

The Divine Insanity of the Days

By Anna Von Reitz



A friend asked me to describe my life these days.

I thought for a moment.

Is there any way to describe this?

No, better to describe the turning seasons, the way the light shifts so quickly in these high northern climates, the Arctic Desert transforming almost by the hour.

Mushroom Season came and went so quickly this year I barely had time to snatch a basketful here and there, and less time to notice the brief interlude of dusky rich mushroom smells exiting the food dehydrator. The 'shrooms are preserved for unknown days and hours, a handful of Morels, some Shaggy Manes, some Oyster Mushrooms, a few stubborn Shitakes.... not a lot of mushrooms this year. It was at once too dry and too wet by turns, never allowing for the mellowing of moisture that erupts overnight into a bountiful crop.

The Leaf Fall, too, has been abrupt. One day all was green, the next day all was gold, followed by a single big windstorm, and now, the forests have assumed that appearance that one associates with late October in warmer places, the storm winds having teased the great preponderance of leaves from the trees, so that now, all that remains are single large birches standing like torches still burning in the gloom.

The birds have been gone for over a week and the silence is deafening in its own way. I would welcome even the mournful question-call of a Raven asking, "Kuaahwak?"

Instead, the whole Earth seems to be holding its breath, waiting.

The worst of the holes and bumps in my driveway have been repaired; I can look at that with some satisfaction. I won't have to skate across my driveway this winter for the first time I can remember. The giant Cottonwood stump is also gone at last, carried away in the jaws of a thumb-bucket the size of a Volkswagen.

All the cars in the Community Fleet are in for oil and fluid changes, topping off of radiators, studded tires, and whatever small repairs they need; we mourn the loss of our members, but we are happy for them, too. One who is now sending us postcards from North Dakota and gushing about her new job, and a former abused wife, now living in Arkansas, who called to say she's getting married again.

And no, he's nothing like the Other... so-and-so.

I stare at the old cars and trucks parked around the yard, yellow birch leaves scattered across their hoods. I can remember all these people who came here one way or another, and got matched up with these gallant old cars --- each one desperately needing a car to form a gateway to a new life: transportation away from blows and threats, wheels needed to finish college, to make it to appointments at the hospital, or simply to make it to work and earn some money to support a family, even to keep a family together.

"Your yard looks like a wrecking yard and it used to be so nice...."

The inconvenience of parking the Community Fleet here for a few weeks comes and goes; soon enough, there will be new faces, strained and under pressure. I know that look by now. They will be facing the winter without

hope. No way to haul laundry or groceries. Three kids. Wife ran off. Will lose his job if he can't get to work....

Boyfriend brought her to Alaska and abandoned her here.... the circumstances and the stories flow onward like the tide.

Just when I think I've heard it all, a new variety of "Moose Munge and shoved in it" walks through the door.

My Sons made me promise to get out and enjoy a beautiful fall afternoon. I did. I checked over my gardens. The decorative yarrow plants have all been trimmed back, ditto the lupines and larkspur and delphiniums, the lavender bush has been raised and repotted and taken indoors, the rosemary, too. Corn lilies, miniature cypress, calla lilies, also. All that can be saved from the frost, has been. My houseplants and their country cousins from the outdoor gardens are settling in for a long winter.

I drank my late afternoon cup of turmeric and mango and ginger tea. I plucked a last bouquet of Violets and Blue Bells of Scotland for the breakfast sideboard. In the morning the men will all drag in looking haggard, slouching their way to the coffee machine, lining up work, setting schedules, making phone calls, arranging details. Investigations, research, international relations, more phone calls. It all gets so overwhelming.

Yet they will see the flowers and get a Cinnamon Roll, some fruit, and a cup of coffee, small sustaining things and acts of kindness that nobody is counting will take the edge off the day and the urgency, like a sign board saying, "Take a deep, deep breath!"

A couple of days, a couple weeks at most, and the hard frost will come and the Earth will be hard as a rock for months. The snow will come, too, gently at first, and then, in deep blankets.

I pray that we can get the last of the excavation work done, that we can set up a new pad for a mobile home for one of ours in desperate need, that we can put up a moveable fence for a dog yard, that we can --- in addition to all else that we are doing --- haul in the last supplies for the winter food storage, line

out the car fleet, climb a high ladder and slather asphalt over a chimney boot, finish bucking up firewood, fill up the extra propane bottles, get the lawn mower cleaned up and in winter storage, and so much more.

All that has to get done in this little space of blessed time, all colored in tones of blue and amethyst and gold.

I think that some people forget the struggle that we each go through, and imagine that the Federation is like the Federal Government that was named after it, born with a silver spoon; but no, I hate to tell you, that isn't true. We were born in Valley Forge instead. We don't tax anyone. We boot it all up and we do it ourselves, because that's what you have to do when you self-govern.

That's what I mean when I say, "it's just you, me, and the chickens."
The Federation is no well-heeled monolith fueled by foreign financiers; its people with lives and jobs and families, housing issues, businesses to run, and more than their fair share to do, as we individually and collectively weigh in to restore our American Government.

We each have to do whatever we can do in support of our cause and our people, our communities, and our values. And somewhere in between all the rest, find those moments to see the beauty, and take a breath.

In the midst of all the craziness, the bad news, the uncertainties, the concerns and tragedies and threats, it's hard to find your center and stay there, unmoved by all the drama and chaos, and yet, this is what we need to do. Stop letting others direct and hold your attention on the evils of this world, and focus instead with all your heart and mind, on what is good and simple and true.

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