

The Journey:

Part 2 – 2007-2009

Responding to Cancer

One Man's Story of Personal Transformation

Craig A. Farnsworth
with Susanne M. Alexander

Co-Author's Note

Craig Farnsworth was born November 10, 1951. In 2007 he was diagnosed with brain cancer. In February of 2009, with some assistance from our hospice art therapist Barbara Trauger-Querry, who was also a friend, I began to collect Craig's poetry, artwork, music, journals, and more. With Craig's encouragement, approval, and input, I compiled the collection into a 2-part book he entitled "The Journey". Part 1 is the decades of transformation that happened before cancer. Part 2 is the short but intense period of transformation that occurred while responding to his diagnosis. These books brought him great joy in his final months, and he often had caregivers read him portions. He also shared the contents with family and friends.

~ Susanne M. Alexander, Craig's wife

Craig's blog: www.factbasedspiritguidedpath.blogspot.com

Book about the Fact-Based, Spirit-Guided Approach to Cancer and Healing:

Empowered Healing: Creating Quality of Life While Journeying with Cancer

By Susanne M. Alexander and Craig A. Farnsworth

www.marriagetransformation.com/store_EmpoweredHealing.htm

It's Your Choice

How do you want to view this? (holding up a half-full glass) Is this half full or half empty? This question is an often used analogy to distinguish an optimistic, positive, abundance (half full) approach to life from a pessimistic, negative, scarcity (half empty) approach.

It really is Your Choice as to which approach you want to use...Your choice.

Let's see what various famous people had to say about this subject:

Let's start with Thomas Jefferson who helped inspire the founding of this country with words such as, **"Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude."**

Winston Churchill once said, **"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty"**. I can see how such a perspective from the leader of the country could have inspired the RAF pilots, in 1940, to defeat the overwhelming German Luftwaffe preventing the planned land assault on England. **"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."**

How about words from another individual that overcame incredible difficulties, Helen Keller. She went deaf and blind at the age of 19 months. Can you imagine being both deaf and blind? Through the efforts of her devoted teacher, Anne Sullivan, she eventually learned to speak, went on to be the first deaf-blind to graduate from college, and over the years inspired millions. Helen said, **"Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence."** She also said, **"No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new heaven to the human spirit."**

This next quotation is from the pen of teen-age Anne Frank. Her diary of 2 years in hiding before she and her family were found by the Nazis and sent to a concentration camp, where she died, also inspired millions. Fortunately her father survived and upon returning to Amsterdam found the diary where Anne had hidden. Anne wrote, **"Everyone has inside him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!"**

The power of your attitude to shape your life is incredible and, once again, it's your choice!!! Thomas Jefferson, Winston Churchill, Helen Keller, and Anne Frank could have chosen very different attitudes towards life, but they didn't.

For me, the journey of the last seven months, as I was first confronted with the presence of a brain tumor that was subsequently diagnosed as cancerous, has opened my eyes to the power of attitude. I could have chosen to withdraw into myself and suffer through the ordeal in isolation. I chose to do otherwise and have been openly sharing the experience as it continues to unfold. Many people have asked how I was able to do that, so I'd like to tell you a bit more about my choices. The critical turning point was the moment I received the brain tumor diagnosis from my doctor on July 19th, at 2 p.m. That's when I first stepped on what I've come to call the Fact-Based Spirit-Guided Path. Fact-Based part...brain tumor in the appropriate location to explain the physical symptoms and Spirit-Guided part...clinging to those facts as a means to not fall into excessive worry, concern, and speculation. From that point, I was able to enter the hospital and put into practice the Three Tools of Healing...Medical Treatment, Prayer, and Joy and Laughter. It made for an extraordinary week.

In my extensive reflections after the surgery, I came to see that I was in preparation for a year or so before. I can recall, throughout my adult life, having had kind of a low-level hunger for really connecting with prayer at a depth at which I could honestly say my

soul was touched and renewed. There were fleeting moments but nothing sustainable. Susanne and I made pilgrimage to the Bahá'í Holy places in the Haifa/Accá area of Israel in May of 2006. One of my intentions was to achieve this prayer connection at the thresholds of where the mortal remains of The Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá were enshrined. The 9-day period was wonderful, beautiful, and uplifting, but I shared with Susanne my anguish about feeling the lack of spiritual connection, and I begged God for help with this challenge. As I departed, I felt I still hadn't gotten what I was after and was left feeling some sadness and frustration.

The next preparation phase began during the week in March of 2007 with my son's brain tumor diagnosis and removal. David came through the surgery nicely and was back to work as a waiter within about a month. The family was anxiously awaiting word of the pathology report so we would know whether David had cancer or not. Over the next several weeks we received contradictory sounding information, "I'm fine but I'll start radiation and chemo in a bit." Finally there was definitive word of an appointment with an oncologist on May 7. Anticipating better information after this appointment, I called David and got the same kind of contradictory information. The next morning I placed a call to the doctor's office, leaving a voice mail for the secretary indicating "I know you can't talk to me about this case due to the confidentiality requirements, but do you have a form that I can ask my son to sign so that I can interact with the doctor?" Instead of calling me back, they merely called David and told him his father called asking for information. You can imagine the fury with which he immediately called me. He refused to listen to my explanation of what I'd actually requested, told me that he was an adult and could handle this himself, and that I should just go away. I was devastated and began to struggle with mild depression. Other than one time later in May, I did not speak with him again until July 19. The last I saw his new baby son was April 28. Shortly after this I was talking with my friend Nik about what happened. He suggested that I add Bahá'u'lláh's "Long Healing Prayer" specifically for David to my daily prayer time. I did so.

The next preparation phase came in late June. As my symptoms continued to gradually worsen, I finally agreed with Susanne's suggestion that I have a telephone consultation with a medical intuitive. Susanne had experienced excellent results from earlier consultations with her, as had a number of our friends. I had resisted this choice because I felt it to be a bit of a stretch to be on the telephone with someone 500 miles away who would be diagnosing what was going on with me. The call was quite extraordinary, however. She made some recommendations about the physical issues she perceived and then we got into talking about my worries and concerns about David. She offered the very loving guidance to just "Let him go and focus on praying for him and know that there would likely be opportunities in the future to reconnect with him." This helped to lift some of my despair.

