

CONVERSATIONS OF A DIFFERENT KIND

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Winterhaven Gård

Preface

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Winterhaven Gård
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Conversations of a different kind - moments and insights shared with individuals who might not always get their voice heard. At least not so that we humans hear them.

This is a collection of conversations with no beginning and no end, gathered during the first two years in the Mio-training. Most of them are from the farm where I live, far up north in the mountains of northern Hälsingland. A few others took place during Mio training in Bohuslän.

The reason why they were written down is because I long to share the astonishing glimpse of the incomprehensible space and beauty that is available in each moment. Available to everyone of us, if we just open up to the possibility that there is something to listen to. Something or someone that wants to be heard.

There's also a Swedish version of the conversations available, some of the conversations are the same, some are not. Why some of the conversations want to be shared in Swedish and some in English, I don't know. Maybe there are other stories yearning to be told in yet other languages?

Ida Winterhaven



*The northern lights, a glimpse of the unknown,
an ordinary August evening at Winterhaven Gård*

The Rain

1

The rain doesn't introduce itself as one single "I". The rain is a herd, a gathering of many, many single drops and droplets. "It's a rebirth. For each and everyone of us", one of the raindrops says. "That's why there's such excitement in rain."

Well, that's something I've never thought of. Excitement?

"We are all heading towards something new", the raindrop continues. "One drop is meant to join the lake and become part of the lake. Another is heading towards the earth, to immerse in the soil and become part of a new grass straw. For example. It's all just so exciting. A free fall and then you're met by your new existence. It's probable like when you humans are born. It's one kind of existence to be a falling raindrop, and then, 'bam', you're something entirely different. Like a grass straw, or a lake. It is so exciting! Such an adventure!"

The excitement of the rain stayed with me for several days. There was so much inspiration and joy in that brief conversation. My mind takes flight. Could it be that our human souls are part of a divine rainfall, where some souls choose to rebirth as humans?



After the rain

2

A few days later I find myself in a conversation with a water puddle down by the lake side.

“It must be terribly lonely to be so disconnected”, she said, she who was the water puddle between the birch trees, just where the forest met the lake. “The way you people are. To not feel that you are part of everything that is. Isn’t it lonely? How do you even stand up? Where do you find your energy to live on?” She was truly concerned.

Then she described her own connection to the earth beneath her. The old grass from last year, the tree roots. The wind that gently scratched her surface. The bug that hastily moved across her. And all these tiny, tiny creatures, living in her womb.

“You all come from the same source as we do, yet you are so separate from us. Why is that? Where’s the fun in being alone? It seems like you spend your lives trying to connect with each other, but now, that’s really difficult since you all live inside your own separate bubbles. Like ghosts, looking for a connection with life through other ghosts. That’s doing things quite backwards, in my humble opinion.”

And then she offered me to lay down in her water to feel her embrace. It was April and ice cold so I politely turned her down. Then I felt ashamed. Why didn’t I dare to accept her invite?

“Don’t be so hard on yourself”, she said. “I don’t take it personally. But remember that the greatest love is the love that you share with others. Where there is no yours or mine, but just us and ours. Everyone here. The birch tree, the grass. The spiders, the ants, the birds. Let yourself become one with us. That is the greatest love of all. You just have to feel our presence and let go of yourself. Try it!”

So I laid me down on the dry grass, on the leaves, under the birch tree. Letting my self melt into all that was. And I felt a loving embrace, bigger than life itself.



The water puddle in sunlight

3

The days go on by. The total and overall encompassing feeling of love from the water puddle lingers with me. I feel so grateful. Then I hear a calling, a calling from the lake. I have to go meet her.

The water level is higher now, and there are no puddles left along the shore line. But the lake is still there.

“Ask not what this day will bring to you, ask what you can bring to the day”. Those words are the first to greet me.

“If you don’t see yourself as part of everything, if you don’t see your own importance for everything that is, then you make yourself smaller than you are”, she continues, the lake who is now speaking to me through the emptiness.

“You didn’t come here just to watch, but to be part of us, of everything. Use your resources, what you’ve been given, what you are, what is truly you. Give what you can of yourself and you’ll find that the resources are infinite for you to enjoy. Dare, little human being, dare! There’s no danger in this. In fact, it’s essential for your existence. Open your arms and hold us close to you. We’ll meet you there. Don’t wait.”

