**7 Women 7 Stories: Who Do You Think You Are?**

**Woman 2**

***A Story about encounter as natural as it can be***

Day 1: I expected that one of the bigger challenges during our week of "Who do you think you are" would be being in a group setting again. And yet I felt a sense of change and new beginning. I was open to the possibility of something new. The possibility of feeling natural in community, as part of it, belonging without extra effort, belonging as who I am.

Day 2: I met my challenge at another place during the week. I shared my struggle in our group of women. Sharing allowed me to be and stay fully present with the others. Sharing meant showing myself with a deep old story of mine, trusting the women and our group container. I believed they would be trustworthy and strong enough to hold me with my story. They were.

Day 3: Being with an open heart and practicing trust, I walked on, confirming my intention from the summer. With my heart and full of trust...

Day 4: On my solo day, I walked off in the early morning without food but warm clothes. I was open to what would happen. My walk was filled with encounters with life, with living beings of all kinds - saying hello. The encounters happened softly, naturally, unattached just as it felt true in that very moment of time and space, not more not less.

Only when death seemed near, I felt an inner struggle - what was mine to do? Then when at the end of the day death had arrived for real, there was nothing more for me to do. The shepherd was going to take care of his herd.

In the village, I met human beings and I passed by with my heart open and full of trust. There were tiny little bits of contact and they felt right.

All was there in abundance of the meadows and hills and cliffs along the sea on this autumn day. "...announcing your place in the family of things" *(Mary Oliver)* while walking slowly through the day.

Day 5: My fellows listened to my story and I felt their warmth and gentleness and I felt welcomed.

Day 6: Practicing group work, co-creating a ceremony for the broader community of women, the women of that place for the next day.

Day 7: We shared a water blessing at the chapel where each woman came together with water to put into the center with her prayers and blessings. The waters became one in the same bowl. The women each took some water, filled with blessings, to offer where it could serve others. Some water stayed with the host and steward of the place.

*What else is there to say?*

It seems to be a short story, a story without big waves and without a plot. A story like soft raindrops on the field, like the waves of the ocean meeting the land over and over again, like the sunrises and the sunsets which come and go, like being born and dying. Walking through the circles of life on earth, mother earth with its abundance and beauty.

Living beings were curious and friendly with me. They approached directly and said hello or just passed by with a short greeting. I am impressed by their abilities, their way to stay in the air without even moving their wings, their excited jump, their walking together when necessary, their acrobatic moves in the air, upside down, going to the edge of capability, stretching, their standing at a spot or just watching or chewing, their naturalness and gracefulness passing by my leg and stopping for a moment, walking on his/her way.

Humans and other beings on this planet, we live here together, we notice each other. They see us, sometimes I see them. Sometimes there is curiosity and some way of contact, a gaze, a touch, a smell.

Sensing their feelings. They are not far away from us, not that different ...

A living being behind the fence, so skinny, the bones very visible, standing not moving, a bit as if feeling some danger around the corner..., knowing that it would not be able to escape.

Others had found a shelter all together in a tiny hole in the pole.

A little one stops its slow movement to "suddenly stand up" and turn around...did it see me? Did it say hello? Was it wondering where to go?

We are not that different. I am wondering how deep and real the communication between us can be(come).

We are not that different, and yet we are. Living together on this earth like roommates with different habits, strangers somehow and yet lovely and heartwarming. Each with its own unique way. One seems so slow, the other so soft I don't hardly perceive its moving by, the other staying still in the air, waiting a long time and then falling down to catch its pray, the other with a jumping energy, joyful and spilling over, the other just standing and eating grass, slowly ...

Another human said thank you for honoring the animals ... of course, I said.

I feel honored and blessed and grateful for every small encounter. ... encounter across the differences, meeting somewhere where we are all the same.

**E.F**