districts.

Enter HB 2049. This bill increases the maximum per-pupil levy limit, allowing for greater local revenue generation beyond basic state education funding. Starting in 2026, the per-pupil limit (currently set at \$2,500 in a community the size of Vashon) could be raised by \$500 plus inflation, with further annual increases through 2030, leading to a fixed per-pupil amount of \$5,035 per pupil in 2031, adjusted annually thereafter for inflation.

So in short, if the current budget passes, as a next step, WA state residents will experience a coordinated spate of expanded school board levy requests, requiring only a simple majority to pass.

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### The Door Fence

By Andy Valencia

Some wonders of Vashon keep forever, like KVI beach. Others come and go – I still mourn what's left of the original bike in the tree. Have you seen one of our newer attractions? The Door Fence is located in the alley running alongside "The Village Green" right in Uptown Vashon. And it's celebrating its 10th anniversary!

The Door Fence started as something far more modest – a rusting wire fence held up by T-posts. Across the alley from this fence is one of our Island's dentists. Because a couple of his treatment rooms look down onto the alley from above, he approached the owner of the property with the fence – John "Oz" Osborne – with an offer to contribute to the cost of putting up a traditional fence.

Oz's wife, Jenny, was inspired to build more than a basic fence, based upon something she'd seen on Pinterest. She imagined doing a bulk purchase of recycled doors and having a fence made up of a long row of all sizes and colors of doors. But then somebody – they're not sure who – suggested at least one should be the "Speak Friend and Enter" door from "Lord of the Rings." This opened the floodgates.

Oz loved the idea, but immediately suggested that they all be different doors – each drawn from the fiction of a book, movie, or TV show. This is about the time this author heard about the idea from my long-time friend Oz, and I assured him he

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# Let's Learn Twulshootseed

(also known as Lushootseed)

By Jane Valencia

In the January and February issues, David Turnipseed, a language instructor with the Puyallup Tribal Language Program, taught us about Twulshootseed, the language spoken by the indigenous people of Puget Sound. He invited us to support its revitalization by learning some of it ourselves.

Today, we embark on this journey together by way of Puyallup Tribal Language Program resources. This month, let's learn how to say:

haʔ sləx̩il. Good day.

Do you have your phone handy? The QR code in the next column will take you to an audio of greetings and departures. haʔ sləx̩il, Good day, is first on the audio!

For help with the sounds of the Twulshootseed alphabet, especially the characters ʔ, ł, and ʃ, go to: [www.puyalluptriballanguage.org/basics/alphabet.php](http://www.puyalluptriballanguage.org/basics/alphabet.php)



Hear how to say haʔ sləx̩il

**Challenge:** This month, let's say haʔ sləx̩il to at least three people. The more, the merrier! When they express puzzlement ("What did you say?"), explain, "haʔ sləx̩il is 'Good day' in Lushootseed, the language spoken by the tribes of Puget Sound."

Be sure to refer them to the Puyallup Tribal Language Program website if they wish to say "haʔ sləx̩il" too.

Maybe there will come a point where someone says, "haʔ sləx̩il" back to you!


Contact us if you want to advertise in The Vashon Loop or share an idea for a story!

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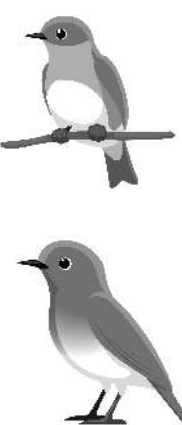
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# There's No Place Like Home – A Ukrainian Woman's Journey

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worthwhile jokes. Olga laughed at the punch line, and then I asked, "It sounds like you have questions and concerns for your continued ability to stay and work here. Can I interview you?"

"Yes," Olga replied.

Olga and I met at Hedy Anderson's "Sugar Shack," and Hedy was kind to offer us the space in the back patio, which is where I saw my friend Rebekah Kuzma's last performance with Saint Ophelia. As Olga and I chatted, her story reminded me of the Wizard of Oz on so many levels. Here is a story that includes friendly raccoons and a coffee house! Now you're talking!

As Olga shared her story, I found myself immersed in her vivid, colorful memories.

Just imagine for a moment that Vashon suddenly was besieged by war. Would you stay as missiles flew overhead, then dropped on a neighbor's house – not on a specific military target, but just a random pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey shot? What kind of war is it when only civilians

are targeted? War is terrorism. Insanity at its highest. Where would you go as an Islander? How would you deal with this drastic change?

Here on Vashon Island, we are a country, and, in a small way, like a country. We are a village in the sense that we as a whole strive (for the most part) to create a more harmonious life together, no matter what our ideological differences may be.

Olga is by all means a working, contributing member of our community whose homeland is an island forced into defending itself in war. How can we help our Olga (Dorothy) have more security in this temporary refuge from the war? What assurances can we offer her as a neighbor that we are here for her?

I asked Olga, would she return to the Ukraine?

"When the war is over. After that, it will be at least two years before the economy starts to recover," Olga said.

"Yes, of course. It is my home. Nowhere else does the rich fertile earth smell and feel the same."



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## Olga and the Ukraine War

By Andy Valencia

The Russia-Ukraine war has touched millions of lives. Who can make sense of lives being disrupted at such a scale? But the Loop had an opportunity to interview a remarkable young woman from Ukraine who literally heard the first shots of the war. Currently living on Vashon, she gave us a peek of the personal experience of a major conflict.

Olga was born and raised in Ukraine, scant miles from the border with Russia. On the other side of that border is a land which, for her whole life, has been led by Vladimir Putin. Andropov and Gorbachev and Yeltsin are just names from history. Over that border is Putin's Russia.

The memory of being a part of the USSR is still very present to Ukrainians. The closer you get to the eastern border, the more Russian as a language is present in all layers of the culture. Many families – including Olga's – have entire branches of genealogy leading back deep into Russia. Although the younger generations can speak Russian, most consider the Ukrainian language and culture their native ones. The memory of being a dominated and subservient satellite of the USSR still strongly colors how they view Russia. Olga sees Russia as a mostly poor nation, with just a few glittering cities like Moscow. To her, rejoining Russia would be a path back to the grinding poverty they knew so well in the USSR.

Olga's life in eastern Ukraine would be familiar to any middle-class American. There are people with fine houses and cars, but also people of modest means. Olga, in her 20s,

### Struggles of the Supermajority

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Senate Republicans, including Minority Leader John Braun, argue that this approach risks repeating the funding inequities that led to the landmark McCleary v. Washington decision. Under McCleary, the state was found to have violated its constitutional duty by relying too heavily on local levies to fund public education, leading to disparities between wealthy and poorer districts.

As of this writing, Governor Bob Ferguson has indicated his intent to review the budget line-by-line and share his thoughts in greater detail. This could happen any day. If you would like to share your thoughts with Governor Ferguson, at any level of detail, contact him at <https://governor.wa.gov/contacting-governor/contacting-governors-office>.

owned a cafe with her partner and boyfriend. The cafe featured a pair of raccoons—Bart and Lisa, a memorable part of any customer's visit. In Ukraine, raccoons are exotic, along the lines of how a meerkat or lemur might be in the United States.

The events leading up to Russia's "Special Military Operation" were just a background to Olga's life. The 2014 revolution was a way to keep a pro-Russia president from taking Ukraine back towards Russia; the Minsk Accords were treaties of little import, undermined by the general lack of trust in Putin. As a recurring theme going back to at least 1992, there was a desire to join NATO and finally gain a formidable military guarantee against any future aggression from the East.

"If you can look go back in history and just look at what Russian did to Ukraine. It was always their purpose to destroy Ukrainian culture—or any other culture."

(All quotes in this article are Olga's own words from our interview with her.)

But Ukraine was not a member of NATO when the situation came to a head in February of 2022 – Russian forces, massed on the border, entered Ukraine as a "Special Military Operation." Olga, living so close to the border, was one of the first to hear the shots of this conflict. She woke to the sound of something a little bit like fireworks – but different, too. It was rockets, missiles, artillery, and her phone lit up as all of her friends and neighbors also awoke to this new chapter of Ukraine-Russian history.

"When the war began, it was around 4 a.m. on February 22. And after everyone who could called me and said that it was really happening – we went to work at the café that same day. First, because we couldn't leave the raccoons alone. And second, because we didn't know what else to do. The hope that it might be some kind of mistake, or that it would only last a day – that hope didn't fade for at least two months."

She adapted even as she hoped the conflict would end soon. Olga began a volunteer effort to gather supplies to help both civilian as well as military Ukrainians impacted by the war. Her cafe had an actual bunker underneath, and many was the time she would gather civilians from the street to offer the safety of the bunker during incoming military strikes.

"Well, this is what we're trying to do. This is what we're fighting for. Because, Russian doesn't want Ukrainian culture, Ukrainian language, Ukrainian traditions, Ukrainian name. So we're pretty much fighting not for our land, not for our houses, not for our homes. It's also about being able to be Ukrainian,



not die as a nation. Having our culture, having our traditions. It's really important."