She shows me a picture of a human being as a closed container. Like a ceramic pot or jar with a closed lid on it. The human won’t let anyone or anything inside. She’s a sovereign shell who controls everything inside. Control is important to the human. For the lake,

that's strange, unnatural. Water holds, embraces, flows, carries. Sometimes totally out of control.

How could the human and the water interact with each other if the human keeps her space entirely to herself? The jar may float on the surface of the water, moving along with the undercurrents and streams, but that's as close as they ever will come to each other.

Is that why humans seem to be so shut off, so distant and isolated from everything? Because humans always are heading somewhere, unable to rest in the present moment?



The lake, early morning

The cat from the village

4

A cat in the village needed a new home. If there was no new home to be found, he would be put to sleep. What a weird expression that is, I'm thinking to myself. Death is in no way about sleeping, it's the greatest of all transformations. But perhaps that is just the human way of creating some distance between the human heart and the decision of ending a loved animal's life.

His name is Emmett. My husband and I offered him a new home, at our farm. Of course we did. Hopefully Emmett would choose to come live with all the other animals and with us.

Cats have very strong personalities, yet they are able to be part of a bigger community, like a family. Some beings, like grass for example, doesn't have as strong individual personalities, their strength lie in being one of many other grass straws. I'm curious about this. As an outdoor cat, living mainly outdoors during summer, and indoors during cold winter days, Emmett seems to have a strong personality, yet he is still capable to be part of a family when he chooses to.

I reached out and asked Emmett what the advantage was of having a clearly defined personality? Why is it so important?

"Contrasts", Emmet said, "our personality gives us the opportunity to see ourselves in contrast to our surroundings. It gives us an idea of size and volume, darkness and light, love and such things that aren't love. It's easier for us to notice and understand details.

Having a personality is to have a tool to work with. The personality grows from the surroundings and the environment we're in, from the people, animals, plants and beings that we meet. Then we have to peel it all off, layer by layer, if we want to see what's beyond all this."

But not everyone wants to see. This is only of relevance for those who want to see. Emmet said he's glad that I want to. It's more relevant for him then, to live with us. More interesting. It made him curious. Emmett sees, and he brings many stories that he'd like to share with us, preferably in my lap, by the fireside.

Suddenly, I longed for summer to turn into fall, for the bright summer nights to turn into dark evenings. I longed for Emmett to share what he knows about life, with us.

Did he come? No. But he's in my heart.



The horses grazing on the Fairy Hill.

5

There's an infinite depth within the being in front of me. At a first glance, she looks like someone who's been to hell and back. And that the journey has taken its toll on her. But as I get closer, I can feel how she radiates love to an extent that just cannot be measured (and why should it be measured?) I see a picture of the weavers of life, sitting beneath the great tree. Norna, the horse, is one of them.

Norna is one of those who weaves together the life threads of different persons and destinies. The web of life. Her wisdom is eternal, but she doesn't bring it forward. She is just here and now, allowing me a glimpse of her purpose, her calling.

Another picture flashes by. She shows me how every human being is tied to a life thread. That thread keeps you connected to the universe you're in, right now, in this lifetime. You cannot lose your footing, you can't fly off, you can't be lost. You are securely tethered to the web of life. Her message gives me a deep feeling of being safe. All of a sudden, all fear is gone.

“Explore! Play!” Her prompt is loud and clear. “Seize the opportunity to explore anything you'd like. You won't be lost. The thread of life is unbreakable.”

A smile comes across my face. What a gift. To be able to jump into the unknown, reassured that there is always a way back, that the connection to what's known can never break. My life thread will keep me safely connected to all that is.



The web of life, an early morning on the Fairy Hill

6

I'm walking through an endlessly beautiful pasture. It's been an intense weekend. I feel like I've shed my old skin. I've let go of old ways of being and I've stepped into something new.

Old trees are shadowing fertile ground. The pasture embraces a creek with steep sides, kept open by grazing horses. At the ridgetop, the forest begins. I follow the horse trails up along the steep hill, until a tree calls for me. An old, crooked leaf tree. I reckonize it as a Tree of life.

