

Kathy's Garden: SEED HOOD OF THE TRAVELING PLANTS

They spring up everywhere, bright faced, green leafed, in the most improbable places. While I am coaxing a sprinkle of seeds to grow in a carefully tended & protected pot full of screened compost, leaf mold & sand, the seed or two I dropped comes up in a crack in the pavement, or some wholly unexpected treasure turns up in the middle of the herb garden.

True, sometimes the treasure is nothing more than the breadknife I lost last summer (now I remember, the children were seeing if they could cut down the apple tree with it...) or a plastic dinosaur, or a huge and healthy thistle. But often the strangest little volunteers come as welcome surprises.

I like the propensity of plants to travel about. I like their gleeful resistance to staying where they are planted. I like it that, riding the wind, hitched to my socks or the fur of my cats, helped by birds or washed somewhere in the spring rains, seeds make their way into further & further reaches of the land.

We call this naturalizing when plants we like prove to be adept at making themselves at home. In a large garden or on acreage where you'd like flowered paths & washes of color you can encourage the process by scattering seed from just ripe seedpods & gently covering the seed. Native wildflowers can be increased this way. *California poppies* are particularly happy to be scattered about on your hillsides. I recently had

dinner at a friend's house where he pointed out the glowing drifts of bright orange poppies that had come up in just a year or so from one plant. The silken blooms were bigger than my hands. My friend, who likes Big Flowers, bet that I'd never seen California poppies that size. Contrary to the usual "let 'em grow in gravel" style he'd planted his in deep compost enriched loam, proving that even the most ordinary things can be transformed by a little love & luxury.

In my own woods & gardens I scatter *honesty*, *forget me nots*, *columbines*, *rose campion*, & *oxeye daisies*, seldom even bothering to cover the seeds. This is, I figure, a nice blend of bird feeding and seed planting. I have fat birds and lots of flowers & love them both.

There are those hardy plants that travel, colonize, invade, & are not uniformly treasured as they appear. "Weeds!" we say, & pull them up hastily. I pull up a lot of them too, but I leave corners of wildness & actively encourage some plants that more careful and conservative gardeners would eliminate.

Many of the weeds are naturalized exotica that have long & romantic histories. *St. John's Wort* in its cultivated form makes a sturdy & invasive ground cover; in its wild form with starry clusters of golden flowers it covers meadows and was cursed by old ranchers as the dread *Klamath Weed*. I grow it in the wild corners of my lower garden with the *daisies* & *yarrow* & make a healing oil from the flowers in mid June. You just stuff a clean jar with the flowers, cover with olive oil, cap & leave in the sunlight for two to three weeks. The oil turns bright red. Strain out the flowers & you have a fragrant oil to sooth bumps, bruises, & insect bites.

Dandelions & all their relatives – the *sow thistles* & *hawkweeds* -- have a long history of culinary & medicinal use. I don't think you can raise children without dandelions around, so I planted some near my cabin. My children take care of seed dispersal, happily blowing at the puff balls.

My neighbor came over with a big rooted plant he'd dug from his lawn. He was about to throw it away but suddenly thought he'd ask me if it was good for anything. Of course I think every growing thing, by virtue of being alive, vibrant & beautiful, is good in & of itself. I even admire my *poison oak* patch, growing nicely outside my window seat. I knew, however, that my neighbor is a practical guy. The plant he brought me was *curly dock*, with its iron rich roots and its tasty spring leaves, so good in salads. I let *dock* grow at my garden edge because I love the flames of red seeds in the fall which draw flocks of happy birds into my gardens.

Even walking through town you can see dozens of remarkable little plants springing up where surely nothing at all should be able to grow – *wild chamomile* with its scent of pineapple, *pennyroyal* with its pungent mint fragrance & purple-blue flowers, *rosebay willow herb*, *scarlet pimpernel*, and every so often a little garden escapee – a small tree, a little *viola*, a snippet of *thyme*. Gardeners watching this profusion can take heart, reminded that plants do want to grow.

Now, if only I can coax these seeds to sprout...

~ Kathy Epling

> 'Healthcare Propaganda' Continues-

Good-bye Insurance Companies (more jobs the Socialsecurity offices though) and no more Trial attorneys in a socialized no fault society. All insurance risk should be secured by the credit of the entire society, so to speak.

Single payer, no fault Socialism. That's what sort of sets me off - Social Insurance Systems (SIS, hence Big SISter) replacing the Money Payoff. System. Statistics and bookkeeping can be down just the same at a 3% margin as well as 30% or 300%. Socializing the economy is merely taking the corporate hand out of the till for its super cut.

Our semi-socialized military is a matter of concern. It's "Military Socialism" is pretty much a "non-profit"!?! In terms of salaries, Generals to Privates I think, have ratios tighter than the Corporate officer class - except for the revolving door that leads you right into the Corporate officer class. Unfortunately, a military socialism is not based on liberty or democracy but obedience to a higher authority, any higher authority. This gives us Pinochets, Francos, Mussolinis, Putins, Netannahyu, Erdogens, Trumps. Liberty has to lead.

America's educator, John Dewey, believed that in a democracy, the community was a force to produce individuals, not vice versa. Of course these are not the all-the-freedom-money-can-buy Libertarians. These are social individuals, public citizens. Social is already a strong challenger to the core of this society - Private. Socialize versus Privatize. Glocal versus NIMBY. Public versus Closed. Realistically when I am not trying to survive with some modicum of independence it is this *Grassroots Socialism* that I work at. Providing low cost shelter, not indigent dorms, but small houses socially organized in large numbers is my current scheme. Distributing food. Directly organizing poor people to satisfy their needs in the cold realization that

"poverty" is a business and government and law enforcement created reality.

I'm working for a non-state socialism with grassroots, cooperative, partnership and land trust structures. Even Liberal Democracy in California has realized that non-state, non-profit action is needed to solved the Shelter Crisis. The Shelter Crisis law, passed under pressure by the County, with no intention of enforcing it of course, intends to relieve mini-house builders from the obvious liabilities placed on them by banks and real estate agents and insurance companies (Good God its FIRE) and by the self-aggrandizing fees and red tags of County and City governments. Never going to happen as long as Rex Bohn and Estelle Fennell can pull their weight.

Humboldt County government is in effect the central committee for a bourgeois dictatorship, totally in the hands of owners, renters and real estate interests. In this emergency, socialism is community survival. Grassroots means community working from the bottom out. It is a local hedge on the bet we take supporting a centralized Nannie state. This is Socialism in Self-Defense. Supporting, creating, sustaining. advocating, serving, A Respite Center adept at feeding, clothing and sheltering people is also a grassroots headquarters providing space, not just for the at risk, but for the lacking environmental, womens', peace, mental health, neighborhood, community centers.

-Paul Encimer

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Dybbuk

I have haunted the passageways
your dreams & waking, eight years
with my hair undone & my eyes' blue snare

a viper; trap for all your sons.

You see me crouched over your meat
honey & venom beneath my tongue
where is the stake, you ask, what name,
where

do I drowse in your son's heart
sleek in my coffin of blood

Dybbuk you call me; Lilith
the golden whore, noon's own, the black
thorn, the sword cutting you

and hold your rage like a new charm;
barrier of stone –
yet I pass through.



- Kathy Epling
Circa early 1970's

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