

Dream Time

Two weeks ago I got a grip on reality and packed away my summer clothes replacing them with winter woolies. The frosty days and snow flurries finally convinced me that summer had truly ran its course. Rediscovering favorite sweaters and scarves, kind of helps to ease the dread that one often feels when all the leaves have fallen, leaving a barren landscape silent and cold. The birds that had been flocking up and preparing to leave for weeks, have all departed without even a word of good bye. Those short dreary days and long dark nights leading up to the Yule season, I find, tend to tax my spirits and energy level to an all time low. I constantly battle my craving for comfort food and the natural instinct to hibernate in front of the TV, wrapped in a cosy blanket. You might conclude that I detest this season. I don't. My two favorite seasons are autumn and spring.

I like to call fall and winter...The Dream Time. I am the most creative during the transition seasons of spring and fall; with winter being not too far behind. During June, July, and August, I prefer to travel or just kind of chill out in the shade most of the time. The dark and often unsettled weather of October can stir our imaginings of death, the spirit world, and our darkest fears. We see the dead and dying vegetation, and realize our own mortality. Dead leaves and bare branches rustle and whisper in the icy winds like ghoulish stalkers, and our imagination sweeps us off of our usually rational thinking feet, as we indulge ourselves with Halloween treats.

Cold, wet, and bitter winds send us seeking shelter indoors when we don't absolutely have to go anywhere; so it is the perfect time to be alone with ourselves who we often avoid, I find, whenever possible. If you don't believe this, just take a look around you. Every where you go there are televisions running, music blaring, ear buds stuffed into ears, messages being texted, phones glued to ears, endless billboards and signs, Facebook, twitter; and the list goes on. If the power ever went out, we would all have to talk to the person next to us, or gasp.....be alone with our own thoughts. I happen to like my own company and the Dream Time provides the perfect setting for self expression, if you are willing to surrender to the stillness.

It is a fact that once the candles have burned out on our jack'o lanterns, there is November to face. The only special day of note in this month is Remembrance Day, the grim reminder of the horror of two world wars, and the terrible sacrifice made by so many. The rights and freedoms that we enjoy today was bought with the blood and lives of so many brave men and women. The deepening darkness and cold, can be very depressing if you can't find purpose and something to get excited about during this time. I often think that is why some people rush to begin the Yule season; putting up holiday lights and yes, trees and decorations. Many people, the health professionals say, often become depressed as time goes on from the lack of sunlight. They even have a name for it: SAD.

I believe that as November rolls into December, it is normal to feel a little melancholy. The nights continue to quickly grow longer and longer, and we grieve the loss of warm sun filled days, and all the lush beauty of a world alive with growing things. There is also the unrealistic financial and social expectations of the Yule holiday season to contend with as well. The songs on the radio and TV tell us that, "It is the most wonderful time of the year." It is not. Even before the New Year rings in, winter will already have taken us its bitter, cold grip, and the next few months will be spent dealing with winter as we yearn for spring.

What sustains me through these times, is focusing on and learning to appreciate the natural cycle of death and rebirth, evident by the arrival of the Winter Solstice in December. The Winter Solstice is the shortest day and longest night of the year, and the way I see it, things can only get better. After that night, the sun will begin it's journey back, giving life to yet another spring. We still have the rest of winter to get through, but I know that spring will return. I like to go out for walks, and get started on creative things to make or do for the coming Yule holidays. It kind of takes the financial pressure off of the holidays and cuts down on the time I have to spend in the malls, where everyone goes when they are sick.

I believe that winter weather can be managed with proper clothing, and a little planning. Most of the time I don't mind shoveling snow; it keeps my driveway clear and provides healthy exercise, as I sort out creative problems in my mind. I don't enjoy shoveling after a major storm and heavy drifting, though, that is what snow blowers were invented for. If you are dressed for the weather, getting out in the fresh winter air can really be an enjoyable thing. When it is horrible outside, I just stay in and wait it out. The weather can always be counted on to change, so if you don't like what you are getting, give it a few hours.

The Dream Time, I believe, is the perfect time to sip hot tea as I write, play my guitar, sketch, cook or bake, while watching the nasty weather happen outside my window. When work or other business makes it necessary to go out and battle the elements, I have learned to leave myself time to deal with slick roads, snow and ice covered windshields, and frozen seats. If the weather gets too horrible, I just stay home...no job is worth your life. The Dream Time is a time for gratitude. Gratitude for snow tires, four wheel drive, block heaters, crisp sunny winter days, warm wool socks and sweaters, hot chili and savory stews, glowing candles; and the joy of knowing that you and your loved ones are sheltered in a warm, dry home. I am aware that many don't have even the most basic of these things.

I have learned over the years, to listen to the rhythm of my mind and body as the cycle of the seasons bring change time, and time again. Every season has it's blessings and challenges, and I guess one must accept what cannot be changed and make the best of it. Autumn and the coming winter bring the gift of stillness. It is time to dream.

Heres hoping that your Dream Time brings you clarity of vision and inspiration.

Gladys McElrea
The Northern Gypsie
GladysMcElrea.com