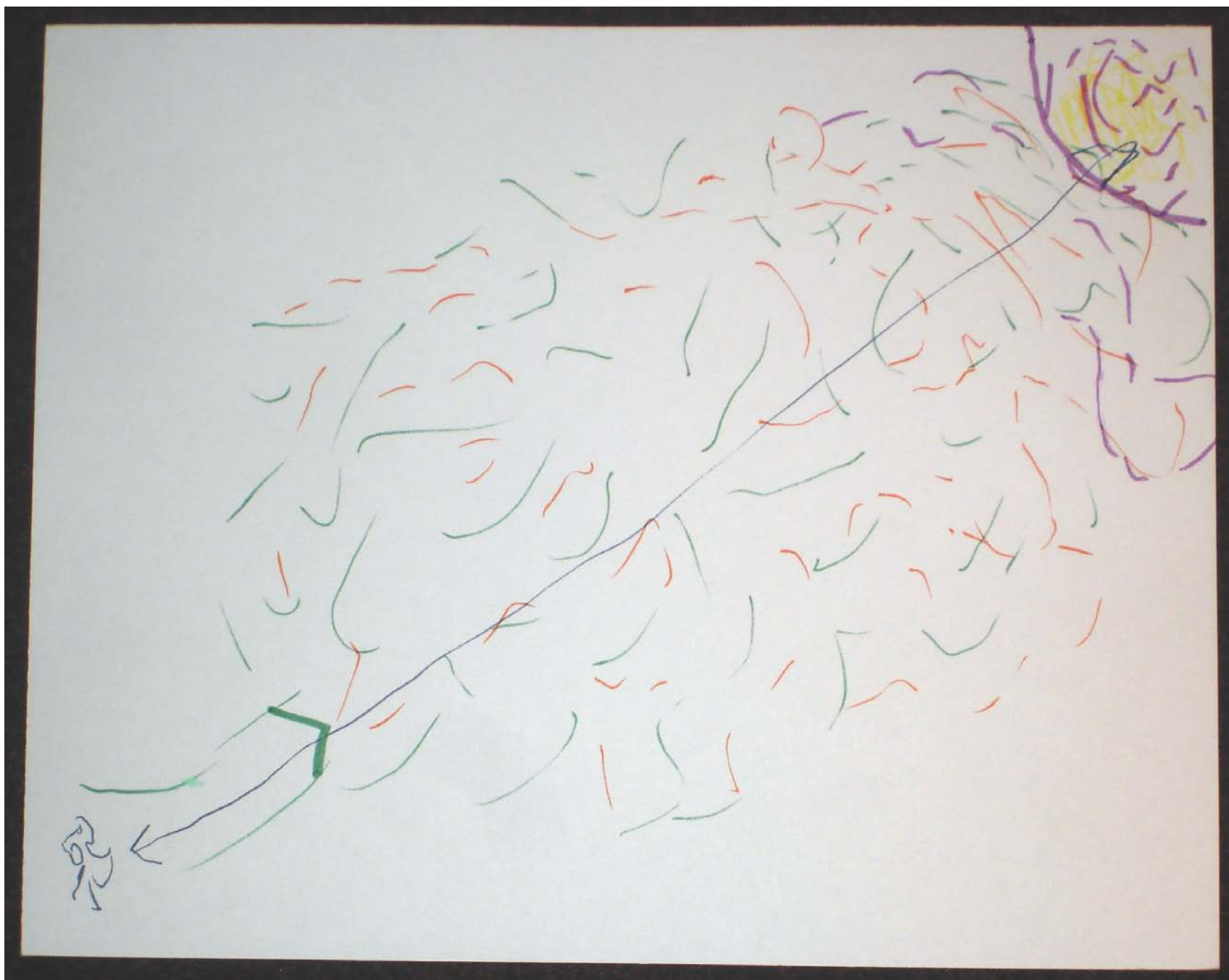
The following week, Susanne and I flew to Denver, Colorado for the annual Smart Marriages and Happy Families Conference. We had a booth there, and I had the joy of using a new card we developed for the conference and teaching hundreds of people how to specifically acknowledge the very best character qualities in their spouse and others. I was filled with such joy to make a difference in so many people's lives.

As I look back, I can see that this whole sequence had me in a mental/spiritual condition to smoothly step on the Path when it presented itself on July 19.

The poet, Emily Dickinson put it very well and concisely, "**I dwell in possibility**". This says not only is the glass half full but unless I get on giving it away and sharing it, the glass is going to overflow.

Bill Cosby once glibly said, "**It depends on whether you're pouring or drinking**". For me, the glass is definitely half full, and I welcome in the possibility of refreshingly draining the glass because I have confidence that it will refill.

~ March 6, 2008 (Speech at the Positively Speaking Toastmasters Club)



The Struggle with Son David's Tumor and Our Relationship Continues (Entries from My Journal)

How do I feel about David now needing chemotherapy? I want to hold him in my arms and protect and cherish him...how do I do that? How do I overcome the past deficit in our relationship?

~ April 11, 2007

Dear David:

I really do love, honor, and respect you and apologize for not always showing that in ways you can feel.

If I could turn back time, I would be more present for you as you were growing up.

I was not only absent to you but to myself as well.

I feel much more present now but struggle with how to make that work in your direction.

~ June 12, 2007

Dear David:

Please know that I love you very much and apologize for any ways I have offended or alienated you...

I would very much like to spend some time with you in the near future to:

1. Fully understand how I've alienated or offended you.
2. Be clear on how you would prefer we interact with you in the future
3. How I can be best supportive of you with your treatments, etc.

~ Early Summer 2007

"Guess what son, I got one too."

"One what?"

"Brain tumor."

"NO."

"YES!!! Golf ball....up top!"

"You're kiddin' me?"

"Nope."

It was a wonderful bonding moment that I will cherish forever.

~ Recollections of a phone call to David, July 19, 2007

THREE TOOLS OF HEALING

From the Sacred Writings of the Bahá'í Faith

MEDICAL TREATMENT

"There are two ways of healing sickness, material means and spiritual means. The first is by the treatment of physicians,...

"...the second consisteth in prayers offered by the spiritual ones to God and in turning to Him. Both means should be used and practiced."

PRAYER

"The prayers which were revealed to ask for healing apply both to physical and spiritual healing. Recite them, then, to heal both the soul and the body."

"...thou shouldst impart gladness to thy patient, give him comfort and joy, and bring him to ecstasy and exultation. How often hath it occurred that this hath caused early recovery."

JOY & LAUGHTER

"When at the bedside of a patient, cheer and gladden his heart and enrapture his spirit through celestial power. Indeed, such a heavenly breath quickeneth every mouldering bone and reviveth the spirit of every sick and ailing one."

Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy.
 Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion.
 Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succor in both this world and the world to come.
 Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.
 - A Bahá'í Prayer for Healing -

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Implementing the “Three Tools of Healing”

As we were preparing to leave for the hospital (on July 20, 2007), I was very clear that I wanted two things with me. A picture of my two grandchildren—4 month old Aidan Xavier Farnsworth and 3 year old Karida Renee Tashakor—and a pretty little poster called “Three Tools of Healing”. We’ve had the poster around for many years, and we have given away an untold number of copies. I was clearly being guided to bring it so I did.

We arrived at the University Hospital Case Medical Center ER and they loaded me into a wheelchair. In the waiting room I tried to operate the wheelchair, but my right arm was so weak all I could do was go around in circles, so I gave that up as a bad idea. I eventually made it through the ER processing to a room in the Neuro-Science ward.

I asked Susanne to tape the picture and 3 Tools poster on the wall at the foot of my bed. I then laid back, mentally sent the grandkids assurance that I would be OK, and turned to the 3 Tools.

Tool 1: MEDICAL TREATMENT

I figured I already had that well delegated as I had just been admitted to one of the leading medical Neuro-Science facilities in the country, if not the world. Dr. Sloan first visited me at 2 a.m. Saturday morning, after his last surgery (this is a apparently not unusual) and explained that they had 3 hypotheses and that a CAT Scan had been ordered to verify or disprove one of the hypotheses...that the tumor originated somewhere else in my body. The results of that came back OK, which was HUGE good news!! They very quickly put me on a high dosage (40 mg daily) of the Steroid Dexamethasone to get the swelling down and reduce some of the symptoms. Over the next several days the symptoms rapidly deteriorated. There was a point where I had difficulty walking because my arm was barely able to support my weight in the walker. The steroids brought the symptoms down by about Wednesday...that was a relief. I had a FAST MRI on Wednesday, which meant they had me do specific things so they could see

exactly where those functions were tied into my brain...amazing. Surgery was scheduled for 8 a.m. Friday.

Tool 2: JOY AND LAUGHTER

I had a calm inner sense that I should maintain my focus on the facts of what I knew (*golf ball-sized tumor that was swelling in a location in my brain that was consistent with all the symptoms I was experiencing*) and NOT getting into speculating or worrying. From that place I was able to consider Joy and Laughter as a possibility. It seemed like having some help with that might be a good idea so I asked Susanne to put out the word to everyone we knew telling them:

- The facts of what was going on with me *with no speculation about what was coming.*
- I needed their help...prayers, visits, phone calls.

She promised to do that as soon as she got home.

From Saturday July 21 through Thursday July 26 I got what I requested...big time...and it was truly wonderful. I lost track of who called and visited there were so many. Nurses must have thought I was nuts with all the activity. I felt surrounded by love...my spirit was uplifted. I think it touched others hearts too. I got a call late one night from a dear friend who is the crusty outside/heart-of-gold type. He said to me "Sorry I didn't call sooner, Craig, but I'm not real good at this sympathy and condolence stuff." I said "I don't need that stuff!!! I need your good wishes, your prayers, and for you to be happy! Can you get on board with that???" Shifted the conversation real quick.