Wars have a beginning and an ending, but when you're in the middle of one, they seem endless. And at some point, Olga was worn out with the cares of her cafes and volunteering. Her landlord had plans for that bunker. It was time to go. She found a place to keep her raccoons (they're still fine as of this writing), packed her car with her possessions, and started driving west.

Olga noticed something interesting about being a refugee. Some people sneer at a "refugee" driving a high-end Mercedes or BMW, where they feel sympathy for somebody in a smaller, cheaper car. And yet war is a great equalizer; its bombs will kill you no matter what numbers the bank prints on your deposit slip. You take your car – fancy or otherwise – and you drive away from the danger.

Olga noticed another dichotomy having to do with danger. She enthusiastically supported Ukraine's military defense, and hoped that her country would assemble a large military force and repulse Russia. And yet she also hoped her own boyfriend could avoid being drafted, or at least avoid serving at the front where he might well be wounded or killed. She accepted both perspectives as just the natural human reality when faced with terrible danger.

Proceeding out of country, Olga eventually earned a degree in Spain. With the war grinding on, she eventually took advantage of a US temporary refugee program. Olga was provided not just a room in a house, but her own personal cottage, which the family built just for her.

"I met a friend whose parents offered help using the refugee sponsorship program for Ukrainians, and in the end, that family didn't just help me with the paperwork – they quite literally became my American family."

She is profoundly grateful for the support she's experienced while living here on Vashon. Not just her housing, but her jobs and the kindness she has experienced throughout the Island. She hears "Glory to Ukraine!" (Слава Україні!) and its answer "To the heroes – glory!" (Героям слава!). Along with the Ukraine flags she sees, it assures her that the conflict, so many thousands of miles away, is not forgotten in the US.

Islanders are always looking for other ways to support Ukraine, but it can get tricky. Olga herself still has her bank card from her account back in Ukraine. She can be paid here on her US card, transfer it to her Ukraine one, and then send funds to support people and organizations back in her homeland. She doesn't feel any need for more personal support, but worries about her fellow Ukrainians who are less capable with English, or aren't able to use search engines to navigate their new lives in the US. The Loop interacted with a Ukrainian support organization in Seattle, and we'll post contact information at the bottom of the web version of this article.

What does the future hold? At some point, the end of the war. And Olga does plan to go back, although she appreciates how much damage has occurred, and hopes to hold off until the first critical rounds of rebuilding are completed.

And therein lies one of the ugly hidden realities of wars and the rebuilding that follows – who pays, and with what? Olga has a resigned, realistic view of what might be needed; some of Ukraine's resources will be given up to cover the coming costs. This will most likely include farmland, which she notes – with pride – is the finest farmland in the world. During World War II, the Nazis even loaded railcars with this topsoil, sending it back to Germany!

"Ideally in the perfect world, you don't want other countries owning land in your country. But from an economical point of view in the situation where Ukraine happens to be, that would be our safety. If countries start to invest money in Ukraine, that will force the economy start to work more and more. Where, at some point, we actually can jump in that car that was being pushed and actually go."

Olga's connection to Vashon started with the war's start. And it will wind down as the war ends. Her legal status is up for review later this year, adding extra anxiety.

What does she think about the terms required to end the war? Her heart says Ukraine must take back all of its territories and emerge intact from this conflict. She accepted the idea of fighting a war, even as she shied from the idea of her own boyfriend fighting on the front lines. And now her society has a similar dichotomy to navigate.

Those who have lost friends, sons, and husbands want to see the war fought until Ukraine is restored in its entirety. To end with parts of Ukraine ceded removes meaning from the terrible loss of their men. And yet, those who still have friends, sons, and husbands are loathe to see their own men headed off into this same terrible danger.

Perhaps these ambiguous feelings are an inevitable result of lethal force at such scale. We appreciate Olga making herself available for an interview, and it'll be the Island's loss when she takes her considerable talents back to Ukraine. We'll finish with her own words about going back:

"I'll go back to my city. I like it a lot. I really do. Very spicy. I have a lot of connections there, that will probably be easier to find a job there. And I like my city a lot. Just, people there are just ... (laughs fondly)."

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## Complicated Conversations: Part I

By Deborah Anderson

September 1969. I sat on the edge of my bed in my first year at Mills College for Women and said to myself, "It's safe to be a woman here." As with many of my epiphanies, I wasn't sure how I knew that or why it was important, but it brought peace to my soul.

For the next four years, I lived passionately and eagerly in the intensity and excitement of ground zero for the Black, La Raza, and women's movement/revolution. Professors who were changing the world and culture taught me critical thinking. This was it! Racism, sexism, and extraction capitalism were all coming to an end!

I got married the day before graduation, as one did in those days. Armed with a Theatre Performance degree and a California Nursery School Diploma (the equivalent of an Associate degree in Early Childhood Education), the world was filled with possibilities.

Children followed after a few years. I was answering a calling that started in Children's Theatre and ended in the ministry. Busy, busy, busy.

While I was occupied, the women's movement and racism seemed to go sideways. Both became monetized. Whether in sitcoms or movies or the music world, corporate leverage or sports, the moneymakers found they could make a buck by ostensibly presenting the marginalized as equals. Money was made, but the individuals headlining the shows or events rarely got an equal portion of the profits.

Sure, some men were in the woods beating their drums in circles to find themselves, and women were allowed to put on floppy bows and go to the office, but dominant colonial patriarchy didn't change at its core, and women still made only cents on the dollars instead of actual dollars.

As a minister, I broke through the stained glass ceiling, but nobody sent the memo that this was a good thing, or prepared the previous generation for new leadership. So it was that a couple of 80 year-old men who did not like a woman telling them

## Island Voices

about God, and some women who had always stood by their men, ended the joyous party the rest of us were having.

The first morning after I was ceremoniously dumped into homelessness with my two birth children in tow, I awoke at the home of a Mills alumnae sister who had taken us in. My eyes fell on a pad of Post-it notes the Palo Alto alumnus group had sold as a fundraiser. The curve of a branch of eucalyptus leaves with the words, "Remember who you are and what you represent."

I took a deep breath. Find my core. Who am I? A woman who has been told and taught that I have the courage, critical thinking, and chutzpah to rise above and begin again. And what do I represent? The new possibilities of and for women.

The 80s and 90s were confusing. Women were at work, but still disproportionately carrying the burden of chores and childcare. The dot-com bust came just as conservative religion began to surge forward.

Meanwhile, Mills was struggling in baffling ways. In the 90s, it resisted the recommendation of the Board to go coed. Rumors of imminent financial ruin swirled. The Millennium brought a change of leadership at the top. As the first educational institution to accept trans students, the voices of opposition to the future began to be louder.

In 2021, the new President Beth Hillman announced a "merger" with Northeastern University, a Boston-based university now established as an educational franchise. With "campuses" that are really just a single, rented room in various cities - for example, the Seattle "campus" is a small room in a building on Terry Avenue that has a table, a dozen chairs, and a white board - Mill's 127 acres of prime property in downtown Oakland, with all its assets, was like fresh meat to a shark in the water.

Yes, I did call Northeastern a shark, an economic shark, and after years of administrative mismanagement, Mills was bleeding green into the waters of higher education. In June 2022, Mills as

we knew it was no longer.

Two mysteries remained. First, Mills was not actually in financial trouble. Its financial strength was harder than 60% of colleges in the country at the time. The breadcrumbs tracing the path of people with fingers in a pot that was not theirs was more than visible. To further complicate the picture, 51% of Mills students were women of color.

The greater mystery was that women were the catalysts to this transaction. Women betraying other women pulsed like a neon sign in the old part of town. Class gifts given in support of the "merger." The "Institute," a leadership program for women of color that garnered the support of key alums, was actually some rooms in Mills Hall.

Where once women of color had 127 acres, accompanying assets, and brilliant professors to teach them in ways that would underscore and enhance their gifts and talents, now they were given seed money to form their own program. Money that, like the name Mills itself, was scheduled to run out in two or three years.

Right now, women are divided in strong and unhelpful ways in the country, the state, this Island. Women who want equal access and freedom to everything men have, and women who want very little but for the price of groceries to come down. Newly labelled Trad wives, and single women with a strong desire to avoid children at all costs. Hybrid women who want a little of everything, and single moms just trying to keep the boat afloat and moving forward.

We need to join forces and find a way to talk together. I have some ideas about where we could rewind and revisit for a do-over, but mostly I think we have stuck with our own kind and not conversed across differences in respectful ways. Never has the imperative been stronger for women to unite. Everything is at stake. Turn to your neighbor and say, "Let's talk." Please.

For generations to come, we need to start disassembling the fences over which we have sometimes passed pleasantries and begin real discussions, complicated conversations. I truly believe, as women, we can learn to do that. Let us begin.

## Are You a Mearcstapa?

By Suzanna Leigh

Strange word, "mearcstapa." According to artist Makoto Fujimura in his book "Culture Care," *mearcstapa* is an Old English word used in Beowulf. It translates as "border walker" or "border stalker."

A *mearcstapa* was someone who lived at the edge of their group or tribe, someone who moved between groups. Remember Strider from "Lord of the Rings"? He was a *mearcstapa*, moving in and out of the human, hobbit, and elven worlds. A *mearcstapa* might be distrusted because they didn't quite fit in; they might question the values of the group because they saw things differently. On the other hand, they might bring new knowledge or insights.

