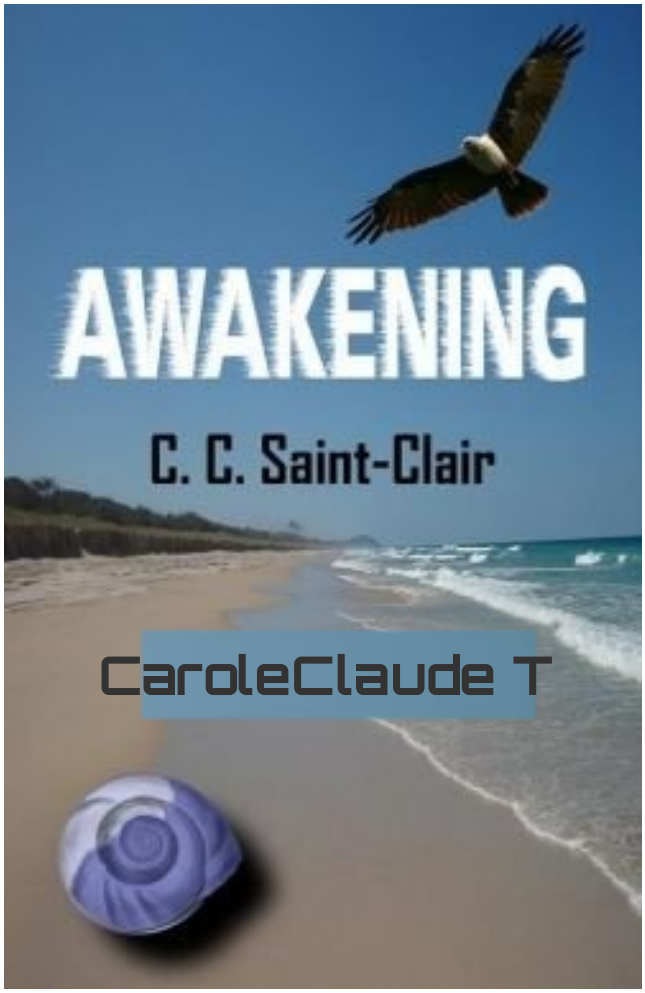
Awakening - Spiritual Short Story



Written along the lines of a spiritual Tao tale, 'Awakening' is a metaphor for accepting What-Is and not letting the ego-persona drag us into her favourite game of What-Ifs. It is a metaphor for being present in the moment.

Copyright © C.C. Saint-Clair/CaroleClaude T. All Rights Reserved

destination.rainbow1@gmail.com

Please, visit: https://www.ccsaint-clair.com.au

AWAKENING

She picks up the empty shell of a sea snail and rolls it inside the palm of her open hand. Grains of sand from her index finger disturb those clinging to the shell. Colour splits the shell in half, and she ponders why solid indigo should be the colour that curls up the spiral, from the opening of the shell to halfway up, while the top half is a perfect, tiny, cyclonic whirl tainted the colour of whitewash.

An ancient Greek village encrusted on a seaside cliff comes to her mind – just like the one already glued inside the pages of her photo albums – pages where she keeps her memories for fear of forgetting who she is and where she has been.

She smiles and rolls the shell one more time. Her hand closes over it. She can already see it – a quaint memento from another world transported back to the city, to her study, to the edge of her keyboard.
The conical shell would remind her of soft white sand and of the smooth ripples tooled into it by the breeze.
It's a new reminder of where she has been and what she has seen, a tiny cosmic trophy, as frail and delicate as the tenuous connection she has with her inner self.

"Don't touch!" says the voice inside her head. The voice had been with her ever since she began the solitary walk away from the campsite. "Don't touch!" it said every time she bent down to pick up a feather, a pebble, a shell.

“You’re no fun,” she replies. Her words scatter about her. “You don’t know me. I’m a hoarder. I accumulate photos, and I collect things, even bits of things which stand for bits of life. My life.
I take them home so I can remember where I’ve been and how I felt at the time. They are my anchors.”