Tool 3: PRAYER

Almost all the rest of my time was spent in very quiet, very peaceful prayer, meditation, and visualization. I don't know if I actually really slept at all during the entire week. The line between the deep relaxation state I found myself in and sleep was probably pretty subtle. "The impulse to **pray** is a natural one, springing from

man's love to God." [SOURCE] The **meditation** I was doing would likely be considered to be of the simple "Mindfulness" form. The **visualization** was creating a cocoon around the tumor so that the doctors could remove it in one piece.

With the surgery scheduled for Friday morning, my dear, dear friend Dr. Holly Timberlake, Psychologist and Director of the Nakaia Health and Wellness Center in Stow, came to my room Thursday night to be with Susanne and I. She said, "I know you've been doing a lot of prayer, meditation, and visualization. Tell me what you're trying to do and I'll see if I can't help tune it up a bit for you." I told her my vision of building the cocoon. She did some focusing exercises which were very helpful.

SURGERY

Friday morning dawned with no movement towards Pre-OP. About 8:30 I was advised that an emergency had come up and that I would be going later that day. Since Nik planned to be there for the duration, we decided that I should adopt him as my brother so any "family only" situation would not be an issue. I thought that was a wonderful idea and am thrilled to now have an **older** brother. I finally headed into Pre-OP around 6 p.m. I had seen Dr. Sloan earlier and requested an opportunity to speak to his team before they put me under. A little later I heard him telling me to go ahead. Here's what I said,

From Susanne:

In the visualization with Holly, we told Craig he had to seal every crack and crevice in the capsule around his tumor with Super Glue®...no using duct tape, which he loves to use in repair projects! Holly's role before surgery was also to help Craig verbalize (and me quietly to myself) to recognize and release whatever fears were present. Craig's concern was whether they would get it all out. She helped him set aside fears about chemo and radiation as possibilities afterward and focus on the surgery. I identified my biggest concern internally (we were at a teaching

"I just want you to know that thousands of people around the world, of various faith traditions, are showering prayers into this room, onto this table, into your hands and judgment..."

Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succor in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

For the last week, I have been in intensive prayer, meditation, and visualization building a cocoon around that tumor. I am prepared to join with you from the spiritual world as you enter my being from the physical...let's do it!"

About 6 hours later they woke me up. I had an incredible sense of elation and exaltation. Of course I was also lalapalooza loopy from the anesthetic and other drugs.

I was told later that it was **quite extraordinary...the tumor apparently came out as single mass!**

~ August 12, 2007

hospital) that a resident would have a learning mistake on Craig's brain. You can, therefore, imagine how terribly disconcerting and upsetting it was to watch Craig wheeled off to the OR from pre-op and then go to the cafeteria and see the surgeon eating chili while a resident did the initial opening of Craig's skull!!! I sat down with him and he promised me he'd be in the OR for the tumor removal!

~ Susanne Alexander, August 12, 2007

The Birth of the Fact-Based, Spirit-Guided Path for Healing

I was discharged from University Hospital and transported by ambulance to the Cleveland Clinic's Euclid Hospital In-Patient Rehabilitation Center. I was elated to be wheeled into a room with a full open view of Lake Erie looking westward. It was late in the day, so the sun was streaming in through the window. I asked Susanne for my sunglasses and just basked in the sun.

I arose about dawn each morning, sitting by the window watching day break. It was particularly entrancing to see the first rays of sunlight reflecting off the bellies of the circling birds. Whenever possible, I went outdoors to the beautiful Healing Garden paths in my wheelchair, and later with a walker and then cane. Susanne and I prayed on the phone most mornings before breakfast.

~ August 14, 2007

At rehab, I felt very serene and mellow, and I really began contemplating about what had happened over the previous 10 days. Clearly I had not endured the normal preparation for surgery and then surgery. This contemplation kept coming back to the moment on July 19 when the doctor called with the news about the tumor. What I came to realize was that at that moment a path presented itself at my feet that I stepped onto. The first step came with receiving the FACTS about my condition...the second step was SPIRIT telling me "Cling to it...cling to the facts. They are your solace, your source of strength and serenity. Do not go into anxiety, worry, or speculation. That will do you no good!! Cling to the facts." Thus the Fact-Based Spirit-Guided Path came into my life, and I am so, so, so glad that it did. It has truly transformed every aspect of my being and views—mental, emotional, spiritual and physical.

Returning Home

I am overjoyed to be home. I tuned up my guitar that had lain dormant for a long time, began playing my favorite flute (made of crystal) in my flute collection and launched the blog [www.factbasedspiritguidedpath.blogspot.com]. I was immediately doing things with both the guitar and flute that I had never achieved before...it was glorious. I was taking great delight in writing the blog and reading the initial comments I was receiving. I felt as if I had creativity oozing out of every pore of my body. Susanne and my sister Nancy observed that since the tumor had been impacting the left (sometimes termed the logical) side of my brain, perhaps that created a shift to the right (sometimes termed the artistic) side of the brain. I don't know...what I do know is that it feels wonderful to be creative, and I hope that it doesn't go away as I recover.

I find myself drawn to reading spiritually related materials such as a book entitled "How Prayer Heals" by Walter Weston, DMin, who Susanne had interviewed during her freelance journalism and radio hosting days. I was fascinated to find that he is a Methodist minister and has a doctorate in prayer and healing research. The book is a presentation of scientific research proving the effectiveness of prayer and healing-touch in effecting healing. He compares and contrasts Eastern and Western healing

approaches. He sees that the Eastern, secularly based, healing approach has no Higher Power-oriented prayer component and "does not offer a supportive community, relational healing, or religious nourishment for the ill. These are already present in the Western holistic health model." [p 52] He also indicates "...of all the issues surrounding healing prayer, the importance of faith and belief during the healing encounter has been the most troubling for me. The public overwhelmingly believes that one must have great faith in God in order to be healed. This has been hammered into our minds by one television faith-healer after another...The truth is that the only qualification for offering healing prayer is a loving concern. The only qualifications for being healed are the desire to become well and a trust in healing prayer." What a refreshing perspective.

My pattern each night continues to be sleeping for a few hours, very peacefully awake for several hours, and then more sleep. Early in the steroid ramp down, the awake hours were pretty charged with frantic thoughts running around in my mind. One of the nights I chose to experience a practice that my friend Rick Eastburn indicated he has done many times during nights with wakefulness...he sits and reads Baha'u'llah's *Book of Certitude* from cover to cover. I tried this and it was wonderful.

~ August 14, 2007

Morning

Early dawn light filtering through the trees gradually opens the day.

The peace and contentment of this moment fills my soul with light.

The blessed relief of a good night's rest is a bounty untold to the weary traveler.

How have I journeyed in the past few hours?

Quietly,

Peacefully roaming,

Savoring the textures,

Mellowing in the beauty.

~ August 11, 2007

Pathology Report

We just received the pathology report from the doctor, and it shows that what was surgically removed on July 27 from my brain was a Grade 4 Glioblastoma Multiforme (cancerous tumor) with some cells remaining behind. They further confirmed that what they removed came out in a single solid mass (Gross Total Resection), which is unusual, but good news. Tumors are graded from 1 (best) to 4 (most aggressive). This means that aggressive

radiation/chemotherapy treatment is recommended, and I will receive further information when I meet with an oncologist. I certainly wish that the outcome was otherwise, but I am fully confident that I will overcome this and get on with my life. I have a very positive attitude and am in excellent shape mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

~ August 22, 2007

Marriage Reflections from Susanne

The stability of our lives and marriage has been shaken up over these weeks. Craig has been my solid and reliable rock for the past 8 years. My husband is now different and will continue to change, both in his personal development and from the effects of any ongoing treatment that occurs. And there's the big one...what

if he dies? I'm experiencing some uncertainty about trusting him to be there for me. That's scary. I'm also scared about being strong enough to handle this test without sinking repeatedly into fear, anger, and anxiety. I'm really wondering, how do I stay positive?

