

FIFTEEN

Celebrating Our Freedoms During the Pandemic

July 5, 2020

July 4, 2020 is over—anti-climactic this year. The country still staggers under the load of mounting coronavirus cases and deaths, and we’ve added another fight to the mix: the mask war. What a tumultuous time, yet memories of past 4th of July celebrations soothe my weary soul.

Normally I would be with family in Red River, New Mexico or Cuchara, Colorado, celebrating the 4th of July. What a time of laughter, fun, music, dance, clear mountain air and joy!

In 2019, Lin and I drove my niece and her two sons from Red River down to Eagle Nest for the fireworks display. On the trip down, we saw a massive herd of elk grazing on the hillside. One of nature’s serendipities!

As I reminisced about happier times, serenity took place of my sadness. I can say the word serenity in the midst of this insanity, and it evokes personal images, so different from what I see happening in the world today.

What Does Serenity Look Like?

June 21, 2020

In the midst

Of the coronavirus pandemic

Storm,

I wondered,

“What does serenity
look like?”

A hazy mountain scene

Calm and quiet,

Lounging on a sandstone rock

Connected to the grandeur

Of Mother Nature.

A lazy beach setting

Calm and quiet,

Reclining in the rhythmic waves

Carefree

Undulating with

The timeless rhythm

Of our world.

Our secluded mountain home

Calm and quiet,

Nestled in piñon pine trees

Sweet meditative music

Serenading me

In the background

Delightful gigantic chimes

Creating a placid sound

As they sway in the wind

Meaningful work,

Done by Lin and me

Gardening

Writing

Life lived together.

Serenity's many faces

Some fanciful memories

Of better times,

One a realistic experience

In the here-and-now!

Peace reigns in my heart now

When
I stay present
Seek God
Seek truth
Seek myself!

A sweet flavor on my tongue,
Gifts from the angels
An aroma of heaven,
Come down to earth
A beckoning sound,
Of my God's gentle calling
A touch of my God,
Through nature
Peace
Silence
Sound.

Serenity lights on my shoulder,
Wraps me in a cocoon
Of tranquility and goodwill
Dances in my heart
To a new rhythm,
A melody of love!

Then it's gone!
Quickly!
Quietly
Without warning.

The world's roar
Scares it away!

The coronavirus surges
And wipes out any remembrance!
Cases
Hospitalizations
Deaths

Then in the quiet,
The dark
Again, serenity gently returns
Ready to console
Me once again.

I anticipate its return once again soon!

* * *

During this time, many brandish their freedoms, not thinking about others. One constant craziness I can't understand that disturbs my transitory serenity: people fighting over wearing a mask, a simple precautionary tool to protect you and me from each other and the coronavirus. Early on masks became politicized and divided our country along political lines. Recently, people have sent me multiple texts discounting the validity of mask. I witness outrageous Facebook posts disclaiming the wearing of masks.

This raging mask war fueled a deep realization for me.

I've Worn a Mask for Years!

July 3, 2020

Wearing a mask
Isn't a new concept
To me.

For years,
I wore a mask of

Deception

Pretense

Illusion

Invisible

Illusive

All-encompassing.

A veneer of acceptance

Compliance

Fitting in!

You didn't know

No one knew me—

Only me!

I smiled,

when asked and replied.

I responded,

"I'm fine,"

while I covered bruises on both arms

From my first husband's detrimental attention

The night before!

Yes, I smiled a mask

For you to see.

In my heart, I winced,

As that invisible mask

Suffocated me,

But I continued to smile,

To wear it.

I lived in quiet desperation

Behind that mask

For many years.

Before recovery,

I donned it unconsciously

Early in the morning,

A regular part of

My attire.

Each night,

In the loneliness of

My room,

I ripped it off,

Tossed in a corner with all the

Other defenses I had learned

Over the years.

I hated it!

It smothered me,

My truth

My voice.

It hindered me

Like fetters,

causing me

To stumble and fall.

At times,

The wise seer

Looked beyond the smile,

The mask,

caught a glance

of the true Larada

and called me forth!

That's exactly what happened in recovery!

Today, after years of recovery and healing,

My God melted the piles of worn out masks

into a fine powder

that blew away

with the slightest breeze!

But now, because of the coronavirus,

I must wear a mask

proudly!

No refusal

No explanation.

Yes, I'm familiar with

Wearing a hidden mask

For years.

Today it's visible

For all to see.

It's not a coping skill any longer

An invisible shield

An emotional blockade.

Now it's vital

lifesaving

controversial

Appropriate.

It's a message

To anyone who sees me

That I care

About you

About me

About we!

Today I proudly

Wear a mask.

How about you?

Your freedom and mine overlap and can cause joyous celebrations like what we do collectively on the 4th of July in the United States. They can also cause dismal disturbances like the mask wars raging. For me this year, one led me to precious memories and a respite of serenity. The other led me to an awareness about why the mask issue reverberated for me.