



## Solicitude September 2023

This “cracking open” that I feel,  
This unzipping of the heart,  
What does it mean?  
To change my habits and my thoughts?

I think not.

To change my dreams and my visions?

I think not.

To change my geographies and my identity?

Not at all.

But to change my heart, my expectations of existence,  
My total cosmic DNA, and to allow myself to become one with the  
all.

Last year I surprised myself by moving to Colorado! I had lived in Flagstaff, Arizona, for almost twenty years, since moving from Texas after my husband, John, died and I retired in 2003. Flagstaff is a wonderful place to—delightful climate, with four glorious seasons; a relatively small city atmosphere, where one could feel a

part of community activities; a lovely church home; a perfect house that fit my needs exactly; dear friends and loving family. It was crazy to even think about leaving this home of two decades!! And yet...and yet, I couldn't stay. Something in me said that I had to make a change, to stretch myself, to explore tomorrow, to see what part of my journey was incomplete.

Moving is never easy. The first thing that happened was addressing my physical space and my accumulated stuff. In doing this I had the opportunity to step back and look at all of "necessities" that clogged my life. I started with my books, held each one intentionally, thanked it for what it had shared with me and then decided if it would stay or go. It was an eclectic collection containing books from my seminary studies, religious topics including Sufism, Judaism, Islamic poetry, church history, theology, and other topics that had meant so much to me at a time in my life. Northern Arizona University Department of Religious Studies was very happy to take the bags and bags of books that I offered them. They told me that they moved a bookcase into the student lounge to make them available to anyone who was interested. I was thrilled that the wisdom that had guided me would be shared with other seekers. I felt physically lighter as I looked at the spacious shelves in my house and packed the remaining volumes for the move.

Next, I tackled my closets, filled with clothes that I had not worn in years, but kept around just in case the occasion arose for a particular sweater or coat. I hauled carloads to the local charity resale store and in doing so I realized that someone was going to enjoy these things as much as I had. At that point each trip became an opportunity to share what I had, rather than regretting what I was giving up. And at the same time the charity store was making money for their projects.

Next came those "family treasures" that I had been hanging on to through two previous moves—old pictures of people no one knew, pieces of China that had belonged to some long deceased relative and had no real function, discolored antique linens, someone's baby dress, my high school prom dress, my daughter's

high school prom dress. Each of these things found their way to a new and, hopefully, useful life. With each closet that I emptied, and each shelf that I unloaded, I felt a sense of freedom from the burden of these material weights.

And so, I left Flagstaff, drawn to a new, next part of my life. When I arrived in midwinter, I was overcome by majestic mountains and abundant snow spanning the western horizon and the promise of verdant green in the spring and flowers in the summer and a plethora of colored leaves in the fall. I thankfully gulped in this new beauty and promise.

But the question persisted—why was I here? I have children and grandchildren in the area, but that wasn't the reason that I moved. What spiritual mandate made me upend my life and move hundreds of miles to this glorious place. Maybe that was it—I was being asked to detach from the familiar, from the material, from the secure and to just have trust that this next step was the right step. As I become familiar with Longmont with its parks, its music, its culture, and the people whom I have met, I am thankful that I had the courage to follow my path, wherever it is leading.

In a recent Zoom session with members of the Order I was trying to explain my understanding of kenosis—the self-emptying that allows God's grace to pour in. Getting rid of all my “stuff” has allowed that to begin to happen. The constant work of non-attachment has opened places where love can pour in and then pour out.

David Price captured it precisely in a recent posting, “The fact that we may have been comfortable in our lifestyle and self-image was of no consequence to some as-yet unrealized drive in us that was determined to be born into the world, even if it has to dismantle our little sandcastles in the process.”

Maybe that was the purpose of my journey. I don't need an answer to the why, I just want to be open to the how and the now.

Your life is a sacred journey.

And it is about:

change,

growth,

discovery,

movement,

transformation—

continuously expanding your vision of what is possible, stretching your soul, learning to see clearly and deeply, listening to your

intuition,

taking courageous risks, embracing challenges at every step of the way.

You are on the path, exactly where you are meant to be right now.

And

from here, you can only go forward, shaping your life story into a magnificent tale of triumph, of healing, or courage, beauty,

wisdom, power,

dignity, and love.

Caroline Joy Adams