Think of Emily Dickinson and Vincent Van Gogh. Both rejected and were rejected by their church communities, yet both brought us visions of the Divine Spirit as they perceived it, through their art. Emily saw herself as unfit for the Amherst Calvinist church she grew up in; she found God in nature, and she brought us this understanding in her poetry.

Van Gogh was rejected as unfit for the ministry of the Dutch Reformed church where his father and grandfather before him were pastors. He then turned to art to express his experience of the Divine.



Suzanna log walking  
Photo by Jennifer Loomis

Art was his ministry. Think of his painting "Starry Sky," with the sky so alive and vibrant, while the church is dark.

By expressing their experience of a Divine Spirit not acknowledged by the church of their time, Dickinson and Van Gogh brought us a larger vision. They were *mearcstapas*.

Think about Native American Sacajawea in her roles as wife of a French trapper and part of the Lewis and Clark expedition; she was moving in at least three different worlds. Meriweather Lewis, for that matter, left "civilization" to explore new worlds. Baroness Karen Von Blixen-Finecke, better known as Isak Dinesen, who wrote "Out of Africa,"

wrote in Danish, English, and French - moving in and out of three different languages. More *mearcstapas*.

You might be a *mearcstapa* if:

You enjoy getting to know people of different races, religions, languages, and cultural groups;

You feel claustrophobic when forced to conform to a group's norms;

You feel like you don't fit in;

You want to dig deeper into what is commonly accepted, to find the truth beneath the truth;

You question your group's assumptions.

Artists and mystics tend to be *mearcstapas*, seeing and expressing a vision that transcends the mundane, that exists beyond social norms, that is outside of dogma. I see transgender, gay, and non-binary people as *mearcstapas* in today's world; in refusing to conform to traditional sexual norms, they force us to confront our own relationship to sex, to sexually determined roles, and to power structures based on sex. To this I say, "Yes!" Yes to new insights and new understandings of what it means to be human.

Fujimura suggests that people who are *mearcstapas* can be leaders in healing the divisions and fragmentation of our culture. They can bring understandings that bridge cultures. Culture Care, not Culture War. We need *mearcstapas*!

My friend asked, "How can they

heal if they are not understood or accepted?" I've been puzzling on that for weeks.

It seems to me that they aren't always distrusted. Sacajawea was able to create trust and safety for the Lewis and Clark expedition precisely because she was a part of so many groups. Sometimes, we don't discover the insights a *mearcstapa* offers until they are gone, like Dickinson and Van Gogh. Sometimes, one is rejected by their own group but finds acceptance in another, like some transgender people whose families reject them but they find community with other non gender-conforming people.

Remember the phrase, "A prophet is not accepted (or recognized) in their hometown"? Some people who bring us new knowledge, insights, or perspectives ARE accepted, at least by a group of people, like Ai Weiwei, whose art is on exhibit at the Seattle Art Museum. Ai Weiwei was definitely NOT accepted by the Chinese government, but he has a following of millions worldwide.

A person doesn't need to be accepted by their community to provide a vision that lifts us out of our limited thinking or brings information that gives us a new perspective. Chances are the status quo-keepers will call them stupid or crazy and try to discredit them, but some people will listen, and change begins to grow.



# Gone to the Dogs

By Michael Shook

Almost 20 years ago, I at last fulfilled a childhood yearning, and acquired my first Scottish Terrier. I had wanted one ever since reading Marjorie Flack's delightful series of children's books about a Scottie named Angus. Additionally, the books of James Thurber (who had Scotties himself), were a fixture in our house, and Scotties figured in more than one of his stories. And of course, one of his best known "fables" is "The Scottie Who Knew Too Much." Clearly, I was primed for one.

Unfortunately for my childhood self, the old man replied to my pleading for a Scottie with, "No. They've got teeth like a German Shepherd. And they bite." This puzzled me, since we had a German Shepherd, who did bite (if only once - that's another story), so what was the difference?

I grew up, Scottie-deprived, with the aforementioned German Shepherd, who was a lovely dog despite the one-off biting. She was a great companion, easily trained to do the usual things - sit, stay, come. In the years since, I've had a handful of dogs that were likewise, mostly Labs, with a Lab/Chesapeake mix thrown in, a Golden Retriever, and a Bernese Mountain Dog. All of them learned the basic commands, and obeyed them well enough, so naturally I thought myself a competent dog trainer.

Then I got a Scottie. And then another. And I soon learned that, as a trainer, I'm middling at best. Not incompetent, surely, but not up to the mark, either. It's my fault of course, though I feel the Scotties ought to bear some responsibility. They have an innate comic aspect that overcomes my best efforts to be stern. Absurdly

cute, scampering about on their short legs, they resemble stuffed toys (albeit fierce, bitey ones).

Yet, for all their antic clowning, when at rest their countenance - foremost their expressive gaze - conveys gravitas, as if a dark responsibility rested upon their stout shoulders. The combination leaves me well short of the rigor necessary to bring the beast that is the Scottish Terrier to behave. In truth, I indulge them dreadfully, and with a Scottie, this is fatal.

I can't say I wasn't warned about their character. Researching the breed, I kept coming across statements like "In the absence of firm, consistent training, Scotties will run roughshod," and "The Scottish Terrier is possibly the most independent, stubborn, and wilful of all the Terrier breeds." After a while, I thought, well, how wilfully independently stubborn can they be? The answer was, much more than I could imagine.

Even the simple command, "Come!" is forever in doubt as to the desired result. If the Scottie in question is not otherwise engaged - and that could mean anything from hunting something to gazing soberly off into the distance - it might come. Then again, it might not. Frequently, my two will look at me, and then casually walk in the other direction. Sometimes they just turn, and sit with their backs to me. Their disdain is palpable, as if the very idea that I could assume the possibility - however remote - that they would do what I wish is distasteful to them, an insult to their dignity.

This is why you will never see a Scottie working as a guide dog for the blind. Another, perhaps more compelling reason, is that a Scottie's prey drive is fearsome to behold.



The Pigs of Devilry

Photo by Michael Shook



Unlike the carefully trained Labrador guide dog, which takes in, then ignores distractions, the Scottie, at the sight of a small creature - especially a rodent, but a bird will do, or sometimes even a bug - provokes a fury of Vesuvian proportion. It is a deeply personal affront to them that any such animal would dare show itself - nay, that it would even exist. They will chase it, and short of catching it and killing it, nothing will stop them. If a squirrel is on the other side of a busy street, or on a narrow ledge above a precipitous drop, the Scottie will still pursue. You can imagine the result if on the other end of the dog's leash there clung a blind person.

The determination and courage of Scotties is boundless, whence comes their nickname "the Die-Hards." Alas, not so their judgment, which is why a Scottie's worst enemy is often himself. Originally bred to hunt foxes and badgers, in addition to rodents, they are ever-ready to fly into battle, and their animus is not confined to small

creatures. They will attack and attempt to beat down and subdue (or sometimes kill) just about anything, including animals ten times their size. For example, the younger of my two, Walter, has it in for a Newfoundland that frequents the same coffee stand. It doesn't matter to Walter that the Newfie's head alone is roughly the same size as he. It must be made subordinate.

Given all this, my son-in-law once asked me why I would have such dogs. I wonder about that myself some days. In part, it's their attitude, the way they carry themselves, their "Scottie-ness." They are indeed "bold, jaunty" little fellows, always alert to a new sound or movement as they trot along, tails up, ears cocked forward, ready to meet any challenge, embrace any adventure. Though not remotely "lap-dogs," they are, in their own way, quite affectionate, and deeply loyal. I can't say more, except that I love them (even if they are so damned contrary - or maybe because they are), and they love me. What else is there?

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*Kin Ship by Anne Cotter Moses*

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## Planetary Ayurveda

### Saturn Transits

By Melanie Farmer

Ayurveda, known as the “science of life,” is an ancient medical system that originated in India over 5,000 years ago. It employs a holistic approach to health and wellness, focusing on harmonizing the body, mind, and spirit by balancing internal and external energies, represented by the five elements: air, space, water, fire, and earth.

Imbalances of the elements are referred to as doshas, specifically vata, pitta, and kapha. Ayurveda offers practices aimed at restoring balance to the five elements and addressing issues caused by imbalanced doshas.

In Sanskrit, “dosha” (दोष) means “fault,” “blemish,” or “impurities.” Essentially, what has failed or is out-of-balance. It’s important to understand when we say, “I’m pitta dosha,” it means where we will tend to go out-of-balance.

Vedic Astrology is a sidereal astrology that helps guide personal action. When combined with Ayurveda, it suggests that planets have elemental qualities and corresponding doshas that influence various aspects of an individual’s astrological chart.

Knowing that a planet might be exerting stronger influence by transit is like forecasting a strong weather pattern. It’s good information to have so one can properly prepare. This idea extends to countries, politics and financial markets.

What is planetary Ayurveda? It’s a system that recognizes the impact of astrological archetypes on life. How these forces can influence health, personality, and destiny. And then it provides remedial measures to help one cope with or manage planetary and astrological effects on life.