Anchors into the past. The irony is not lost on her and she arches an eyebrow.
“Don’t touch!” the tone is as patient as it is firm.

She smiles at the indigo-white shell, but drops it gently on to the sand.

Loud and full of rambunctious energy, the sea comes in adorned with frothy white caps. It comes in from afar, dancing, rolling on chords of cobalt blue and menthol-green, bejewelled and sparkling, but it is very gently that it stretches itself thin over the sand, leaving it untroubled and smoothed, untiring in the soothing of all that lies beneath.

“Be like the sea,” says the voice.

“Oh, OK. I’ll be dramatic and erratic. I’ll quit my job, say goodbye to my lover and become a drifter, a beach bum.” She grins into the sun though her eyes find the moon, a diaphanous presence overseeing all.

“You’re being childish,” says the voice.

Talcum powder soft, the white sand squeaks under her feet. She turns to look back at her footprints to see who she is and where she has been, but her gaze is pulled again by the moving edge of the sea, to the spot where it comes in to cover again and again the tawny wet sand with a wide apron of transparent, watery light.

“Be like the sea?” She samples the sound of the words.

She sighs for it does not come easily to her, this budding understanding that collecting and hoarding memories in a physical form do not, in fact, sustain her – not any more than smudging her present with resentment from the past and fears of the

future, however near or far – not any more than the fear of the bogey-man under her bed helps the little girl get on with the business of growing up.

Futile mementos, she agrees, thinking of the treasures she has accumulated over the years, each garnered as an antidote against any one of many spiky, barbed-wire moments that have left her bruised and clinging to what she fears the most.
“See the breeze,” says the voice.

She lifts her face again. “Can’t see the breeze. It’s invisible.”
“See the breeze!”

High above her head, bright-white clouds rim the huge void of blue calm. A small Brahminy kite, a russet little eagle,
is banking low above the tasselled fringe of casuarina trees.

She watches the flutter on the tip of its wing feathers.
“I see the bird,” she says.
“See the breeze,” persists the voice.

She resumes her walk, thoughts tuned to the squeaking sounds of the rutile-soft sand underfoot. Behind her, her footprints are already losing their shape but, ahead, a sand bird, high on stick-thin red legs that match its beak is picking at the sand. And, around its legs, cloaked in grains of sand, she sees the breeze. She sees it drift over the sand. She sees it part around the bird and, undisturbed, follow its own path.

“I see the breeze,” she says. “It creates ripples and transforms the dunes and erodes the landscape.”
“The breeze doesn’t transform,” says the voice. “Its touch is a caress. It neither dwells nor lingers. It neither tumbles nor troubles. It has already passed you by the time you notice its presence. Don’t cling. Be like the breeze.”

She bends and puts her hand flat against the unbroken sand ahead of her feet. It is warm against her palm.
Firm. Crusty. The breeze drifts around her wrist.

“The only moment that is real is the moment under your feet,” says the voice. “The past is no more real than the future. Neither exists. As you are, feet planted into this sand, the only moment that IS … is the one that links a heartbeat to your blood and a gulp of air to your lungs. There’s only this – an eternal present.
No moment to run away from or fantasize about. Be here, now.
Be the sea at the edge of the sand. Just be.”

She lifts her face to better feel the breeze. “Who are you?”

Even before she opens her mind to hear an answer, her words are no longer hers. Lifted by the breeze that never stands still, deaf and mute, they have already slipped into the past, the all engulfing void that sucks in all that is used and spent to let it ferment like yeast.

She walks to the place where the sea meets the sand and stands, arms wide open, her face up to the empty sky.
Warm water swirls around her ankles, sucking at her heels, surreptitiously

pulling her closer to the earth’s core.

Eye wide open, she looks unblinkingly at the solid blue sky. She stares at it through the onset of sun-glare tears.
She stares at it until the familiar myriad of diamond-headed streaks appears. Erratic little comets, the silent crystal swirls of prana sparkles flit about. Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds.