~ Susanne M. Alexander, August 21, 2007

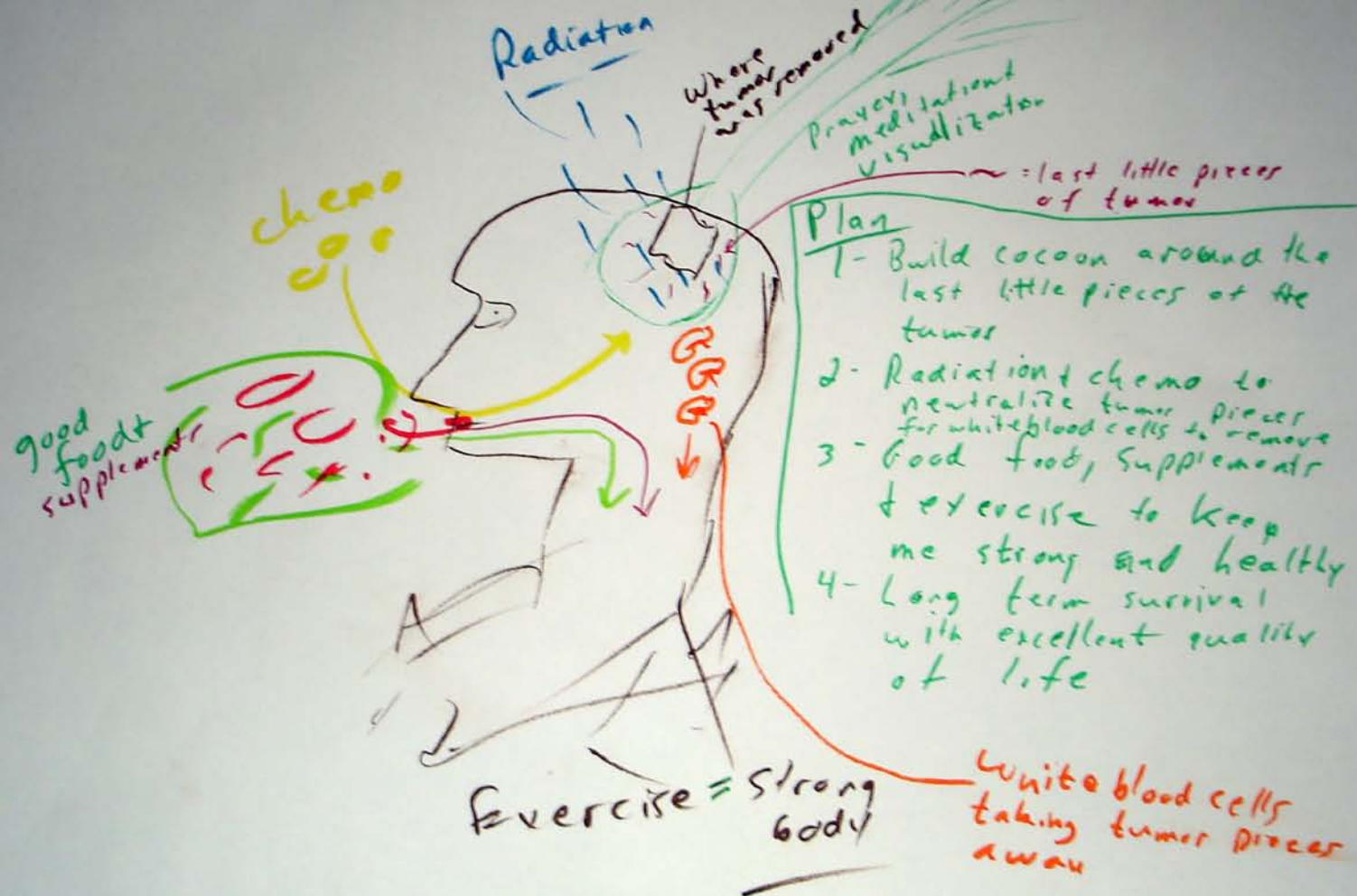
It's definitely easy to have one's regular issues cause friction during high-stress times. Throughout our marriage, Craig's biggest tests with me are my tendency to notice all the outcomes of a circumstance, particularly the bad things that can happen, as well as to be critical when things are less than the best they could be or approached in less than the most efficient manner. Part of what's interesting about my tendency to notice the bad stuff is that it connects to my strong ability to analyze, which is also a useful skill. It also links back to a time in my life when I was full of anxiety 24-hours a day and I read Dale Carnegie's book *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*. His recommendation was to recognize and face the worst and then work to prevent it from happening! This became part of my ingrained functioning. And...it challenges my dear, always optimistic, look-on-the-bright-side husband!

For me, my biggest challenge with Craig has been his tendency to always be in a hurry, whether it's speech, movement, or needing

to wait for someone/something. Sometimes I can practice what we coach other couples to do, which is to acknowledge Craig's purposefulness and not criticize him for lacking patience! Other times, it's more difficult to be that skillful. At times in the hospital when Craig was shuffling slowly along, I regretted all the times I had ever asked him or told him to slow down. I even thought that I'd celebrate if he started hurrying up again! When I am concerned about his safety though, it's almost impossible for me to stay quiet. And when I see people frustrated at asking him to repeat himself because he's speaking so fast, I think about how that impacts relationships and makes communication less smooth.

So, as we know, personal growth and marital growth is a lifetime process...and we are in process right along with every other couple on the planet!

~ Susanne M. Alexander, August 24, 2007



Becoming an Exceptional Cancer Patient

I've been reading Dr. Bernie Seigel's book *Love, Medicine and Miracles* and have found it to be profoundly useful in guiding my perspective on how to approach the cancer treatment and support activities. Dr. Seigel was a surgeon who came to understand that there is much more to healing than drugs and surgery. He indicates that the mind influences the body to change through the nervous, endocrine, and immune systems. He says, "Exceptional patients refuse to be victims. They educate themselves and become specialists in their own care. They question the doctor because they want to understand their treatment and participate in it. They demand dignity, personhood, and control, no matter what the course of the disease. It takes courage to be exceptional." [p. 24]

I find this approach to be very consistent with the Fact-Based Spirit-Guided Path. Much of the focus of his work is with cancer patients, and he has established an organization called Exceptional Cancer Patients (ECaP) that I'm interested in exploring. He indicates it is vitally important to pick a therapy to believe in and proceed with a positive attitude. One of the initial activities he recommends doing is making a drawing of yourself, your treatment, your disease and your white blood cells eliminating the disease. I did so and showed a side view of my head with the location where the tumor was removed shown. I depicted the last little pieces of the tumor as red squiggly lines and outlined my plan as follows:

- Prayer, meditation and visualization to support the white blood cells in creating a barrier around the last little pieces of the tumor and any pieces of it that may have infiltrated the brain beyond the solid tumor and invite them to entirely leave my body and minimize or eliminate any potential side effects of the radiation and chemotherapy.
- Continue to eat good food, take supplements, and participate in exercise to keep me strong and healthy and minimize/eliminate the side effects of the radiation and chemotherapy.
- Welcome radiation and chemotherapy to neutralize the tumor pieces so that they can be carried away by the white blood cells.
- Hold as my goal effective and efficient healing with long-term survival and excellent quality of life.

A friend of Susanne's sent her a wonderful quotation that I really like:

"Really life is like riding a wave. If you are a negative thinker, you will only stay at the bottom of that wave. If you think in terms of success, you will ride that wave all the way to the shore and enjoy the marvelous experience. Really, we all have the same difficulties. It is just the way one chooses to handle them that determines how high you are on that wave." - Allen Steble
[Unknown source]

~ September 16, 2007

Participating in Spiritual Groups

On September 27 we attended the Spirituality Group at the Gathering Place (www.touchedbycancer.org). It was refreshing to find a cancer patient/caregiver group that was focused on open discussion of the spiritual aspects of dealing with cancer. It began with a meditation about walking on a path through the woods with the autumn leaves falling and then a request that we share what the symbolism of letting go like the leaves meant to us. We felt very welcome, as newcomers, and shared extensively about our journey, which the group welcomed warmly.