#### The Five Elements

In Ayurveda, the five elements form the basis of all living and nonliving entities.

- Air: movement, lightness, dryness
- Space: expansiveness, openness, sound
- Fire: transformation, heat, digestion
- Earth: stability, solidity, grounding
- Water: fluidity, moisture, cohesion

#### The Three Dosha

- Vata – Air and space (out of balance: desiccation and fragility)
- Pitta – Fire and water (out of balance: inflammation and anger)
- Kapha – Earth and water (out of balance: heaviness and stagnation)

#### The Role of Planets, Saturn’s Transit into Pisces

Within Vedic Astrology, each planet exhibits distinct qualities and governs specific life domains. Over the next 2.5 years, Saturn will require discipline from all of us while in Pisces, a Jupiter-ruled, kapha constellation.

Saturn is a vata planet that rules truth, structure, discipline, and responsibility. Saturn can have a very positive effect if it’s in balance and you have access to your life lessons as you age. However, the influence of Saturn can also be very negative when it’s not in balance. It can be cruel, as Saturn is desiccating, leading to the feeling that things are falling apart and dying. Saturn is the indicator of what is old and what is ending.

Saturn in Pisces has an impact on religious and spiritual matters, as well as idealistic, empathetic, and intuitive matters. Pisces is the natural twelfth house, where endings occur. It is also the constellation for formal religions and the return to the Divine Ocean.

Saturn brings the truth, ready or not. Denial of the truth may feel cruel, and will pose challenges. However, Saturn transiting into Pisces can lead to significant spiritual transformation, if managed properly.

## Learn Your Life’s Purpose



**Melanie Farmer**  
ayurvedicastrologer@gmail.com

#### Basic Remediation

To begin, this simple daily breath practice can help regulate the nervous system.

Belly breathing twice a day, morning and evening:

- Place your hand on your abdomen.
- Inhale slowly through your nose, allowing your belly to expand.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth, allowing your belly to contract.
- Repeat for several minutes.

Other recommendations include:

- Avoid alcohol and overeating; keep meals simple.
- Practice self-massage with food-grade oils like coconut or olive.
- Take daily walks in nature with animals or friends; stay connected with others and the environment.

## Door Fence

Continued from Front Page

would be building a new chunk of Vashon history.

The new “door fence” concept set the Osborne family’s imagination into high gear. They quickly thought up many noteworthy doors from their favorite fiction, and started planning how they might line the alley with recreations. The original concept was to have each door be openable, so that an Osborne might pop out from any one of the doors on a given day. But the extra work needed to support so many openable doors defeated this – only the door at the far north end of the row is actually mounted with hinges and a latch.

The first door was the “Sherlock Holmes” door – 221B Baker Street. It was not only the first door, it has also proven to be one of the most durable.



Maria and Oz installing the first door.

Thus began the great door project. The deal that emerged between Oz and myself was simple: As each door was completed, I’d come over, see the door for the first time, and try to guess which book or movie it came from. We’d then hang the door, adding another installment to Vashon history.

Roughly half the effort of the door project is maintenance. Not just peeling paint or wood rot – the “Twilight Zone” door had a car back into it more than once. The Hobbit Door didn’t allow for wood expansion and buckled. The mirror on the Narnia Wardrobe was never quite right, and its current incarnation is due for yet another fabrication. At some point, a small peaked roof was installed over the doors, and that slowed the weathering. But they’re out in the wet and cold all year, and nature takes its toll.

One of the newer completions is the openable door at the north end – the Oz door into the Emerald City. It was built right before a Strawberry Festival, and we were finishing its construction as quickly as we dared. Over time, I had become more and more involved in the construction and even design of the doors, and we were doing the final assembly even as curious festival tourists peered at us. But whoever controls the fate of woodworking projects smiled upon us that day. All the holes drilled true, all the measurements were accurate, and when we hung it, it hung straight, fit the frame, and smoothly clicked shut. Call it “festival luck.”

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Every great project has “the one which got away,” and the fence of doors is no exception. Oz found an actual ship’s door – huge, made of steel and painted with a marine-grade finish. The thought was to create a hatch from the 1972 movie, “The Poseidon Adventure.” Sadly, the door was hundreds of pounds, and too large to fit in any of our vehicles. It would have taken a large tractor with a front loader to even move it into place! Although I offered to pay for half, Oz still decided to let it go.

(But our taste for madness in doors is not entirely extinguished. If you ever come across a bank vault door, please reach out to editor@vashonloop.com).

Each door also has to pass a unanimous vote of the Osborne family members. Oz had a pretty good idea of how to build Rodan’s “Gates of Hell” when Jenny vetoed it. (Oz notes that Jenny always has the ultimate veto power.)

When Oz first described the project to me, I assured him it would become a new Vashon landmark. I

was right! Inevitably, whenever we’re out working on the doors, somebody will come by to ask questions and share comments. The fame has spread – literally – throughout the world. The Door Fence is in the Atlas Obscura, and is marked in openstreetmap.org. One day, a group of polite young men visiting from China came by – the Door Fence was recommended on the Chinese version of Facebook, “Little Red Book.”

Although the alley is drivable, you’ll miss many details looking out from your vehicle. Why not buy a drink at one of our local cafes, then take a walk down the alley to study the doors at a leisurely pace? If you see one or two men working on the doors, be sure to introduce yourself and say you read about it in The Loop.

How about that neighbor dentist? Is he happy with the result? Dr. Langland answers: “The doors are fantastic! Patients can sit and ponder the doors while they lie to us about their flossing habits. We are lucky to have neighbors with such creativity!”



## Native Plant Appreciation Month

By Kim Cantrell, Little Bird Gardens

April is National Native Plant Appreciation Month. It began in 2003 as a week-long observance, sparked by a conversation between Fred Weinmann, President of the Washington Native Plant Society (WNPS), and Bill Brookreson, a state board member.

“Native Plant Appreciation Month celebrates all the individuals and groups who have contributed to the preservation of Washington’s native flora. These efforts include managing invasive species, tracking rare species, and protecting and restoring native plant habitats. Education also plays a critical role, helping teach the public about the importance of native plants to our heritage and natural ecosystems.”

This year’s theme is “Exploring Biodiversity: Exercises in Community Science.”

I decided to take on the journey of cataloging the native plants on my property – both those that were already here and those I’ve planted over the past ten years. Much to my surprise, I’ve cataloged over 50 different native species. Of those, I’ve introduced 14. Several others appeared over the years on their own, and the rest are naturally occurring.

Some species already on the property include familiar Vashon natives: Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*), the ubiquitous Evergreen Huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*), Sword Fern (*Polystichum munitum*), and Hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*).

Some of my favorites are:

Ocean Spray (*Holodiscus discolor*), which invites the Bushtits each year with its prolific seed heads. I love watching the whole flock dangle from the branches, their tiny tweet-tweets filling the air. They used to come just for a short time in August, but this year they lingered into fall and early winter.

Pacific Dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*), which is a breathtaking sight when in full bloom among the Douglas Firs. Although tall and spindly from the shade, their creamy white flowers brighten the canopy in spring.

## Island Resilience

Deciduous Huckleberry (*Vaccinium parvifolium*), whose spring foliage is a bright chartreuse that pops against the dark green of Evergreen Huckleberry and Douglas Fir.

What else should I include on this special list? I’d also choose Snowbrush (*Ceanothus velutinus*), which I uncovered years ago under a tangle of blackberries. It’s now thriving with the added light, and to my delight, I found a seedling last year that’s also doing well.

There have been new discoveries since I had some old Alders taken down and let the sun shine through. Fireweed (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*) appeared, along with Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*). And this spring, I discovered for the first time on the property, Red-Flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*). I credit the birds for this lovely new addition! I also identified a Cascara (*Frangula purshiana*) along the driveway – previously mistaken for a funny-looking Alder. Joke’s on me.

The increased sunlight has also caused Trailing Blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*) to take off. I’m not a fan of the tripping hazard, so I let it be in some areas and remove it where I’m “grooming” the woodland. By grooming, I mean keeping invasives at bay while continuing my quest to add native plants and promote biodiversity.

There’s a huge Bigleaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) nestled among the firs that puts on a brilliant golden show in the fall. The Bitter Cherry (*Prunus emarginata*) was a wonderful surprise the first year I noticed it – it was buzzing with bees, so much so that I could hear them from the front porch. I haven’t seen bees on it since, and I can only guess the bloom time hasn’t lined up with their emergence. Spring temperatures have been inconsistent, and unfortunately, the blooms and bees haven’t synced up. The same has happened with my Snowbrush.

Over the last ten years, I’ve added:

Vine Maples (*Acer circinatum*) as understory trees.

Mock Orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*), a wonderful attractor for swallowtail butterflies.

Nootka Rose (*Rosa nutkana*) – not quite a thicket yet, but it’s taking off.

Pacific Wax Myrtle (*Myrica californica*), which draws in yellow-rumped warblers.

I’ve also added the all-important Garry Oak (*Quercus garryana*). Oaks, along with Willows, are keystone species – plants that provide essential habitat for the most insects and wildlife, vital to a healthy ecosystem.

