An incredible visitation

and I am deeply grateful!

'catches my heart off guard'

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Rome, December 2012
Surprised by how quickly time went by -
Gratitude for - ‘no thinking’
only openness to receive instructions and letting go- and
simply a sense of being drawn into something beyond me yet knowing I am part of it.

Aware of my lack of faith that something beautiful will be born – yet joy, peace exists - allowing patience to be and a waiting with Mary in darkness.

For the first time, for ages, the desire to journal again catches me by surprise! The presence of a friend, with whom laughter resides, just below the surface, and bubbles so easily, eases tension, anxieties. Sheer gift and joy -

Your hand on my shoulder God,
Your love experienced,
You are with me, bringing me home - back to you in such an unexpected way.

Wasting time with you, away from the constant daily demands frees me to settle into a space - a different where creativity becomes possible again and enables fresh perspective.

Soul is nourished, even in the not knowing. The initial coat important yet not the finished product. Many coats required before You will emerge, before you will be born afresh.

Excitement, wonder anticipation enfolds me as I willingly, lovingly, walk this waylessness unknowing
Day 2 Dec 14

The incline steepens,
the air is different-
profound attentiveness to detail
is necessary,
to distinguish shades
of darkness and light-
perceived at first
to be easy,
I find myself struggling
to really see,
know, sense and feel
where light is needed,
where I must bring
the light.

A small sense of relief
as features come
into focus again
and obscurity clears
for a moment –
yet the struggle
increases –
stokes are hard
when softness is required,
lines are broad
and uncertain
when thinness and firmness will
give more shape –

As the day draws to a close
a deep fatigue
seeps through-
a flowing out of energy
just to keep faithful
and night prayer seems so apt-
Still deep gratitude within-
for this all consuming way-

And then—
another kind of
presence subtly felt-
new life stirs within
and I am somewhat
shaken –
life is poured not out
but in – nourishing and
sustaining
the not yet born!

Being pregnant is not easy
carrying and caring for
a life one does not know-
another side to wonder,
anticipation and
excitement -
How can this come about?
How will it really be
at the end moment
when that new life
emerges?

The need for true companionship,
a holding, warm,
reassuring, presence -
is keenly felt -
in these uncertain
unknowing times.

Elizabeth, Mary,
wisdom women to each other,
soul friends and mentors
pray for me
and be with me
on this waylessness
unknowing
that I too,
like you,
will remain
faithful and faith-filled
to the end.
A casual comment, ‘what is it with you that hands and fingers keep disappearing?’ stays just below the surface, as I eagerly anticipate writing in the lighter shades for Elizabeth.

Watching a demonstration on ‘bringing up the flesh’ my own flesh groans - remembering past struggles.

Tongue in check, aware of my trepidation I go with my fear and the flesh - to my utter surprise, this time, paint flows more smoothly, difference is quite visible and astonishing.

Gazing to observe the lighter shades fault lines now become apparent on Elizabeth’s cloak! Disappointment, dismay surges upwards! Consoled for a moment when I hear ‘it will be ok, remember - it is your first’ I am quickly challenged! ‘You have time and if you want to risk - you could go back to basic color’.

For another moment I wonder, will it be worth it? will I simply repeat? will colour lift and leave just patches, holes?

Though not easy, awareness of the need to pay attention to detail guides my brush. Slowly and inspite of more mistakes small progress is made!

Over lunch, a soul conversation, brings light to the disappearing hands and fingers! Hands, symbolizing mastery, and the ability to let be...

Wow! How often do I ponder from so many different angles, possible meanings, significance! Always trying to understand more fully what is going on, always looking for meaning, always, always, always!

Today, I sense the invitation ‘to let be’ - as deeply challenging. Remembering the necessity of many coats, the need to wait for each level to dry before applying the next.

Each one having its own impact though not always so very visible to the eye.

How I need to grow in my ability to recognize when waiting is what is necessary - when patience is required before the next coat can be applied and to be at peace in the waiting. God to do unto me as You desire in this waiting time.

Mary, you who kept faith on Good Friday and Holy Saturday pray for me, Elizabeth, you who kept faith allowing God to surprise you, even when humanly speaking, time had long past, pray for me that I too may grow in faith and trust in God’s mysterious ways - allowing God to do unto me as God desires.
Day 4 Dec 16

Awareness of tension within
as the day begins,
not sure of its source,
just the sense that the incline
will steepen still further-

Misinterpreting instructions
written I begin a step too far-
the undoing, a challenge -,
even Mary’s blue
vanishes this time and
I have to begin again!

Close to despair I welcome
the break -
some small consolation
enters in as I listen
to groans of pain
discouragement,
disappointment.