She opens her eyes wider. Finally she blinks, squeezing her eyelids shut tight.

The silent darkness of the cosmos expands inside her head. She no longer hears the movements of the ocean.
She is only aware of its downward pull under her heels. It wants to keep her there, a thing of the earth – grounded.
She opens her eyes and, through them, returns sound to the waves pushing each other out of the way.

She turns her back to the sea to get her land bearings.

Lighthouse to the right. Campsite to the right, too. Some five hundred meters up the beach, she thinks to herself.
Her thoughts return to Myarh, her partner, her anchor.
Myarh is a sailor.
She loves the wilderness and camping, too, but she loves the sea a lot more than the sand and the sand flies.
Myarh's self-inflicted mission is to keep the sand at bay from everywhere possible – a Sisyphean task when camping wild in the sand dunes of Moreton, the world's second largest sand island.
She smiles at the image of Myarh, brush and dustpan in hand, pushing back obtuse grains of stubborn sand past the edge of the floor matting, the theoretical No Trespass zone under the large tarpaulin that protects the shared area between tents.

Dana is probably checking her fishing gear and getting herself organized for a post-breakfast fishing expedition. The lie of the sea in the shallows will

guide her to the troughs where whiting, bream and flat-head feed, but it is the night's fishing foray, under the large moon, hip flask in her back pocket that, for Dana, is the focus of this trip.

"Sure," Dana had already explained, "we can catch whiting during the day, but in this area it's at night that the largest suckers come out to feed."

Kim, she assumed, would probably be doing what she could to be of help to Dana, her new lover. Why, she might even be on the moist apron of the beach, sucking up ghost shrimps with Dana's pump or digging out pippies by twisting a bare heel on top of each little mound of sand, the locals' way of plucking them out of their burrow.
Later, Dana will pierce their flesh with her fishing hooks and use them as bait.

The call of a sea eagle makes her look up. She shields her eyes from the glare. She follows the bird's path until it banks beyond the line of sand-dune casuarinas.

The footsteps she had left before entering the sea are still there, comfortably deep, waiting to guide her return to camp. The passing breeze has only softened their crumbly edges.
She looks at them, as if surprised to still find them there.
As if, perhaps, they should have kept walking on ahead – without her.

The silver tarp, held up firmly by the ridge-pole, stretches under the line

of wispy conifers. She treads cautiously over the pebbles, twigs and sharp-edged pine nuts that litter the ground.

Thock-thock! Thock-thock! Mallet on pegs.

Someone is tightening their tents' guide ropes in anticipation of the afternoon sea wind.
Dana's voice cuts through. "Kim? Myahr? 'Nuther round of toasts while we await the return of the Lonely Walker?
How about a cup of some hot brew while I'm at it?"

She weaves her way around Dana's tent pegs, barely avoiding crushing a tiny, purple sand crocus.
"I'll say yes to coffee, but no to toast." Myahr's voice. "But, if you're all set to go, don't feel you have to wait for Alex. Once she disappears on one of her walks, there's no telling when she'll be back."

She emerges from behind one of the tents, just as Dana turns around, kettle in hand. "Well, well, speak of the devil!" she grins. "Spot-on timing, Alex. Name your poison. Coffee, chai, tea?" she asks jingling the kettle in her direction.

"The only moment that is real is the moment under your feet," says the voice.

Alex grins. "Oh yes, please. Coffee, but, first, water as a pre-emptive antidote." And then, wryly she adds, "Dana, you want to know something? Like a best kept secret?" She breathes in the sea air made fragrant by the aroma of freshly brewed coffee. Dana holds out a steamy mug. Alex takes it with a nod and smiles broadly. "The secret is that there is absolutely NO moment like the present moment under our feet – that is the truth."

How about your own Awakening Moment, dear Reader?
Feel like sharing?

Standing by, but for now, kind thoughts.

CC

©CaroleClaude T. 2008