One thing I’ve done with all my woodland plantings is not water them. Ideally, they should establish without supplemental water. I also don’t amend the soil – they can thrive in our native conditions. I planted a Mock Orange in the woods two years ago that appeared to die, and it wasn’t in great shape to begin with. But this spring, to my amazement, it came back strong from the base. Natives are resilient! Now, I just have to protect it from the deer until it’s large enough.

I’ve also been working on a perennial native border in the upper woods, which runs alongside my fenced ornamental gardens. I added focal shrubs like Silk Tassel (*Garrya elliptica*) and have been filling in with Goldenrod (*Solidago*), Douglas Aster (*Symphotrichum subspicatum*), and Checkermallow (*Sidalcea*). This year, I plan to add some Cascade Beardtongue (*Penstemon serrulatus*), Inside-out flower (*Vancouveria hexandra*), Scouler’s Corydalis (*Corydalis scouleri*), and Western Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra formosa*).

For years, I didn’t look closely – I thought my woods were just full of Alder, Doug Fir, Huckleberry, Sword Fern, lots of Salmonberry, and Hazelnut, with not much else. But as I spent time tidying up areas over the years, I’ve been amazed at the diversity my five acres hold. I imagine if you took time to explore your woods slowly and deliberately, you’d be surprised too at how much native diversity can lie in such a small space.

I hope you’ll take time to appreciate our local natives by exploring the Vashon woods and walking the Island’s vast trail system (Island Center Forest is a favorite). Look up, down, and all around at the immense beauty of native trees, shrubs, perennials, ferns – and so much more.

Meet Kim Cantrell, Nursery owner and native plant advocate. Kim has been growing gardens since 1996. In 2020, she launched Little Bird Gardens to offer plants especially suited to the Pacific Northwest. After moving to a five-acre forested property, her focus deepened for natives: today, Kim champions native plants through her thoughtfully curated nursery collection.



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## Practicing Naturopathic Medicine On Vashon

By Caitlin Rothermel

On Vashon, conversations about health happen everywhere, all the time, and go well beyond the typical topics of diagnoses and drugs. We discuss what we eat, where that food came from, how we move, and how we want to age and ultimately die.

At a time when conventional healthcare can feel increasingly fragmented or distant, many Islanders have found their way to practitioners who take a more integrated, individualized approach. Naturopathic doctors – fully recognized as primary care providers in Washington State – are an important part of this model. Below is an introduction to Island practitioner, Leigh Siergiewicz, Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine (ND).

### A Talk with Dr. Leigh Siergiewicz

Medical doctors (MDs) and NDs both receive extensive training, but the pathways and philosophies that shape their practices are different. Many people underestimate the training and qualifications required to become an ND – maybe in part because there are substantial variations in ND requirements by state, with Washington state being among the most robust.

As Leigh explained, the first two years of naturopathic medical school involve coursework in anatomy, pathology, pharmacology, and physiology – essentially mirroring the biomedical education an MD receives. But where MDs typically go on to specialize, naturopaths start as generalists. “We’re trained to be primary care providers from the beginning.”

Though trained as generalists, many NDs do specialize over time. Leigh has shaped her practice around women’s health, with a focus on issues like menstrual irregularities, fertility challenges, autoimmune disease, migraines, and digestive concerns. She also sees children.

### A Different Kind of Patient Visit

## Health Matters

What sets NDs apart is their incorporation of therapeutic modalities not typically emphasized in conventional medicine. Things like nutrition, herbal medicine, and homeopathy.

Within her focus, Leigh values the freedom to work in depth with her patients. “I want to be the guide for people, not a gatekeeper,” she explains. “Patients come in with ideas or concerns, sometimes from social media or friends. I help them untangle all the information that’s out there.”

For Leigh, a good candidate for naturopathic care is someone who is ready to be active in their healing process: “A lot of people come to me having seen a number of other healthcare providers that didn’t meet their needs. I’m still surprised how many patients tell me their stories of having their symptoms dismissed or weren’t offered more tests and screenings.”

Appointments are unhurried, with a focus on listening and trying to get to the root cause of symptoms. Leigh says, “People are often surprised by how much time I spend with them.” This visit structure contrasts sharply with the time constraints most MDs face.

Practicing on Vashon Island brings its own rewards and challenges. While often perceived as an affluent enclave, Leigh says many Vashon patients struggle with affordability. Leigh has never been in-network with insurance, and she has no plans to change that. “Insurance is organized crime,” she says, only half-joking. The paperwork burden, the unpredictable denials, and the need to “check boxes” just to get reimbursed all detract from the kind of care she wants to give.

Instead, she operates on a fee-for-service basis and provides receipts for patients to submit to their insurance if they choose. “Being out-of-network lets me work one-on-one with people, without compromise.”

### Health, Responsibility, and the Limits of Protocols

Naturopathic care isn’t typically aimed at quick fixes through medication alone. Leigh emphasizes that lasting health requires commitment. “You need to sleep well, move your body, cook most of your food. At some point, everyone has to decide if it’s worth it to make those changes.”

She is also wary of algorithm-based medicine and overreliance on protocols. “When you have something like a urinary tract infection, a flow sheet is a useful resource, and there’s a time and a place for that.” But when protocols become too complex, they start to leave out the individual, and more complicated situations can be overlooked. “The healthcare industrial complex wants to treat millions of people the same way, but it just doesn’t work when you’re sitting with one person.”

What Leigh enjoys most is simply being with her patients. “The best part is when someone walks out and says, ‘You actually listened to me.’ That means everything.” She also appreciates the investigative side of medicine: digging into lab results, spotting unusual patterns, and finding the path forward. “It’s exciting when we discover something that explains what’s going on. Then we can actually do something about it.”

*Dr. Leigh Siergiewicz graduated from Bastyr University in 2017 and moved to Vashon, where her husband grew up, in 2021. She has two young daughters. You can visit her website at [betulanaturopathic.com](http://betulanaturopathic.com) or contact her at 253-330-8708.*

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## Address Your Physical Health Through Subconscious Work

By Dr. Lisa Morse

I remember it vividly: The day during my clinicals of naturopathic medicine that I realized how much thoughts and emotions affect our physical health.

I was seeing a 70-year-old woman who had a full-body itchy rash. She was attached to the idea that candida was the cause. Upon questioning, it was revealed that the day before she broke out in the rash, her son had come into her home and threatened her with a gun. It was obvious she had extreme stress from this incident.

The next patient who presented was a 12-year-old girl who had repeated incidents of fainting. Upon investigation by her conventional medical doctor, it was determined that she had abnormally low blood sugar. Her father had abandoned the family days before the fainting started. On that day, I realized that our emotions and thoughts are amazingly powerful in affecting our physical bodies.

How would you feel if I told you that all physical symptoms are a result of the disruption of our mental, emotional, and spiritual realm? I have come to believe it, even though I have not entirely employed it in my medical practice. Typically, I have encouraged my patients to seek that support from other practitioners, including traditional talk therapy.

But just this past month, I became trained in 3 different modalities that I can use to support my patients in this

arena: Neurolinguistic programming (NLP), Quantum Time Technique (QTT), and hypnosis. These therapies are extremely powerful and quick in restoring health to the whole body.

NLP, which originated in the 1970s, is a process of examining the words we use, the thoughts we think, and the ways we act. By shifting those things, we are able to get the outcomes we want in life.

Consider the fact that we are constantly bombarded with millions of bits of information coming at us every second in life, but that our brains can only accept a much smaller amount – around 130 bits of information per second. Imagine those bits of information are toothpicks. As we go through life, we pick up certain toothpicks based on what it is we are looking for, and which toothpicks we select is partly based on our past experiences.

We can delete, distort, and generalize based on which toothpicks we pick up. If we are looking for reasons why we don’t belong, are unhealthy, or aren’t good enough, then those are the toothpicks we are going to pick up. The toothpicks we pick up in life will determine our destiny. Working with a NLP-trained practitioner can help you become more aware of what those toothpicks are, how they are limiting your potential, and which toothpicks you want to pick up instead. This can give you amazing potential in all areas!

Have you ever wanted to talk to someone or something you are at

odds with? One of the many exercises that I experienced in my NLP training was Perceptual Positions. This is where I spoke directly to a part of my body that I have felt at odds with throughout my life – my gut. I let it all out and spoke freely to my gut, and then I shifted my position and acted as my gut, speaking to myself as a person. Lastly, I got into a position of a third party, where I spoke to both my gut and myself as a person. The insights that came up from these conversations were that I need to “let go” and “just be me.” This is a powerful exercise that can be used to help shift perspectives and adjust what toothpicks are being picked up.

It’s estimated that 95% of the steps we take in life are directed by our subconscious mind. This means that most of how we live comes from a place that we aren’t even aware of. How daunting is that? Even more daunting is that most of our subconscious programming is installed during the first seven years of our lives. That is because, up to age seven, our brains are in a theta wave pattern, which is basically a hypnotic state. Everything that is said to us and everything that happens to us becomes part of our subconscious.

This is where QTT can be helpful. This involves putting our conscious brains aside and tapping into the unconscious. In doing this, we identify the events in our lives, particularly those prior to age 7, that have caused us to be stuck in a negative emotional pattern, holding us back. By discovering the initial event that put us into the pattern, we can then reveal what we have to learn from that event and what our unconscious wants instead.