Additional lighting eases
the work a little -
edges and shades become
more visible,
background detail is
filled in more easily-

While paint no longer
seems to flow smoothly,
with only patches appearing -
to the trained and trusted eye
all is ok, it is looking good!

Remembering my prayer of the morning, my
need for faith -
like Mary and Elizabeth,
when humanly speaking all was lost
something shifts within-
The journey is not easy,
yet, it is becoming possible –

Sensing the thin small sliver of faith
I embark on 2nd lights
with greater trust and ease.

Though flaws are evident,
small adjustments are made
and paint flows,
covers and enhances.

Journeying in this
waylessness unknowing –
with even a thin small sliver of faith-
enables me to come to core again,
enables something new to
actually begin
to emerge-

Gratitude this night
for the wonderful gift of friendship-
the safe sharing space -
where pain, passion and possibility
can be explored and held-
for that true companionship,
that warm, encouraging presence
that words cannot describe -

Laughter bubbling forth
expresses all -
the shop at the corner,
the three old houses in Rome,
take on a symbolism that
only we can know!
at homeness is experienced in the marrow of
my bones –
and an enveloping presence
draws me gently
into a sleep of deep peace.
Day 5 Dec 17

Seeing the icon of the Visitation in our prayer space this morning warms my heart- and I ponder how will I receive Your visitation today?

Though relaxed, catastrophe strikes at first light! colour runs as I apply the wash and disbelief strikes hard!

Calmness and steadiness of our guide, touches me deeply. Her gentle, reassuring presence, throughout these days, holds me at bay, yet challenges me to risk where even I, would not have dared, before this moment.

Such a beautiful, humble, stance, an enlivening presence - freely shared with all!

Whitewash holds a whole new meaning- moving the water around is what it’s all about- no heavy handedness needed! Stars and golden lines appear inspite of initial horror and trepidation!

The background, which flowed so smoothly yesterday stretches my faith and patience. Cost after coat and yet, after all this time, all this effort, only blotches and holes appear!

Nothing is ever what it seems at first glance! I need to steady, gaze, observe, apply, with a confidence and surety that only You can give!

The day ends.
Repair work done in silence, unnoticed, makes all the difference.
The emerging image becoming so much more than I had ever thought or imagined it could be!

A journey of companionship and faith is being lived.
The helping hand, the encouraging smile, the laughter and silence comingling together deepens this shared experience.

How the icon has subtly worked on me Incredible!

A visitation, that has caught my heart off guard and has led me to places where I would never have thought possible before - I know, I am deeply blessed-

May I become more open to all the visitations that lie ahead.
May I welcome You as You have welcomed me.
May Mary’s gentleness, Elizabeth’ wisdom, inspire me all the days of my life.
Full to overflowing,
tears pour out freely
as I try to capture in word
something of the incredible
journey lived so deeply.

Extraordinary visitation,
incredible beauty witnessed -
 experienced -
the unthinkable coming
to birth- and
a deep awareness growing
of a journey ending
yet only just beginning.

Walking in waylessness
unknowing,
allowing myself to be lead
is truly spirit filled
and blessed.

I, of little faith,
had no idea at all that
the pull and draw would be
so strong - so captivating
that at the end
a deep knowing resides within -
this journey must continue.

I walked a way
not knowing, even what the one
next step would be -
not knowing what it would mean
or where it might lead til
I literally followed the way outlined.

Not knowing instructions
unclearly heard would
bring disaster to my unknowing
heart - till
miracle of miracles,
with the stoke of a brush,
by a knowing heart,
a new annunciation could be heard,
returning me to base -
simply by a different way.

What visitation!
What a graced experience that
can only be lived and treasured
to know and sense it’s depth.

Like a young mother
I gaze on this beautiful child,
 feeling so protective,
so absorbed by its presence.
I want to simply sit and
gaze and gaze and gaze -

Incredible, incredible, incredible!
my mantra, trying to express
something of the
depth of a graced reality
lived and experienced these days.

Mary, Elizabeth, you walked
your way unknowing-
allowing only faith and trust
in the One who called you
to be your guide, your strength -
Pray for me that I too
will grow like you, believing deeply
in the mysterious life conceived within.
Enable me to wait patiently,
trusting, faithfully,
for God' time to bring to birth.

Blessed am I to have had
this opportunity-
Blessed am I to have had
the company of a great
teacher and many companions-
Blessed are we who have grown
as we companioned
each other along the way -

Blessed are we and all people
who believe that the promise
made to us by our God
will be fulfilled.

To God be
the glory now
and forever more
Amen.