

What is Holding it Together?

by Nora Bateson

For you, a respite of uncontainability. Safe pages for words, to taste them as they find their rightness. Let them rest in their silky beds of lyrical dreams. Let them run like rivers down mountain-sides, arranging curves and switches where the textures change. Thoughts yet unmet arrive in cloaks of language, becoming bards to take you where you can see that you are wide inside.

Words are delicious, but cannot say much. They often lose the water of meaning before it is delivered. But they can be stirred to form descriptions of the breath, glances, gestures, and pulses between lives. Perhaps writing is finding a scrape in the skin of knowing, where the sting and dirt and blood of the day is let out, and music is let in.

There is no language to define the spiraling processes of the vast context we are participants in. We do not have names for the patterns of interdependency. To lock down the delicate filigree of life in explanation is to lose it, but not to see it is disastrous. Words are what we have. The why, of why we do anything at all, matters.

An inside-out kaleidoscope—a de-fragmenter—might be useful for looking at a fractured order through a lens of unity. A superhero in a comic book might have such a tool at her belt. The way we see affects what we do, in both the broad strokes of global study, and the details of a day. Playing with the limits of our perception, our knowing, and tweaking the cultural script is like using a lemon juice wash to reveal the invisible ink and unspoken scaffolding we inhabit.

The ink of interrelationship bleeds across the boundaries between professionalism, academic research, and the banality of daily life. Theory and philosophy are stained with the mundane and both are vis-à-vis. What holds this collection of sightings together? What holds anything together? Glue is superficial, so not that. Thread is better, sewing, mending the torn-apart seams of perception—possibly. It is the right question—what is holding it together?—and the question alone might be the source of inquiry. Surely a search for the elegance in a mess of weighted compensations, and river-washed shapings of the context of life, is enough of a spine. Perhaps?