Releasing the big six emotions – anger, sadness, fear, hurt, guilt, and shame – can be a powerful exercise to free up our bodies’ healing energy and restore physical health. This exercise can also be used to limit beliefs and phobias, which also usually come from events in our childhood. It is amazingly powerful, and can produce a quick shift in mental, emotional, and physical health.

The last technique I experienced and trained in was hypnotherapy. It is best used after the other techniques because the new beliefs and goals can be laid down after the ones that are holding us back have been shifted. Hypnotherapy on its own can be effective, but usually needs much more repetition than if it is done after NLP and QTT.

Going forward and utilizing NLP, QTT, and hypnosis, I look forward to being able to address the mental and emotional aspects of health with my patients in a quick and effective manner, resulting in a significant effect on their physical health.


To find out more, contact me via my website: [www.ferncovenaturalmedicine.com](http://www.ferncovenaturalmedicine.com) or via phone at 206-693-4143.

*Dr. Lisa Morse is a Naturopathic Physician who has been helping patients for over 10 years with various medical conditions. She specializes in Irritable Bowel Syndrome and is passionate about helping patients get to the root cause of their symptoms so that they can live the life that they desire.*





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**Omission**  
Last month in printing Megan Hasting's recipe, "Casserole ...," we neglected to note that Megan is co-owner of Snapdragon Bakery & Cafe. While many of you know this fact, we regret the error.

Vashon! Do you have a great story that you want to share with The Loop? We want to hear from you!



Contact us at [editor@vashonloop.com](mailto:editor@vashonloop.com)

## Mayo is Magic

By Marc J. Elzenbeck

For decades I thought mayo was the province of professionals and was too intimidated to try my hand. But looking at store shelves full of white stuff made with industrial oils at \$10 a jar provided the final oomph. (What is a canola? Where does it grow?)

Turns out, mayonnaise is one of the easiest things you can make, so gratifying it really is like magic. And it is fast. Almost faster than buying it. We're talking five minutes, ten if you dawdle and use a hand whisk, and it's far more like a fun chemistry experiment or alchemy demo than "cooking."

I don't consider myself a chef or even a cook, just a dad who picked up a few basic tricks over the years to appease friends and family. Buffalo chicken wings, cheeseburgers, salmon grilled to the exact moment the fat inside pops, that sort of thing. My job is to make things that get eaten fast, are sneaky-nutritious, and don't get thrown out. So. One of the surprising things they ask for now is home-made mayonnaise. It's cheaper, it's better, and you can easily tweak it into the spicier, saltier, or more acidic and colorful ends of the taste spectrum.

The rule of thumb is one large egg with yolk to one cup of room temperature oil, like cold-pressed light olive or avocado. Add the juice of a lemon, a tablespoon of preferred vinegar, and a 3-finger-pinch of salt per each egg. Adults prefer a heaping teaspoon of Dijon mustard, maybe some finely ground pepper; teenagers, in my experience, do not.

If whisking in a bowl, stir the yolk and companions into a creamy froth. Then pour the oil in from a cup gradually as you oscillate those wires as fast as you can. The reaction will "set" and you'll know when it's done. Now, if you have a hand immersion blender, you can cheat by putting all the ingredients into a wide-mouthed quart Mason or Bell jar. I cheat. Fire it up on low and gradually proceed from top to bottom. After a couple passes, or about 30 seconds, you've got mayo. I usually do a few more passes on high speed for maximum fluff. Using both lemon juice and vinegar, over-thickness has not been a problem.

Pop the lid on, keep it in the fridge, and it's good for two weeks. Keep some tuna fish handy and a long spoon around for serving, and two cups will disappear before they expire. It's nearly impossible to screw up if you stay within the ratios, but you'll naturally start tweaking it to your crowd's taste. Here's the basic formula laid out in traditional recipe format, along with a couple of taste tips.

# MINGLEMENT

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## Homemade Mayonnaise

**Ingredients** (makes about 1 cup)

- 1 large egg yolk (room temperature)
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbsp vinegar (white, red, black)
- 1 cup cold-pressed light neutral oil (olive, avocado, grapeseed)
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard (optional)
- Pinch of finely ground black or white pepper (optional)



### Instructions

1. *Blend the base:* In a wide, low bowl, casually whisk the egg, yolk, and chosen ingredients. They'll start looking and feeling frothy.
2. *If whisking, add oil slowly:* Once you get froth, pour the oil in while whisking vigorously. As the mixture starts to thicken (after approximately ¼ cup is added), keep adding the rest gradually using the emulsion's consistency as your "throttle."
3. *If using an immersion blender:* No source I've seen will admit this, but you can get away with putting all the ingredients of a 2-cup recipe into a quart Mason or Bell jar at once. You just blend it gradually from top to bottom, first on low speed, then on high. A couple passes and you're done.
4. *Adjust for consistency:* More high-speed passes, more thickness. If too thick, thin with a bit more lemon juice or vinegar. There's a crowd-pleasing balance to strike here. The more tart, the faster it seems to disappear.
5. *Storing:* Clean jar or airtight container. Refrigerate and use within 2 weeks.

### Tips

- *Room temperature ingredients:* Probably the most important factor in achieving good emulsion.
- *For a deeper flavor:* Add a small amount of extra virgin olive oil at the end. If used as your primary oil, it tends to be bitter and comes out heavier. Whereas a touch of bitterness adds character, or "umami." Another risk-free way to go even deeper with umami is to use truffle salt in your base. People won't really notice. They'll just eat more.
- *If the mayo "breaks":* I've never had this happen, but they say you can start over with a new egg and use the non-emulsified or "broken" mix as your oil pour.

## Island Epicure – A Mideastern Dinner

By Suzanna Leigh and Marj Watkins

"I am getting to be an old lady all wrinkled up," Marj frowned, as I handed her a cup of tea.

It was the day after Easter Sunday, traditionally a day our extended family gathers together for feasting and visiting. Mom loves having her family around, but only my brother Steve and I joined her for Easter Dinner this year. Missing the usual larger gathering made her face crinkle up as she remembered loved ones who were not there.

"After all, you are a hundred years old," I told her. "You are entitled to a few wrinkles."

"Well, yes," she smiled, "there is that. And I'm not ready to quit yet," she added fiercely.

When she smiled, her wrinkles disappeared. I told her so. "Remember you used to tell me, 'smile for your public?'"

Her smile broadened. "I am so lucky to have my family!" she beamed. "And good people to help take care of me."

Kathleen, fixing dinner in the kitchen, overheard and let out a happy chuckle. These days, Marj has passed the role of cook on to Steve and to caregivers such as Kathleen, who come for a few hours to do many of the tasks Steve's chronic pain keeps him from. He could not, for example, cut up the meat for the lamb stew in this archived column from the "Island Epicure."

### A Mideastern Dinner

It's still the season of lambs as I write this on May Day 2011. But lamb meat is somewhat expensive. The logical, and mouth-watering aromatic solution is to convert those expensive sirloin pieces into stew and serve it with a Mideastern-style lentil side dish. Brown rice and a vegetable salad complete the meal.

Though it is a stew, it cooks fairly fast. Lamb is a meat you could actually eat raw, as the Mideastern people sometimes do. Our western palates prefer it cooked. Simply cut it into bite-size pieces, dredge it in flour, and brown on all sides, sprinkling with salt, pepper, thyme, and garlic powder.

Combine it with separately sauteed and braised onions, carrots, and celery. Voila! A stew in less than an hour.

#### Lamb Stew

- 4-6 servings
- 1 to 1½ pounds lamb sirloin, cut into bite-sized pieces
- Dredging flour (see below)
- ⅓ to ½ cup olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion
- 5 long carrots, sliced
- ½ tsp thyme
- ¼ tsp crumbled sage
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced, or ½ tsp garlic salt
- Salt and pepper to taste

Continued on Page 10





# Island Epicure – A Mideastern Dinner

Continued from Page 9

## Dredging Flour:

1 cup sorghum flour (gluten-free and high-protein) or barley flour (low-gluten and low on the glycemic index)

- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp coarsely ground pepper
- 2 tsp paprika (optional)

You can make the dredging flour ahead and store in a small, tightly covered jar

Dredge the lamb in the flour mixture. Shake off the extra flour. I put the floured meat into a sieve and shake the excess flour into a bowl. Then I return that flour to my Dredging Flour. (note from Suzanna: I would use ¼ to ½ cup of the flour

mixture to dredge the lamb, and use some of it to thicken the stew instead of returning it to the Dredging Flour.)

Heat ¼ cup of oil in a wide skillet. Brown the meat on all sides. With a slotted spoon, transfer to a large bowl and reserve. Add remaining oil to the skillet. Add the onion and carrots. Stirring occasionally, lightly brown. Add water to cover. (From Suzanna: I like to use chicken stock I have made earlier and stored in the freezer).

Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low. Cook and cover 10 minutes, until the carrots are tender. Return the meat to the pan. Cover and cook just long enough to reheat the meat. Transfer to a serving bowl or serve from the skillet.





