

Introduction

Fierce Tranquility was written in 1989, after I moved to my new apartment, a month after I left the woman I'd been living with, three years after I moved to Seattle, four years after I quit drinking. It was the first time I was alone without alcohol or a woman to give me comfort and keep me company.

This writing begins after a night when I was feeling happy in my new place. I was watching a movie and eating fried chicken, when I broke a tooth. It was a Sunday night, and I couldn't go to the dentist. The pain triggered deep feelings of loneliness, then beneath that, sadness, then beneath that, a sense of terror. I went beneath the terror, and I felt a peace that remains to this day.

At the same time, I rescued the part of myself I had allowed to remain abandoned for 47 years. I picked up the baby, the one who experienced terror in the beginning.

This is the story of that time, after which my daughter said I went into six months of grace. The stories, *Minnie the Mermaid* and *Borderwalker* came to me, during this time.

I was able to rent the apartment with no money. The landlord said, later, he'd never done that before. At the end of this story, he accepted my bid to paint the building, and that settled my account for the first five months. It was a time of healing, and as much as it felt catastrophic, it was also a time of wonder.

Steve Abhaya Brooks