On October 18, we attended another session of the Spirituality Group at the Gathering Place. I take great joy in sharing about the spiritual plan I have chosen and hear what others are doing. This group is very receptive to this kind of conversation.

We had been invited, by my dear friend Debbie Boyd-Tressler, to attend a Healing Retreat, this weekend, which was being put on by the local Sufi community. The Sufis can be considered as a mystically oriented tradition from Islam that arose, in Iran, shortly

after the revelation of the Holy Quran. The Americanized version of it seems to take a very universalistic approach to all of the world's religions. Part of the retreat included an "Informal Universal Worship Service" where we read from and honored the scriptures of most of the world's major religions. We shared some of Bahá'u'lláh's *Seven Valleys and Four Valleys* that was revealed for the Sufis and also taught them a song. It was well received. It was very easy to share about the Bahá'í Faith, which was great fun.

My primary reason for attending this retreat was to gather as much spiritual energy around healing as I could. The timing was perfect, as I've now completed 3 of 6 weeks of the chemo/radiation regime. The weather was perfect, and the trees changing to autumn colors were gorgeous. The meeting room we used at Camp Asbury in Hiram had large windows and was surrounded with a balcony and colorful trees very close in. I felt encircled in love and healing energy and wrote my second poem since leaving the hospital in August:

Autumn Trees

Flowing drifting floating.
Gentle waves reach over me.
Encircling me in light.
Encircling me in healing.

The energy of life abounds.
The power of love transforms.
I feel connected to all of this...as a lesson to absorb.

The gentle breeze filters through the swaying trees caressing them with love.
A reminder of God's eternal love available at all times.

~ October 20, 2007, Sufi Healing Retreat

A Lunch Visit with Son David

We finally got together...Yeah! It was good to be with him and share from my heart how I love him, and am so sorry for not being accepting of his life choices... I said it several times and ways, and he really seemed to hear it and appreciated it. I asked if there was anything else from the past that he would like for us to talk through...he said no...the acceptance was the big one!!

We had a bit of fun sharing the ups and downs of our treatment journeys. We were both sitting at the table at the restaurant without hats, so our scars were very visible. We chuckled about what people walking by might be thinking.

It just felt so good to be laughing and sharing with my son!! I look forward to building on this!

~October 25, 2007

Reflections on the Journey

Be merciful with myself...this is hard/scary work. I'm doing great!! I'm surrounded by love and caring...I will make it through.

~ October 29, 2007

My journey has been empowering. Shifting from hectic external driven going about work, etc. to the hospital preparing for surgery...much prayer, me, vision. I feel as a new person...looking at the world with fresh eyes...

~ November 17, 2007

Embracing Life

Rolling, tumbling, sliding
Through fields of green and spice
The joy of embracing life
Is an inspiration beyond compare

The journey continues to grow
And give a power beyond compare
The bird in flight is strong

~ November 28, 2007

Am I in denial about there being some element of ordeal to this journey?
Denial...what would it look like to experience the full range of emotions around what's happening...I can resolve to be more immediate in doing so and see what happens... It's not all sweetness and light...I am scared that I'll not succeed, or that my quality of life will diminish.

~ November 30, 2007

Two questions loom large for me after a discussion with Susanne:

1. Is my perspective of my path, since diagnosis of the tumor, as a spiritual journey just a drug-induced escape?

As I continue to reflect back, I see that I was truly guided, by what I've come to call the Fact-Based Spirit-Guided Path, to bring the Three Tools of Healing with me and ponder on putting it into practice before I had the first mg. of steroids in my system. There is no question that the steroids eventually hooked onto that, elevated my excitement, created an edge and grandiosity that eventually diminished during the 3 week phase-out period after the surgery. The core spiritual experience is, however, solid and real.

(Susanne's comment on our different journeys was that I was flying high on drugs and she was dealing with the extreme angst from the uncertainty of what was going to happen to me. My characterization has often been that I was in heaven and she was in hell. We have both agreed to refrain from using these characterizations in our conversations, as she views her path as spiritual as well...just very different.)

2. Am I in denial about there being elements of “ordeal” in this journey?

What would it look like to experience the full range of emotions around what's happening? I resolve to be more immediate in doing so and see what happens. It's not all sweetness and light. I am scared that I'll not succeed or that my quality of life will severely diminish.

~ November 30, 2007



THREE TOOLS OF HEALING

- ♥ Medical Treatment
- ♥ Prayer
- ♥ Joy & Laughter

Dramatic presentation by Craig Farnsworth

Craig thought that he was checking into the hospital to have a brain tumor removed... Turns out he was also on a life transforming spiritual journey ... and came back with profound insights about the Fact-Based Spirit-Guided Path.



Participant or Passenger?

I'd like to introduce you to two of my friends...Jim Passenger and Mike Participant. Externally they look pretty similar but on the inside they have some very fundamental differences in how they approach life: relationships, planning/goal setting, work, medical issues, etc.

Let's start with Jim Passenger....

- Jim's decisions about being in a serious relationship are pretty foggy....she's pretty...she's fun to be with...she likes me. He will shy away from initiating any changes and wait to see what his partner wants to do.
- He will avoid making plans or setting goals because "those will just change anyway".
- At work Jim keeps his head down and hopes to not attract attention. If he makes a mistake, he hopes that no one will notice or even better, think that it is someone else's fault.
- When confronted with a major medical problem, he will be consumed with worry and expect the doctors to fix him or tell him what to do. Hopefully this illness won't require much pain or change in his lifestyle.

What does Mike Participant do under the same circumstances?

- In a relationship, he is very clear with himself about his own strengths and weaknesses and what character qualities he is looking for in a long-term relationship or marriage partner. He's not afraid to conclude that the current person with whom he is in a relationship is not a good match for him and act accordingly.
- He has a clear sense for himself as to what his priorities are in life and has developed a clear set of plans for his life that are consistent with these priorities. He makes day-to-day choices based on these plans and priorities.
- At work Mike handles the responsibilities given to him and is not afraid to take responsibility when he makes a

mistake. He is proactive at suggesting new ideas to his management and shows willingness to stretch and challenge himself.

- When confronted with a major medical problem, Mike researches the matter and actively engages with the doctors in determining what to do. He asks many questions and keeps asking until he is satisfied that he understands the trade-offs in the treatment options presented to him and has made the best choice. Instead of considering himself a patient (patiently waiting for someone to do some thing to/for him) he considers himself a "respart"* (responsible participant....one who is willing to take charge of his own life). He is very clear that the decisions being made are about his life...not the doctors.

My journey of the last 7 months has really enlightened me about the value of being a "respart"—we have a file drawer full of information pertinent to my cancer diagnosis. We are known by all the doctors to ask lots of questions and to be on top of the ongoing information regarding blood counts, MRI scans, and other tests. For your information, the most recent MRI in early January continues to show no visible tumor matter.

I don't take the position that I have cancer or that I'm consumed by or owned by cancer. I do, however, fully accept these facts:

1. I had a brain tumor removed last July.
2. All visible tumor matter was removed in one piece.
3. What was removed was found to contain highly active cancer cells.
4. There is a very real potential that microscopic tumor matter remained behind that, untreated, would grow and spread.
5. I came to agree with the doctor's recommendation that I proceed into radiation/chemotherapy treatment.

6. We have sought out several additional practitioners of alternative healing and developed a diet and use of vitamins and supplements that is most supportive of my well-being. We make the primary doctors aware of most of what we are doing.

Let's come back to Jim Passenger and Mike Participant here. Jim kind of flows through life without making particular waves and

hopes for the best. Mike grabs onto life and is proactively involved with choosing the best path for himself.

I'd like to see a show of hands as to how much you've been like Jim Passenger before tonight. Now how many are willing to take on being more like Mike Participant in the future?

