



BYRON BAY

NO. 9



GREETINGS AND LOVE FROM MELANIE.

Thursday, November 29, 2012

It is 10:30 am on Thursday, November 29th in Byron Bay. It is 3:30 pm on Wednesday, November 28th in Berkeley, CA. From the time I left my

house in Berkeley on Sunday to head to the airport, to the time I arrived in Byron Bay at the boat shed (the little one room studio where I am staying on

Beachcomber Dr.) it was more than 24 hours of travel, plus the loss of a day due to the 19 hour time change.

My journey in this lifetime,



TALLOWS BEACH



THE BOATSHED



PATH TO THE BEACH

Ashtanga Yoga November 29, 2012 continued . . .

continues to be one of walking through fear. This is the first time I've traveled solo. The first time I have traveled away from my children half-way across the world. The first time I figured it all out.

The thing about fear is, once you move to the other side - there is this feeling of empowerment waiting. Getting here to Byron Bay this time reminded me of the journey of my second birth. The path is a familiar one because I've been here before, but at the same time I've never done it this way. The last time I was here in Byron Bay was almost exactly three years ago. I was here with my children and my ex-partner. We came here as a family, even though we were living in two homes and ending a relationship.

Just like giving birth to my daughter Ren, this journey was familiar and yet so incredibly different. During my pregnancy with her and preparation for childbirth, I wanted two things. I wanted to let go of everything so that I could not push for three hours and I wanted to stay with myself and birth her with full awareness of my body and her body. Birth was familiar because I'd given birth to my son and yet it was still the complete unknown because I'd never given birth to Ren.

Leading up to this trip, I was overcome with anxiety about so many things. Anxiety about leaving Noah and Ren and traveling so far away; traveling alone; arriving to see my teacher broken (I injured my wrist badly); leaving my students and the yoga studio in Berkeley; leaving my girlfriend; primarily, I was scared of the ultimate loss of control - death. What if I died on this trip and left everything behind?

Just as in childbirth, this trip felt like I was on my way to the ultimate loss of control in birthing this very important part of myself. I'm not completely sure what this part is, but I feel it emerging and blossoming into something.

And so it is with all of my imperfectness that I arrive on my mat at The Yoga Shala in Byron Bay with Dena. In true Dena fashion, we began our practice this morning with a sit. Unlike Mysore practice in the States, where students begin their practice as they arrive. At Dena's studio, we all begin together with a sit. Dena invited us to take part in Swadyaya (self-study). We move from the thinking room to the quiet room and begin the love affair with the beloved breath. In and out.

She talks about the many obstacles in our path that we will undoubtedly encounter over and over and over again. These obstacles and pit falls are part of the practice; part of being human. We can not control their arrival or departure. We can only control our attitudes. We can choose the attitude we take towards everything.

It is really that simple.

After a bit of pranayama, we commenced our practice with the opening chant. For two hours I practiced. I felt steady and took good care of my injured wrist. I held back a little and stayed in, focused, and strong. Nothing fancy. Nothing amazing. Just me and my yoga mat.

Today was very much unlike three years ago when Dena helped me with karandavasana over and over again and was on me not to "drop the baby."

Three years ago she said, "ok, imagine you have a baby in your arms and it is small and slippery. You can't drop it. If your butt hits the ground, then you've dropped the baby. Don't drop the baby."

In karandavasana, you begin in forearm balance (pincha mayurasana) and place your legs in lotus. With the legs in lotus, you lower the knees into the armpits while balancing on the forearms. The butt stays off the ground and you hover there for five breaths. Then, you take the legs back up into pincha mayurasana and then lower into chaturanga.

Today, while I was lowering, my lotus knees into my armpits, Dena came over and lightly helped me balance and hover for one, two, three, four, five. Today was another day that I would keep hold of that small slippery baby. I'm curious to see what happens when she watches instead of helps and how in the world I will ever be able to get back up into pincha mayurasana by myself.

Because of my injured wrist I had to modify some postures and back off a little. Today that felt good. Today I was able to meet myself within my limits without forcing anything. Today I held onto my truth and let go of the place I am trying to get. Because really, what even happens when we get there and where are we going anyway?

Om. Shanti.