



*Skyline, Fall - 2013*

# *Earthlines*

By Diane Pendola

## **Silence The Only Solace**

The last time you heard from me I told you I was late with the Summer EARTHLINES, but that I would be getting it to you within a few weeks. That never happened. My mom died during that period of time.

Since the death of my mother I have been plunged into a deep sea. I think the pervasive experience of this sea is it's largess and my smallness. Sometimes the sea quietly rocks me and sometimes the sea overwhelms me... and I know that it could drown me in an instant... though this EARTHLINES is evidence that today, anyway, my head is above water.

All of the sea's lessons seem to be about surrender... surrender at ever more subtle layers of myself. My experience of losing my mother is a deeply visceral experience of the loss of her body... physical, emotional and spiritual... her body that gave birth to MY body. And with her death has come an inner collapse of the holding structure around the landscape of my heart.

The metaphor of being "at sea" is apt. Metaphorically the structure of my boat is coming apart. The *belief* that my boat could control this sea has been the first to be washed overboard. Secondly the *belief* that my boat could at least NAVIGATE this sea has also splintered as the boat itself comes apart battered by the ocean's power.

Interesting, isn't it, that the sea is nearly a universal symbol of the Mother— from science to religion. And the sea as Mother is both birther and destroyer; both Mary, Mother of Christ, and Kali, Destroyer of Worlds. Through the death of my own mother I feel the presence of this Divine Mother that holds both birth and death in some mysterious union of opposites.

When the sea is calm, I float on the remnants of my splintered boat. When I am not feeling so overwhelmed by the inner movement of loss and grief and heartbreak, I think (maybe even intuit at some level of reality deeper than my thinking) that there is something new coming through this labor of suffering and surrender; that the union of birth and death is germinating a new being in me.



Every day that I could, I have come here to our Gazebo, a secluded and sacred spot on our land that looks towards an expansive southern horizon. There is always a breeze blowing through this screened, open space. The pine trees respond with sighing high in their spires. Here I created an altar to Mom with everyone's cards and prayers and condolences; with her New Testament and rosary and devotional pictures gathered and where I am writing now. I've journaled, prayed, cried and sunk into silence in these days. Feeling how the

snake sheds its skin, sensing the rightness of it as a symbol of eternal return: birth-death; death-birth... and always, LIFE... I wrote these few lines:

*I come here,  
to the center of the world.  
I cry and weep and writhe  
out of my old skin  
until I sit quiet  
gleaming and new.*

*Tomorrow I will come  
And begin again.*

And each day I have come to begin again: to begin this new life without my mother; without my father. I have found that the only thing I really want is silence, this *writhing out of my old skin until I sit quiet and new*. Words have lost their gravity. My boat of belief has shattered, incapable of carrying me over this sea. All my constructed meaning is flotsam somewhere on the sea's surface. Now, *deep calls to deep in the roar of waters*. Silence is the only solace.

#### Quietness

*Inside this new love, die.  
Your way begins on the other side.  
Become the sky.  
Take an axe to the prison wall.  
Escape.  
Walk out like someone suddenly born into color.  
Do it now.  
You're covered with thick cloud.  
Slide out the side. Die,  
And be quiet. Quietness is the surest sign  
that you've died.  
Your old life was a frantic running  
from silence.*

*The speechless full moon  
comes out now.*

*(Rumi)*

©Diane Pendola, Fall, 2013 You are welcome to print or make a copy in electronic form for personal use or sharing with interested persons as long as the copyright notice is not removed or altered.  
Rumi poem from [The Essential Rumi](#), translations by Coleman Barks with John Moyne, p 22