~ February 12, 2008 (Speech at the Positively Speaking Toastmasters Club)

* Used by Bernie S. Siegel, M.D. in *Peace, Love & Healing*, p. 144

Handling Uncertainty

When facing two possible outcomes to medical tests...

This is clearly another fact-based, spirit-guided path point, and it feels both terrifying and empowering.

The terrifying is that re-growth could be the beginning of decline to death and will call for further aggressive decisions and actions. I just want to get on with life!

The empowering part is that I've, once again, been able to clearly define options and paths. I'll know what I'll do depending on the test report.

~ March 7, 2008

"Faith is the magnet which draws the confirmation of the Merciful One. Service is the magnet which attracteth the heavenly strength. I hope thou wilt attach both." 'Abdu'l-Bahá TAB 62 [verify quotation]

Faith and service...this is the essence.

~March 8, 2008

What Am I Grateful for?

- Susanne
- Mom
- Family
- Grandchildren
- Home
- Loving friends
- Supportive employer
- Material sustenance
- Skilled doctors

~ March 14, 2008

It's getting hard!! Not having certainty around radiation side effects versus tumor re-growth is trying...anger, depression, worry... I thought I was coming out the other side until the spasming [seizures] and what the MRI's did/didn't show.

~ March 25, 2008

Going to a counselor today is a good idea... prayers... focus... breathe.

I've built my plan around certainty...uncertainty is a real challenge.... I can grow from this!! Many people have uncertainty in life. It may be more normal!!

An Anniversary – Celebrating Progress

It was exactly a year ago that I awoke from surgery to the news that all visible tumor had come out in one piece. The one piece was highly unusual. I was high as a kite, singing, praying at the top of my volume. Nik and Susanne were frantically working with

the nurse to keep my blood pressure from spiking. My visualization work had been successful!! Yahoo. I really had been a participant!! Such fun!! It really took me to the next level of certainty about this being a spiritual journey.

~ July 28, 2008, 2 a.m.

Reflections on the First Anniversary of Diagnosis/Surgery: July 20 to 27, 2007

It's now, amazingly, been one year since my tumor-removal surgery, so I'm reflecting on this period of time.

At that time, I described what I was experiencing as an "amazing spiritual journey" that I'd "come to call the Fact-Based Spirit-Guided Path."

- Does this still feel as true now as it did a year ago? YES. My understandings around the Fact-Based Spirit-Guided Path have grown, developed, and been modified to a certain extent. But, my core feeling is that July 19, 2007 at about 2:00 p.m., when I got the diagnosis, is a moment in time that I will forever recognize as a spiritual transformation of my very being.
- How has my thinking about this Path been modified? A key piece of the modification has been in realizing how difficult it is for many to grasp and apply the "Fact-Based" portion of the Path. Maybe it's the scientist/engineer in me that allowed me to immediately grasp the importance of focusing on the fact of the diagnosis without descending into severe anxiety. My college degree is Physics and my work career of the last 25 years has been in R&D, Product Management, and technical sales, so I'm pretty darned good at sorting out the essential information. However, I have also struggled at times with anxiety when the facts

have been unclear due to limitations in medical equipment or misinformation.

- How did the Spiritual Journey unfold from July 19? The first was my being Spirit-Guided to calmly prepare for the hospital stay and leave home with the picture of my wife and grandkids and the "Three Tools of Healing" poster. It felt Spirit-Guided to me to make lots of personal connections with friends and family prior to surgery and then to recover from the tumor removal with a high level of tranquility, yet fully determined to walk normally again. It was almost 4 weeks after the surgery that we got the official pathology report. By that time, I was fully ramped down from the high level of steroids that they put me on pre-surgery to reduce brain swelling and was able to continue on the Path. My conviction of being a participant vs. a passenger in the surgery and treatment have strengthened throughout the process.
- What was next and how did I apply the Path? The researching phase was next, which began with a message out to friends and family seeking well-researched conventional medicine treatments and well-researched alternative or complimentary medicine and healing methods. I wanted the means of maintaining personal wellbeing and the strength of the body's immune system while undergoing the conventional medicine option. I was

clear that I wanted to avoid receiving alternative approaches that were only anecdotally-supported (for example, this worked for someone...). These, to me, bordered on pseudo-science (no research demonstrating effectiveness). This was a very powerful distinction to have articulated and I have continued to find it useful.

As part of the researching, we traveled to the Block Integrative Cancer Care Center in Chicago in September 2007 and came home loaded with both medical and complementary information and recommendations. Susanne and I consulted to determine what our plan would actually be, and I felt Spirit-Guided in selecting what recommendations to use or not.

- Where did I go from there? In large part motivated by the book “Love, Medicine, and Miracles”, I gained further affirmation of the power of visualization work and the importance of being an active participant in the treatment process. I created specific plans around each of the 3 phases of treatment: 1) Six weeks of radiation/chemotherapy, 2) A six-week rest break, and 3) Long-term chemotherapy. For each of these phases, I worked with a hypnotherapist, who created sessions that I tape recorded and listen to frequently, and which reinforced the current plan.
- Right now I’m focused on finishing my treatment and getting on with life.

So the journey continues!!!

~ July 28, 2008

The Tumor Recurs and Head Becomes Infected...Again

I'm in barely functional mode. I arrived at the hospital this morning at 5:50 a.m. for morning prayers with Craig, and we headed to the pre-op area at 6 a.m. Craig went into surgery at 7:20 and out about 2 p.m. They finally let me see him in recovery at 4:30. Don't know why you would care about this travelogue, but there it is. A little linear thinking.... So, here's the summary of how it went and how he's doing: - Tumor almost completely removed - Tumor was tested and is Glioblastoma (brain cancer), so good thing surgery was done...it wasn't just cells hit by radiation or something less serious - Blood vessels near tumor kept intact - Great care was taken to not impact more motor functions; unfortunately there

were a number of seizures during the motor mapping and surgery and at the moment there is limited/no movement on the right side of Craig's body from the shoulder down (face okay). He was far more alert and responsive from 4:00 p.m. on than anyone expected. He asked how my day had gone with the friend who was with me during the day, asked intelligent questions about the surgery, responded to prayer, interacted with the doctors relatively well considering how doped up he was, wanted to know what he looked like! (I couldn't find a mirror). Craig is in NICU - Neurological Intensive Care Unit for 24-48 hours or so with brain seizure monitoring going full time.

~ Susanne Alexander, August 19, 2008

After hours of seizures and fever, the surgery for head infection went well. Craig is experiencing fever and needing close monitoring in intensive care. We encouraged a small number of people to visit him briefly yesterday, and that seemed to lift his spirits.

Today is our 9th wedding anniversary. We began the day with saying a prayer for marriage and then I helped him go to the bathroom. So, from the sublime to the mundane! But alive and together. The day ended with more friends and a mini/impromptu anniversary party complete with chocolate chip cookies, a friend singing "Happy Anniversary", and Craig feeling much better.

~ Susanne Alexander, August 28, 2008

Note: This was Craig's second tumor-removal surgery and his third infection surgery. From the seizures and the two surgeries in such a short time, Craig lost the use of the right side of his body, some speech and memory functions, the ability to read, and his ability to work. He then spent weeks receiving extensive in-patient rehabilitation, followed by in-home physical and occupational therapy.

How Am I Doing?

I've been reflecting on where I am these days and how I'm doing physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Physical:

I still have virtually no ability to move my right arm and hand. I have regained much movement in my right leg and a little movement in my right foot. I am getting better at walking up and down stairs with someone helping me, both inside and outside our home. At times now I go down the inside stairs to the garage and car instead of using the wheelchair down the ramp. A neighbor put safety bars across the top of the basement stairs to protect my safety on this route. I will finish in-home physical therapy January 1st and transition to outpatient therapy. I continue to have a significant amount of fatigue, primarily as a side-effect of medications, and therefore take two naps a day and sleep a full night as well. The fatigue and foggiess are affecting my reading ability at times. I seem to be best able to cope with light novels right now and read much slower than I used to.

