

## **Submission for IEATA**

### **09 Fall Newsletter ~Andree Baillargeon ~ Field Notes**

#### *Companionship with Horses*

Most of us have memories of a time when as children we freely conversed with nature. As lifelong companions horses have been my primary teachers in the active re-membering of a language that communicates through gestures, rhythms, images and the symbolic. Through the horses I reclaim a primal part of myself and feel the renewal of a deep connection and love for the world I live in. Since my training at the Tamalpa Institute, I have come to appreciate art as the process that keeps me engaged in a body to body attunement with natural cycles and of service to the earth.

It is from a place of deep gratitude for all my teachers and for the future to come that I share here a fragment of my dance with horses.

Through my back I feel a gaze from the other side of the aisle The oldest mare of the herd is staring requesting attention. So I step over to the left side of her door where we engage in this spontaneous silly head/neck dance...looking towards, looking away I feel like I am clowning around. As the space between me and you settle I put my hand behind your ear; the delicate softness that covers your sturdy bones shifts my mischievous mood and my hand flows around the contours of your face shaping a new distance between you and me

You close your eyes ..... I notice I am holding my left arm stiffly against my body.  
..... I feel tears swelling up from deep inside  
..... I lean against the door sill

You open your eyes & look at me,

..... with my left hand I stroke the right side of your face

You move back into your stall,

..... I follow you in. Tears are streaming down my face.

..... I reach into my pocket and pull out an old crumpled tissue

You quickly step back, raise your neck, your body is rigid your eyes wide open,

..... I notice this gesture scarred you

..... I know you where mistreated when you where young, so long ago

..... I imagine you think I will hit you

You look at me

..... both my arms are quiet along my body, I notice they are numb

You look away

..... I look away

You look towards me

..... I look towards you

You look at me

..... I look away

You look at me

..... I am feeling playful

We repeat this movement a few times

You seem curious; you extend your neck and bring your head up and down

..... I mirror and follow your movement

Neck down extended you look at me

..... head/neck bent forward I look at you

Neck down extended you look at me

..... head/ neck forward draws spine into forward flexion

..... I look at the ground pulling myself in I get the image I am a very very sad clown

..... I am aware of the expression on my face like a white painted downward smile; "There is a child who plays it to small"

Neck down extended you look at me

..... in forward flexion I feel my arms hanging

..... I unroll slowly into hyper- extension lifting my forearms with my palms up

..... I look up & imagine the sky through the ceiling and hear: "Help"

You look at me

..... both my arms are quiet along my body, I notice they are numb

You turn your head towards me

..... I am standing straight and look at you :  
"I am so so sorry this happened to you"  
..... my hands extending towards you in offering gesture,  
..... I stand upright relaxed

You lick your lips , chew and start eating some hay

..... I pick up some hay with my 2 hands  
..... I am looking at the hay in my hands

You take a step forward turn your head/neck towards me stretching slightly you gently take a few strands of hay, for a moment we are connected by these dried green threads that feed you  
You are eating a few strands of hay

..... I pick up some hay and really feel it's texture  
..... I bring it up to my nose and strangely there is a fresh  
fragrance crackling from last fall's dry twigs

You do not seem interested in me anymore

..... I make myself smaller and smaller, pulling myself in and folding  
my lateral space inward,  
..... extending my hand with a gift of hay to you I squeeze myself  
close to the door and say " I just want to be your friend, take  
this, I ask for nothing more, promise I ask for nothing more"

You look at me still chewing your head is slightly above the ground

..... I turn my body towards the door holding my right arm out  
behind my back  
..... I am still holding the handful of hay, "Promise, I just want to be  
your friend"

For some reason neither of us are moving, I lost track of time

..... close to the door almost facing the wall, still holding my hand out  
behind my back I feel myself soften at the knees and I let  
myself slowly drop to the ground

You are still looking at me

..... I am sitting curled up on myself the middle of your hay

You extend your neck and ever so softly take the hay out of my hand

..... I feel moved and blessed and as I watch you chew I feel like a  
stream of sparkling and tickling movement around my heart and  
up the right side of my sternum.  
..... I feel my weight relax into the floor

You take a small step and start eating nibbling here and there around me

..... "I have not shared a meal with another in a long time, I eat alone  
..... the streaming around my heart is moving through my chest.  
..... I close my eyes  
..... I listen to your chewing. The space between us has become so  
palpable and soft almost spongy.  
..... I feel a warm breeze on my cheek

..... I imagine the last rays of sunlight.  
..... I notice there is a soft rhythm to the breeze curious I open my eyes and realize you are standing there about 5 feet away your eyes half closed and through the stillness I feel your breath on my skin. It is dusk I am basking in white light and slip out the door to the other side



walking past a few other horses  
I come to the end stall  
where I see  
one of the stallions tied to the  
wall to cool down his supper is on  
the ground  
just a few feet away out of reach  
" He was a bad boy today"  
I am told  
,"This is good for him".

My heart  
is racing  
I am not sure  
what planet I am walking on

through the rhythm  
in my legs  
I feel You  
a not so quiet clown  
moving inside out  
I hear 6 feet 2 beats  
a tail-tale behind me  
a childlike tree grows  
crisscrossing rock heart  
between  
me looking at you looking at me  
slowly curving back towards the  
sky  
holding hands with the invisible

Andree Baillargeon is an interdisciplinary artist, Reiki Master/Teacher and equestrian. Her passion for horses and constant desire to learn has lead her to study various movement practices such as Feldenkrais, Authentic Movement and Spatial Dynamics. Andree is a movement based expressive arts graduate from the Tamalpa Institute and is now writing a book entitled "Horses Carry the Wounded Home". Using the Tamalpa Life-Art process as corner stone, this book relates her journey of personal transformation and creates a map for anyone interested in the field of equine facilitated learning. Andree can be reached through email at [inspiredconnections@gmail.com](mailto:inspiredconnections@gmail.com).