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**The shape and content of life depend on how attention has been used. Entirely different realities will emerge depending on how it is invested.**



~ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi



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## Violet – Lore, Poem, and Herbal Litany

By Jane Valencia

In Catholic faith tradition, flowers have a treasured place in devotions to Our Blessed Mother Mary. Since the earliest centuries of the faith, flowers (and other plants and trees) have served as nature's "icons" – expressing the virtues, character, and mysteries of Our Lady, as well as other spiritual truths and tales.

Two years ago on a walk along pondside trail, my mom Joyce Kiefer (whose poem "Light Show" appears in this issue) and I came upon our Pacific Northwest native Violet, *Viola sempervens*, or Evergreen Violet. This lovely species of violet grows in woodlands, and here was a whole tiny colony of them strung alongside the path. They are low-growing, with heart-shaped leaves. May is one of the two months of the liturgical year devoted to Our Mother Mary, and violet carries Mary lore.

### Mary's Humility

Called variously, "Mary's Modesty" or "Mary's Humility," one tale is that at Christ's crucifixion, the purple violet bowed her head in sorrow when the shadow of the cross fell upon her, and has remained that way ever since. In the liturgy, purple is the color of Advent and preparation, but also of Lent, and for the Masses for the Dead.

Violet is also a flower of the Annunciation. Upon witnessing the Virgin Mary's humble acceptance of the Archangel Gabriel's message, and her yes to God's divine plan, Violet blossomed outside Our Lady's window.

*Dixit autem Maria: Ecce ancilla Domini. Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.*

*And Mary said: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to thy word"- Luke 1:38*

A litany is a prayer, generally call-and-response, that is a series of invocations or supplications. What follows is a poem and an "herbal litany," inspired by my mother's and my walk in the woods.

### Evergreen Violet

As in the old fairy tales  
I find myself wandering  
the dark and tangle of the woods.  
Violets line a trail  
and we witness Blessed Mary as she passes by  
Perhaps on the way to someone's Calvary.

As she passes, your face is an illumination  
miniature yellow petals reflect her sun.  
Your surrender to Divine Love  
awakens joy in the depth of a hardened heart

From the dry spring  
a gentle stream flows

### Litany

Violet, This is your medicine –  
some of it, anyway:  
Lymph mover  
Relaxing nervine  
Demulcent  
Mineral rich, food-like  
Leaves and flowers in foods, tea, tinctures,  
vinegars, and honeys  
(we do not include your roots)  
Safe for infants and elderly, children,  
and the delicate  
Softener of cysts,  
Soother of coughs and sore throats  
One who eases headaches  
Soother of fears, anger, irritability,  
and vindictiveness  
Comforter to those suffering long-held trauma  
Intercessor for those in implacable situations  
Consoler of those caught in unmoving grief

Little handmaid to Mary,  
We, who meet you in the garden  
and woodlands,  
and who welcome you in  
windowsill planters, and  
in our herbal pantry,  
proclaim you.  
Blessings upon your virtues,  
sweetness, and being

Violet, oh, small one  
in the way that herbs do,  
lend your healing to our bodies  
lend your healing to our minds  
lend your healing to our hearts  
lend your healing to our spirits

Violet,  
Thank you and God for your gifts.

*"The splendor of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not rob the little violet of its scent nor the daisy of its simple charm. If every tiny flower wanted to be a rose, spring would lose its loveliness."  
— St. Thérèse of Lisieux*

For more information on Violet's herbal medicine: See this article online.

**Herbal note:** On Vashon, if you wish to gather violets for food or remedies, please harvest garden violets, and not our native violets. I have encountered few of our native violets on the Island.



Evergreen Violet - Illustration by Jane Valencia





Photo by Jo Ann Herbert


### May 2023

By Jo Ann Herbert


These fragrant historic roses have not opened yet this season. My garden's past beauty has suffered damage as the poem references, but as all of us age and life unfolds, I hope we remember what of beauty and joy we have expressed created and shared in this life.

#### May 2023

I just went outside to check on my flower friends and as happens every year about this time, the Cecile Brunner rose vines fully in flower I stood amazed at the unfolding of life all around me when I remember so well the bareness of the fall and winter garden and with it my feeling that this spring maybe because of all the sadness and my neighbor's trespassing upon it that it would not somehow thrive but with no effort each plant found its way up not knowing or caring that the people around were sad or confused or destructive or lost ~ all the plants, each one, knew their place assured of their part in the scheme of things right there where they were planted little birds walking underneath near their roots deer passing by and butterflies This is my comfort in a seemingly chaotic world of concrete. How lucky to walk under Sequoia trees and among Lily of the Valley and Violets and large hanging branches of Vibernum. They all appear at this time and then are gone leaving their scent and their solace on my soul.

**Island poetry in these pages**  
How about yours?  
  
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**Vashon! The DSHS Van will be here**  
  
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### Light Show

By Joyce Kiefer

My bedroom window faces east. When I get up in the morning I raise the shade like the opening curtain to a show. How does the day look as it begins to reveal its mysteries? Sometimes the opener is spectacular!

#### Light Show

When it's not quite morning

I emerge from a cave  
made of pillows and the quilt  
a friend made when Bill died.  
I raise the shade  
on the opening show of the day.

The sky is luminous.

Swaths of Clouds materialize,  
one, then another  
Coral red against the backdrop of turquoise sky

I turn away, then look again,  
The streaks are bold now  
their color tinges even the remaining fog.

The surprising thing is the flock of crows.

They shuttle back and forth  
Between two redwood trees,  
Everything black against the horizon

When the primordial sun swaggers  
up the sky,  
The crows, the streaks of cloud all disappear  
to let the mystery of the day unfold.

We are all, even the dead,  
made of Stardust

*Joyce Kiefer is a writer who lives in the heart of Silicon Valley. Her poetry and other writings have been published in various anthologies and her essays have appeared in The (San Jose) Mercury News. She loves being with family (especially the Valencias!) and enjoying nature and road trips. Her blog can be found at [lifeinthepursuit.blogspot.com](http://lifeinthepursuit.blogspot.com).*

### Laughing Llamas Chronicles

By Daniel Hooker

One of the worst critics of my joke column passed away; I went to his funeral and I stared into his coffin: "You're dead wrong. Thinking outside of the box is better."

~  
Someone asked me where my grandmother and grandfather lived.  
I replied, "Alaska."  
"Never mind," he replied, "I'll ask her myself."

~  
Q: What do you call a lazy opossum?  
A: A couch potato.

~  
Q: What do duck hunters eat with their cheese?  
A: Quackers of course.

~  
I was selling bread crumbs for the ducks to tourists at Lake Union.

One tourist asked, "How much are they?"

I said, "Don't worry. I'll send you the bill later."



~  
Q: What's the best way to communicate with a fish?

A: Drop it a line.

Q: What's the best way to watch a fish?

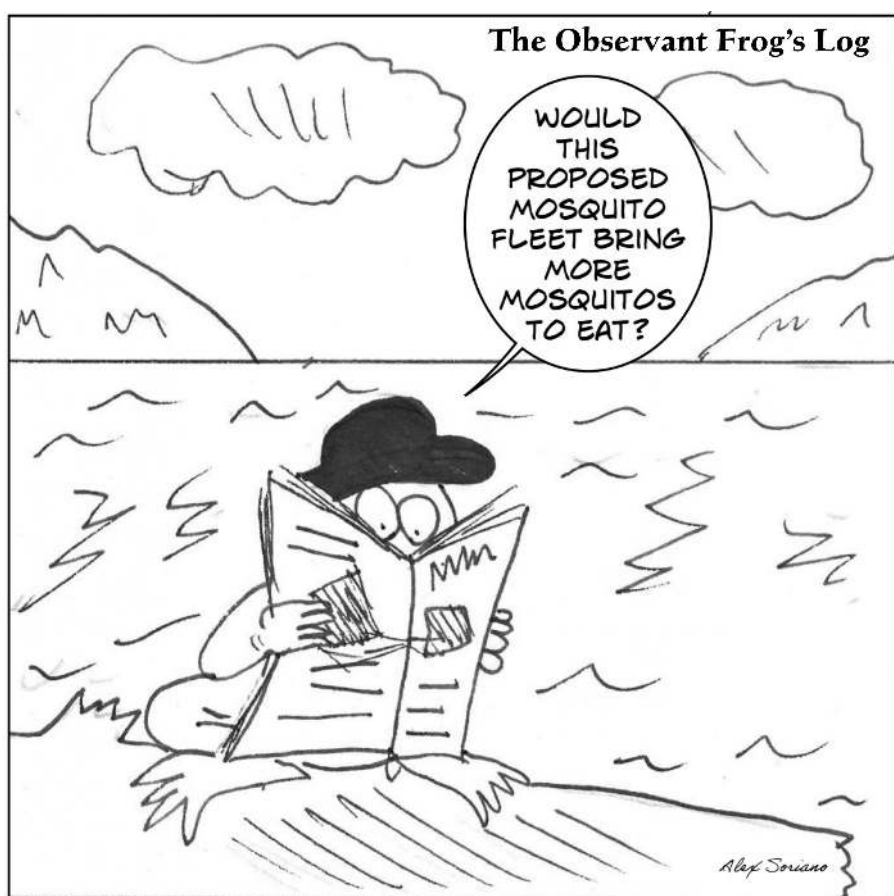
A: Live stream, of course!