Mental/Emotional:

I'm very frustrated by not being able to use my right arm and hand at all. That functionality was lost after the last seizure episode in October. I'm grateful the progress with the leg is continuing and I'm able to get around the house better and get out more, such as

for dinner at restaurants or to visit friends. My former ability to be very sharp with numbers has been slipping, making it difficult at times to dial the phone and remember key numbers. I totally made up a new social security number this week for the rehab center! I have not worked since mid-August now, which is difficult and frustrating, but unfortunately necessary. I'm now starting to face the prospect of never working again, and I don't welcome that. I'm grateful to still have enough cognitive ability, though, that I can discuss things with Susanne and help with making family decisions.

Spiritual:

I continue to experience a state of calmness and serenity around what the ultimate outcome of this journey may be. I am NOT giving up the fight, but I also recognize that this journey may include my soul passing on to the next world. I continue to remain in a state of prayer and meditation regularly. It has truly become a part of the ongoing fabric of my life. Susanne and I have resumed having morning prayers together each day, including saying the Bahá'í Long Healing Prayer together most days. I struggle at times with the words, but for the most part the prayers are still flowing for me. I'm still occasionally able to sing a prayer as well. We are having an interfaith spiritual study circle at our home regularly, currently with a focus on the Bahá'í teachings about life after death, which is supporting my spiritual journey.

~ December 30, 2008

Treatment Ends and Hospice Begins

We are transitioning to the next stage of our journey with Craig's cancer diagnosis. Our oncologist has now shared with us the difficult, although not totally unexpected, news that the tumor has continued to grow and has spread from the left parietal lobe to the left temporal lobe of Craig's brain. These MRI results explain why his speech and memory have begun to be affected in addition to the motor symptoms he was already experiencing. We made the decision for Craig to stop taking the anti-cancer drugs, since they were not effective, and we have now exhausted all treatment options.

The next stage in the spiritual and physical journey is focusing on preparing for the next life after this one, and our efforts will include using various hospice services as needed. We plan to enjoy art and music therapy, in particular. We will work in partnership with

our care team to maximize Craig's quality of life. This will include some drug changes, such as increasing steroids to reduce brain swelling and help him to communicate. As you know, Craig's attitude has stayed positive throughout this journey, and this is not changing now. **This approach has clearly strengthened his health and lengthened his life.** The doctor continually expresses amazement at how good Craig looks, the quality of his life and choices, and the strength and effectiveness of our partnership in meeting this challenge together. (He commented during this visit that he wished he had been videotaping our visits to be instructional to others!)

Of course the length of Craig's time physically with us is very much in God's hands. Yet, we see that the sunset of his life here is approaching.

~ Susanne Alexander and Craig Farnsworth, February 14, 2009

Adjusting to the Present and the Future

The days since the news of beginning hospice have been very emotional. We have shed many tears while absorbing this new change. While we know that the transition to the next life after this is a joyful one, grieving loss is also natural. We had some happy and sad moments as we worked with friends Nik and Debbie Tressler to get the funeral program planning mostly finished and music chosen. It was great to listen to music together and remember all the singing Craig has done over the years. Craig asked me to read him the eulogy that I had written for his funeral – that generated sobs in him and tears in the rest of us. But, it was good to share and know that the content worked for him.

We have met with a representative from hospice. They will provide in-home support with a visiting nurse, aide, music therapist, art therapist, social worker, spiritual care person, and more, to help us keep Craig at home as long as possible. He may even be able to pass to the next world at home. If that doesn't work, then Hospice House is an in-patient facility on Lake Erie near us that would provide Craig with a place to stay. Their goal is to help

Craig be comfortable but not engage in extreme life-extending measures. Hospice nurses often become deeply involved with pain management. We are grateful that pain is not usually an issue for brain cancer patients.

As we have mentioned, Craig and I have been working in partnership to create the celebration of Craig's life that will be his funeral service, when the time comes. It has been an honor to be with him on this journey and this phase of his life and I wanted to make sure to get his input on what will be an important transitional event as he moves to the next stage of his life after this one.

While this is a very hard time for all of us, we are celebrating Craig's life and we invite you to join us in a celebration of all that he has given us. This includes his intense love for people that we all feel, his musical gifts which he shares with complete generosity, and his intense desire to help everyone who crosses his path.

~ Susanne Alexander, February 27, 2009

The Zone of Receiving Divine Love

Throughout Craig's illness, we have had the blessing at times of being with a wonderful woman who is both a medical intuitive and who also has the gift from God of deep connections to the spiritual world around us and insights about what is happening.

Julie encouraged us to recognize that Craig and I are still putting out a great deal of energy but that we need to be far more tuned into receiving the universal love that God provides, to be in a "Receiving Zone". The more we are tuned into this force of love, the more cushioning there is from the "rawness" of this experience. She said she could see that Craig is focused on maintaining the steadfastness of his faith and that I'm focused on radiantly accepting or acquiescing with what is happening, but that it will help both of us to "shift our lens to receiving mode," both love from God and from others. As we do this and don't fight the current of the Will of God, we will learn more and be unified together. First comes love and then comes knowledge and truth. So, we have been dancing with this concept in the days since and starting to feel its effects.

Julie reminded us that the process of leaving this world can be like the transition stage of giving birth. Women in that stage are assured and prepared for birth and enthusiastic, but then have personality shifts and begin to swear, beg for drugs, and want to stop the process and check out of the hospital. Craig will have his private soul times of grappling with his fears, but this is part of the sacred work for him to do at this time. God's Grace and support in waves will accompany his transition. She assured me that the grieving and emotional work of the last two years will help me to not fall apart or have extreme severity in the grieving time after

Craig eventually passes. The descriptions I have been reading about being a widow have been a bit scary (!), so this was lovely reassurance to hear.

Julie encouraged us to breathe (something I keep stopping doing when it's a bit too busy and the to-do list seems overwhelming!) and enjoy this goodly period, to take advantage of every moment. It's going to all work out. The learning from this time will stay with me the rest of my life. People have been amazed at our calmness in planning Craig's funeral over the last weeks – Julie said there is a shield around us in the process that is helping us do what needs to be done. [Working on projects together is also very much a part of the culture of our marriage!] As we travel this unfamiliar path of accompanying Craig while he lives and engages in the myriad of relationships that surround him, we have many wonderful helpers. And many offers of help. I have done an excellent job of asking for and receiving help, but I know I still have much growth to do in this area. As the to-do list overwhelms me at times, I can tell I sometimes need to expand my circle of helpers.

Of great assurance to us were Julie's words that indicated all is going to come in the right order and that everything is in the right order for the two of us and everyone involved. She noted that it is extraordinary for her to see that in us there are "no strings that are hanging out, no strand is out of place". Craig and I have been very committed with each other and with our family members to ensure that what has needed to be said and done actually happens so that each relationship is "complete". It was good to hear that we have done well at this.

– Susanne Alexander, March 1, 2009

Hospice Art Therapy Begins

Our art therapist with Hospice of the Western Reserve is Barbara Trauger-Querry, a long-time friend and Bahá'í, as well. She helps both of us with painting and exploring where we are right now...transitioning, growing, grieving... Her process is to find something circular in our home that can be traced on the paper before we begin. She has us then create a “mandala”, a representative of ourselves at the present moment. Once we are done painting, we describe our paintings and feelings to her, and she makes detailed notes and reads them back to us. If we have not already chosen a title for the painting, then one usually emerges from the sharing. Barbara then takes her rough notes and types them up in poetry form, adding drawings of our hand motions that we made as we talked. The poems are then glued into our art therapy journals opposite the paintings on her subsequent visit. Wonderful gift...

~ Susanne Alexander, March 13, 2009



Motion

I started with purple:
a strong spiritual color for me.
That's the underpinning of it.
Other colors came along later.
The green seems to tie it all together.

