

Pick Up the Baby

- Catastrophic Healing -

Pick Up the Baby – Catastrophic Healing was written in '89, after I moved to a 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 without 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 terrific 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.

There are two metaphors that are central to *Pick Up the Baby*. One comes from the world of parent-child consciousness that was widespread in the 80s from which I began to speak of my inner child. It was an effective metaphor for my healing, but even as I considered my inner child emblematic of an inner state I could address, I was simultaneously conscious that there was no such thing, in reality. The other, coming out of my experience in recovery, mainly through AA, where talk of a higher power was common, was my addressing, and speaking of, God, another reality I accepted as emblematic of my relationship to the Universe and my own existence in it. Within two years of this writing, I let go of that relationship, as I did, earlier, of my inner child. I loved them both, but finally, I found my freedom in the acceptance of a less specific consciousness in an even greater awareness. However that evolution has transpired, I am grateful to both for helping me to come to peace in my heart.

Steve Brooks