

2016 - Sandee, Nancy N, Ellie + Diane

Winter Solstice, the wheel turns.

We started with thought of a soup dinner, and the image of the soup bowl took flight. We reminisced a bit about Empty Bowls, a Chico fundraiser, briefly considered making or finding bowls and gifting you. We knew immediately to bring singing bowls.

Bowls became vessels, became talk of ourselves, of the time of Solstice, for transformation, of seeds and sparks of growth deep down in the wet soil, and in our souls. Of being broken, are we not all broken in some way, of things dissolving from our past year, of finding pieces still needed, of creating intention for the upcoming year and of doing so after a simple bowl of hot soup and in an atmosphere of peace within, among and beyond us, it's been a challenging year, and a tiring season.

Our process was creative, jumbled, perfect:

We had a story of a young high school boy who thru physical trauma, lost a leg, and was in therapy with Rachel Naomi Remen, MD, author. She had him draw a picture of himself, at that time. He took black crayon, scribbled aggressively on white paper, a shattered bowl. In total despair, he said, "I am broken, I cannot do anything anymore."


A story found of a woman, maybe in Saharan Africa, or a bundled up peasant in the far reaches of northern tundras or a native woman here in Butte Creek, carrying 2 large vessels of water, slung from ends of a pole, from the water source back to her home. One vessel is perfect and carries a full load, the other cracked and delivers only half its capacity. The cracked bowl is ashamed of itself and confides in her. She smiles and says, "I have known of this flaw, so I have planted crops, flowers, along our route. Notice that only because of the crack, and the gift of your water, do we have food and flowers to sustain our bellies and bring us beauty." "Do not worry."

A reference made to Japanese ceramic artists, of repairing broken pottery, with gold, silver and platinum lacquer in the cracks or replacing lost pieces. This is called KINSUGI and stems from the philosophy of WABI-SABI, of embracing the flawed, and imperfect ways of human existence, not to discard, but to value the history, the wear and tear, of who we are.

I read of Jewish mystics, that tell of creation as God pouring divine energy into a vessel that became the material world. This energy was so great, the vessel shattered into a million pieces. In all matter, in all beings, we are of that first cosmic vessel, in each of us a spark of divinity.

And the ending for the story with the young man who lost his leg. He eventually found his way out of despair, and in part, was thru offering his experience and his compassion for those who suffered similarly. He met up with Rachel years later and she returned his self portrait. He asked for a golden crayon and immediately, colored in between the raw black lines, and out well to the edges of the paper, streams of light. He spoke of gaining back his value and wholeness.

A broken vessel can be put back together or it's imperfections highlighted. Light will come thru,



Perhaps, perfection lacks depth, or that imperfection is perfect. What better time, than now, Solstice, Winter, time to go inside, listen, absorb, review, allow things to dissolve, others to percolate, gather the pieces that are you, and hold them close, tenderly.

Finally this poem by Leonard Cohen, musician, poet and mystic:

Ring the bells that still can ring

Forget your perfect offerings

There is a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in.