~  
Q: Why can't you hear a pterodactyl go to the bathroom?

A: Because the pee is silent. And they've been extinct for ages, so they don't even smell.

~  
Q: Why should you always wear glasses to your math class?

A: It helps with da vision.





**Aries (March 20-April 19)**

Just about all of the substance of your being is invested in what you don't talk about, don't reveal, and may not have discovered. In that spirit, I suggest making a deep and detailed inventory of all the places and topics about which you are usually silent. Go into the territory you hide not only from others, but from yourself. These are going to be things you're not only reluctant to say to someone else but also reluctant to write down. Why the secrecy about such basic elements of who you are? By avoiding these things, you dodge responsibility—that much is true. Yet what you really avoid is the edge. It's easier to stand back, far away, or retreat into a cave and stick to what seems totally familiar. Until you can't stand it anymore.

**Taurus (April 19-May 20)**

You're at the point of a profound breakthrough, something you've been working up to for years. That's Taurus for you—take it super-duper slow, and adjust to every little change, decide how you feel about it, think it over a few more times, contemplate whether you're really safe. However, this is not how breakthroughs work. The one that is brewing involves discoveries about yourself that could influence every facet of your life. Your solar chart has a kind of inner sanctum that's a little like King Tut's tomb. You won't know what's in there until you go inside. I can offer a clue: you are what's in there. Once you go in and meet who you are, there will be no turning back and no pretending that your encounter has not happened. Note that many people who get into their inner sanctuary only go so far. There are elements of themselves they leave out, or look away from—often the deepest and most important. But why?

**Gemini (May 20-June 21)**

You could make a long list of spiritual and creative properties that humans usually avoid. You could list all the talents people are too insecure to share or allow others to see. Careful review would suggest they are merely sketching qualities of something deeper, much closer to the core of who you are. However, for the best perspective, do your thing and explore the world of people and relationships. That's where the gold and sunshine are. Listen to what people are saying to one another; and hear attentively what they are not saying. It is vital that you hold their confidence, and reflect back to them what they are presenting to you. Be calm and steady as you do this, and remember that the mirror goes both ways. Sometimes freedom is discovered as a wholly private matter. In your life it's more likely to emerge in a social environment.

**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**

The events of May 2025 take place in the topmost house of your solar chart—Aries. You have the sign of action on a house devoted to making bold moves in the world, asserting yourself and making your mark. And this astrology is big, bigger than anyone can describe in an encompassing way. We know the world is changing in daunting and irrevocable ways that a hundred chai lattes cannot conceal. And your life—particularly your professional, or preferably, vocational existence—is about to surge forward. (In astrological shorthand, this is the 10th house.) You will feel the first rumblings over the next month or so, as Chiron and Eris meet in a conjunction for the first time since 1972 (long before they were



# Planet Waves

by Eric Francis <http://www.PlanetWaves.net>



discovered). At the same time, Saturn enters your 10th, which is usually worth waiting the 29 years it takes to come back around. While society is being remade, your specific involvement and your new lines of commitment are being formed, reformed, shaped and forged. It may not be easy, but you don't need or want that.

**Leo (July 22-Aug. 23)**

Whatever God may be, it manifests among humans and in human awareness; and that begins with you. The "begins with you" thing when it works is usually silent and focused inwardly—but on what? On whatever it is that lights up your mind from the inside. You'll never find out about your truth or that of anyone else while you're busy doing what you were taught thousands of times to do, which is to endlessly judge everything and everyone. There is a distinct point of maturity where letting go of judgment must happen, in service of discovering what those judgments (especially of yourself) conceal. And what is that? All that is truly possible.

**Virgo (Aug. 23-Sep. 22)**

Something ugly has happened during the past 75 years or so, which is that commitment—particularly to others—has become meaningless. Not only is it possible to "walk away," it's often heavily encouraged, and the consequences are not measured. Yet there is a more significant problem, which is that the at-times difficult task of working matters through to a better outcome is never even considered, much less attempted. Most people are willing to have a conversation, and you might be too, as long as you don't predetermine that anyone in particular is beneath you. In that conversation between equals, you can put your cards down face-up and ask where people stand. Then you can do something daring, which is to say specifically what you want and what you need. (Statements like "I'm not happy" do not count—this conversation must begin with affirmatives.) In any relationship between adults, the only thing of value that can possibly be transacted is the truth, which means speaking yours and listening to that of others.

**Libra (Sep. 22-Oct. 23)**

Learn whatever you can from any conflicts you find yourself in. Think of them as probes that reveal the true nature of people, and expose the underlying condition of your relationships. Who is your friend? Who can you trust? Who supports you even when your views are unpopular? At the same time, all those questions are really for you. Do you show up when others need you? Do you listen when they have something to say? Do you go the second mile as a matter of personal policy? It's ultra-modern to expect the world to support us at every turn, but rather old-fashioned to think that you have any responsibility for the lives of others. Once you recognize who you are, that's likely to arrive with an understanding of what you're doing here on this planet at this time. That, in turn, will reveal both commitment to yourself, and an investment in the world around you. I am deeply concerned that children are being

neglected now, particularly boys. I am equally concerned that adults have given up on daring to understand one another, and that intimacy has been reduced to being roommates. Yet everything is in motion now, and different territory is ahead.

**Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)**

The road to success is paved with the risks you have taken. Those include creative risks and social ones; and they include breaking various rules—and in the process, making new ones. If you're wondering what it feels like to "be creative" or aspire to something you've never experienced, there are a few main flavors. Yes, it's possible to be "in the zone" and really making life happen. Yet that is likely to be preceded by feeling some shade of nervous, daunted or terrified. This is where most people pull back. Then there is embarrassment, because to take an active role in life means revealing elements of yourself (such as weaknesses) that you might not want people to know about. Too often risk is translated into a financial element rather than a spiritual one. But money is the least of it, and plenty of people starting with absolutely none have made something beautiful of their lives. What your astrology is describing right now is persistent experimentation, driven by a mystery that you can only discover if you keep going. And that is the biggest risk of all.

**Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 22)**

There are times when new elements and compounds are created. I don't mean in a physics lab for one one-millionth of a second. I mean as a result of a natural process, long preexisting human involvement, or intervention. What your astrology is now asking (with me as its voice, I admit) is that you take nothing whatsoever for granted. You are in a moment of profound potential and change; a moment of creative rebirth like no other. You will often hear me associate the concepts creativity and risk; and by that I mean engaging with fear and the possibility that things might not go as planned. Yet this is the essential factor; this is what differentiates basket weaving from art. It's also what separates underwater demolition from working in an office. In what occupation do you think one has a better chance of getting to know themselves? This is the most daring thing in the world, and the one that nearly everyone is hiding from. Congratulations—you no longer can.

**Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)**

Anger is useless, except as an early warning system. And as that, it's essential, because it tells you where to look for more specific information. Most people grab onto their anger and declare themselves right. That debases its most useful purpose, which is to find out what you're really feeling below the surface—and the ways you might not be so right. People want to understand one another and this is what usually gets them started. Unfortunately, this does not usually last so long, though I consider this a creative failure more than any other. What is less obvious is to transform anger and resentment into mirror-like wisdom—or anything new and helpful. Anger can serve as an inspiration to make improvements to your world, if

you respond to it in that moment. If something frustrates you, fix it. If you can't find one, build one. If you feel limited within yourself, push your boundaries and grow as a voluntary act.

**Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)**

With Pluto now in your sign, you are being invited to make contact with both instinctual and evolutionary forces. In fact, they are unlikely to leave you alone for a minute. Think of Pluto as an internal beacon that will remind you of who you are at all times. And with half of the solar system taking up residence in Aries, you're being driven to express yourself, by which I mean to not hold it all in. So you have the inner connection you need, and the modes of expression that will serve you if you want to use them. And if you're waiting for things to get better, by which I mean conditions to be more facilitating of your journey through life, right now is about as good as it gets. If there is something you've wanted to do over and over, but could not get going, that's probably your best candidate. Once that chain reaction starts, it won't stop for quite a while.

**Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)**

Now would be a good time to dial back the effort and just coast for a while. This month Saturn leaves your sign—at least temporarily, till it moves on for the next few decades. It seems impossible now but you will feel some breathing space, enough to know that you can feel better. And then you may notice what a difference it makes when you do. This remains a serious and sober time in your personal history, when decisions mean more than usual. So don't make them quickly, and keep a constant inventory of what you observe, what you know for sure and what you don't know. However, if your solar chart blazes out with one message, it's this: a single idea has the power to change your life, and I mean for the better. If you can define a problem correctly, you will find the resolution. If you are true to what you want, and true to who you are, you'll have a guiding principle for all the decisions you need to make (and they are ongoing). The stress factor is often the lack of a guiding principle. Yet the depth of sincerity required is more than most people can stand.



**The only things one  
can admire at length  
are those one admires  
without knowing why.**

~ Eleanor Roosevelt