She invites me to stand there, beneath her huge crown of leaves. Humbled, I step closer to stand in her shadow. Soon the picture of the web of life emerges in my mind. A voice is ringing in my ears, overwhelmingly loud and clear: "From now on, you weave the web of your life yourself. Up until now, it's all been destined. But now you're free to form your life the way you want it. Completely free. What becomes of it is up you and you alone."

I feel a silent peace in my heart, and then a panicking thought: "Help! Am I all by myself now? Am I left all alone in this thing called life?" The next moment I'm filled with laughter. This is an incredible opportunity. It's amazing. The freedom! How typical of my brain to immediately look for something to hold on to when it's been yearning for this freedom through so many lives.

The land is guiding me to keep walking. Slowly, I get down to the creek, all the way down to the water. I kneel and dip my hands in

the cold stream. The sunrays find their way through the tree canopies, and water passes by, idly. Yet everything is still. I hear birds singing.

I ask out loud, to the empty air, what to do with my freedom. It only takes a moment and then it's all clear to me. What it is that I want to do. Now, when it's up to me to choose my way...



My way home

7

For quite some time, I've had the feeling that the two grand Geranium plants want to speak to me. These two have been on this farm for at least fifteen years. But it could have ended with that. This spring, they both had a near-death-experience when I had put them out in the garden (they live indoors during winter). The temperature suddenly dropped below zero, an early June night.

I knew there was something that needed to be said about this.

“It was unexpected”, the largest one of them says. “We were not prepared at all. There was a huge feeling of disappointment when the cold came upon us. Was it already fall? It couldn't be. Was there nothing more to it than this? Was this it?”

The two Geranium plants tell very different stories.

The larger one was putting up a fight against the cold. She didn't want to give in. The other one, slightly smaller in size but still a huge plant, said that perhaps her time had come. Why fight something that seemed inevitable? Why fight fate?

Then, the morning sun came up, just before the cold was going to break through their protective skin. Everything turned around in a split second. The larger plant describes it as yet another shock. A liberation, but a completely different one than she expected.

After that, an incredible fatigue came over her. It took time to integrate the sharp turn from death to life, to release the fear and

the tension and find gratitude for her rescue. She says that it took several months before her physical and mental strength fully returned.

The smaller plant expresses a calmness, an acceptance of the situation. “Oh, so the sun is back? It’s not time for me to leave yet? Allright then.” Her physical recovery required just as much time as her sister’s, but she didn’t experience any frustration at all. She just accepted it for what it was.

When I listen to the Geraniums, it’s not the theoretical understanding that creates the feeling of recognition. It’s a motion, an emotion, the wave of disappointment - “is this it”? It’s impossible to ignore. I recognize the feeling.

Then, the two different stories of what happens next is fascinating. The fighting spirit in one of the plants, the instinct to resist a grim fate with everything she has. The calm acceptance in the other one. Two opposite motions at the same time, like two equal weights on an old fashioned scale.

A void, while waiting for the final step. Then, the sun breaks through, and the pattern repeats itself. The larger Geranium experiences a shock of relief, while the smaller one calmly accepts the return of life.

Yin and Yang. Give and take. Eternity.

Could one reaction ever be possible without the balancing force of the other?

8

Various beings come and go in my life. Sometimes we say “hi”, sometimes we don’t. Sometimes there’s a conversation, sometimes we share the silence. Yet there is a presence I know is always with me, whether we speak or not. My sister lives 400 miles away from me, but the heart knows no distance. She’s Nina.

*A riverstream, windling down the mountainside
Water, nourishing and pure
A mirror, where light’s reflecting
over and over again,
until it’s totally clear to all*

*How incredibly beautiful her heart is
That the light she carries
is from somewhere far away
a place we all long to come home to*

*She’s the mountain, she’s the lake,
She’s the sun and she’s the sky
Without her, nothing would be
Nothing, and nothing again,
until it’s totally clear to all*

*How incredibly beautiful her heart is
That the light she carries
is from somewhere far away
a place we all long to come home to*

*And when the starry sky rises
over the mountain top
and the moonlight sparkles in the snow
Then I can feel her presence
in all there is*



The stream on the mountain “Vålåsberget”