



Sangha Sharing

‘Just a Walk’

Friday, July 2, 3 p.m., Old Croton Dam, New York. Words and photographs by M.E. McCourt

I took a walk today. It was on my favorite path . . . because it is so ordinary . . . just a forest walk . . . It does not have extraordinary views . . . until you get to the dam . . . It is what it is . . . a forest walk . . . no more, no less . . . Like many forest walks in the northeastern woods of “now” . . . thick with remembrances of secrets kept and long remembered . . . Of changes felt and easily accepted . . . A peacefulness of acceptance of what is . . . Without regret for what was and is not now . . .

I walked . . . slowly and mindfully . . . aware that a retreat was happening at Serenity Ridge . . . my teacher was teaching in the gumpa . . . and I was there . . . walking . . . step by mindful step . . . remaining on each foot . . . mindful . . . until the other foot was firmly planted . . . step by step . . . breath by breath . . . no more, no less . . . A 360 degree awareness . . . Practice . . . Developing . . . Becoming . . . and on and on . . .

I met a friend . . . She said “I love this path, I come here every day.” I met a steady stream of wild raspberry pickers . . . One said “I picked a bowl of raspberries this afternoon along my driveway . . . My neighbor came along and I said ‘please take some’ . . . and she took all of them! . . . And I could not tell her that I only meant for her to take a few . . . And so I am here picking some for myself” . . . She laughed . . . so much . . . and said “They are ripening even as we speak! The ones I leave behind will be ready for the next walker who comes along the path” . . .

I met a man picking raspberries and I said “The sweetest ones are in the shade, deeper in the thicket . . . And he said, “Yes, but I can’t bring myself to go digging in there, there are so many thorns! I’ll pick the ones closest to the path. . . Even if they are little more sour, that is fine with me.”

The top of the dam was filled with intense sunlight, hot and wild . . . Like someone had turned on a heat lamp and focused it right on the top of the dam . . . So bright . . . So hot ...

I went down to the base of the dam . . . Water . . . Water . . . Water . . . the power of water . . . The power of the stone dam holding it back . . . That is all.

Here is a link to photos of the dam . . . in all its old, simple glory.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/14362205@N02/sets/72157624473263524/show/>