The blue came down from somewhere else
The only one that didn't do the



Intersected here
A bomb or something burst here
The colors seem to come
Just because
The move appears to be

-Craig Farnsworth
3/13/09

Celebrating Life!

We held a wonderful gathering to celebrate Craig's life. Generous friends created the occasion and hosted it, so Craig and I were able to attend simply as honored guests. We estimate over 200 people streamed in and out enjoying the delicious food, photographs, flowers, socializing, and opportunity to greet Craig.

The diversity of the friends and family members who came were beautifully representative of the unity Craig has dedicated himself to creating throughout his life. Bahá'ís, Christians, Muslims, Jews, and others I'm sure! Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Iranian, French, and many others. Family came from various places. Friends came from Toastmasters, workplaces, marriage

community, our neighborhood, Landmark Education, cancer support groups, and more. But the overall theme was simply LOVE! In abundance.

Craig slept for two hours after the event and recovered his energy over the following couple of days. He continues to lose speech and memory, but overall is very peaceful and still enjoys being with those he loves. One of the party visitors stayed with us and recorded Craig's favorite prayers on his MP3 player, so that is wonderful for him now that reading is much more difficult.

~ Susanne Alexander, 3-15-09




Dave and Craig Farnsworth at the Appreciation Party

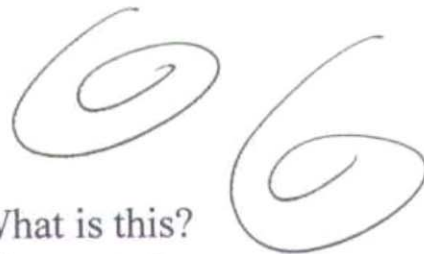


Opening up

There's a hole in the yellow
that's reaching out
And it's with...for ...
An empty red area...



The center is a bird in blue
The gold above is an ornament



What is this?
It's a metal
that falls
And continues down inside
whole and complete.

It's whole and complete
Even with the hole on the right side.
The red area is opening up
In a winding welcoming way.

Craig Farnsworth
3/20/09



Peaceful Staticy Love

Sort of a mix-up for me,
Where things are
and wishfulness.

So what I want to be creating around Craig
Is abundant love: the concentric hearts
Ever expanding love, peaceful flowing

The blue flow of peacefulness
Flowing through my inner self, around me
So it cushions Craig in peacefulness

And the reality of my world feels like static
that keeps interfering in both

The gold static of money:
Many conversations so constant in my life
and drives me crazy.
The static is what people are
pushing me to do for my future
I want to isolate them so they don't interfere.

Craig's time is limited.

I absolutely understand that

People that have loving conversations
about money love me
But they often occur to me as static:
too much electricity
And interferes with my being
fully present with Craig.

Peaceful staticy love: Such a mix

~ Susanne Alexander, March 20, 2009

The Emotions of My Journey with Cancer

At times, Craig wishes he could communicate more directly with everyone. He has requested that I type his words...and then edit them. The challenge with you seeing the edited version is that you don't get a sense of the difficulties. Craig is struggling to find the right words, mixing up words, getting dates wrong, and losing his train of thought mid-sentence. Sometimes he is frustrated, and sometimes we lighten the moments up with humor. And...he still wants you to hear his voice. So, below is the cleaned-up version of what's on Craig's mind to share:

"I've been reflecting lately that my feelings are very different in the three stages of this part of my life journey that includes cancer.

"The first part of the journey incorporated immense elation as I found that I was very hopeful that I would in fact have a long-term survival. The main reason was the 100% resection of the tumor, and although there were a few incidents with infection, there was no tumor recurrence for a year. There were big positives – one was the spiritual elation of this successful surgery, and there was the overall sense of getting to a new level of spiritual connection to God.

"The second part of the journey was a bit of a disappointment that in fact there was recurrence of the tumor, which made things in a very different light. I recognized immediately that recurrence decreased my longevity. As we started into this stage, there was a clear sense for myself that the surgery and infection associated with this phase was very, very hard and reduced my functionality. I could have chosen to die at that point. I made a conscious decision to stay around for awhile to finish handling some issues for both Susanne and my Mom. My sense is that both of those issues have now been handled, which I'm grateful for.

"In the fall of 2008, a further treatment started that initially looked positive. It was both an established type and experimental. Initially there were hopeful signs. However, a further MRI in February

showed that the tumor was back, and I could tell from my symptoms that there was further spread. At that point, I suspended treatment.

"The third part of the journey has begun now that we have started meeting with hospice. Much more noble, quiet, and less frantic. I've found my body shifting to work more that direction. I've stopped going to the rehab center. It was no longer consistent with what I was trying to do. I'm still doing exercises at home on my own though. I've set up a music corner in my bedroom, and we have started doing art therapy, which is very wonderful.

"My active goal is to be as coherent as I can be and be here for March 29th when my son has a Bahá'í wedding ceremony planned (he had a civil ceremony 2 years ago). I have no established goals beyond then. What will happen after that I don't know. I plan to remain active as best as I can, and my focus is on the quality of my life. I'm spiritually preparing to embrace the journey to the next world."

~ Craig Farnsworth, March 23, 2009

And from Susanne again: Craig and I are floating in quite mellow space. He often spends time playing or listening to music in his new bedroom music corner. His wheelchair faces the window, which overlooks the woods. In the distance, he can see Lake Erie and loves to watch the sun set on the water.

Craig still welcomes individual friends and small groups, but turned down going to two Bahá'í New Year's parties this past weekend. We are home-focused and peaceful. Friday's art therapy session had Craig drawing his soul as a bird headed towards an empty space depicting the "next world". My painting showed ever-widening hearts and waves of peacefulness (interspersed with occasional jagged lines depicting all the hassle with finances!). Tonight we began a new study circle based on

reading and discussing *Reflections on the Life of the Spirit*. (Our previous group finished the book last week after a year together and they voted to begin again and invite others to join!) What a blessing it is to have the accompaniment of such dear friends.

We so appreciate all the love, prayers, and friendship that surround us.

~ Susanne Alexander, March 23, 2009



Opening Up

The growing red
is getting larger and more distinct
The blue and purple is still alive

The green and blue is still strong

The increasing blue is suggesting the strong
more more growing in the spiritual world
and that's very very very good.

The rolling, growing life
Of the gold gold circle
Is very important

This is a green mountain
Off in the distance
That's what's been in the river
Around the next world and
It's emerging in a gentle way

Each week the soul becomes more and more.

-Craig Farnsworth 3/27/09

Harbingers

Souls
In the corner of my room
Corners of the room
Appear and go away
They're there just waiting
Until making ready
And they'll be here soon
Right now I don't know when
Not this weekend
I don't know when.

~ Craig Farnsworth, March 27, 2009

Noting the first appearance of the angels in Craig's bedroom at night



Comingled

Well, what's there for me today
Is the mix of spirituality and grief,
The spiritual is more dominant.

Craig and I are in a very spiritual
and spiritually connected place

Moments of sharp stabbing grief,
those moments feel overwhelming
and then I go back to the spiritual flow again

The yellow around the circle is feeling very much like
God's cushioning close by
This warm cushioning around
both the spirituality and the grief

So at moments when it's difficult to pray
I know that God's still there

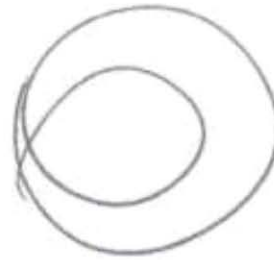
Definitely both the spiritual connection and grief comingled.

~ Susanne Alexander, March 27, 2009

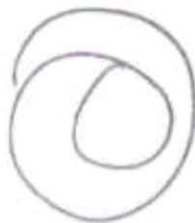


Joyous Vision

Ahhh...
(breath intake)



The cup's full
Overflowing
And full of abundance



The popcorn popper is filled
This popcorn:
all excited and joyous energy
It is very warm, very warm



I guess it's all there:
Joyous vision



-Craig Farnsworth 4/3/09



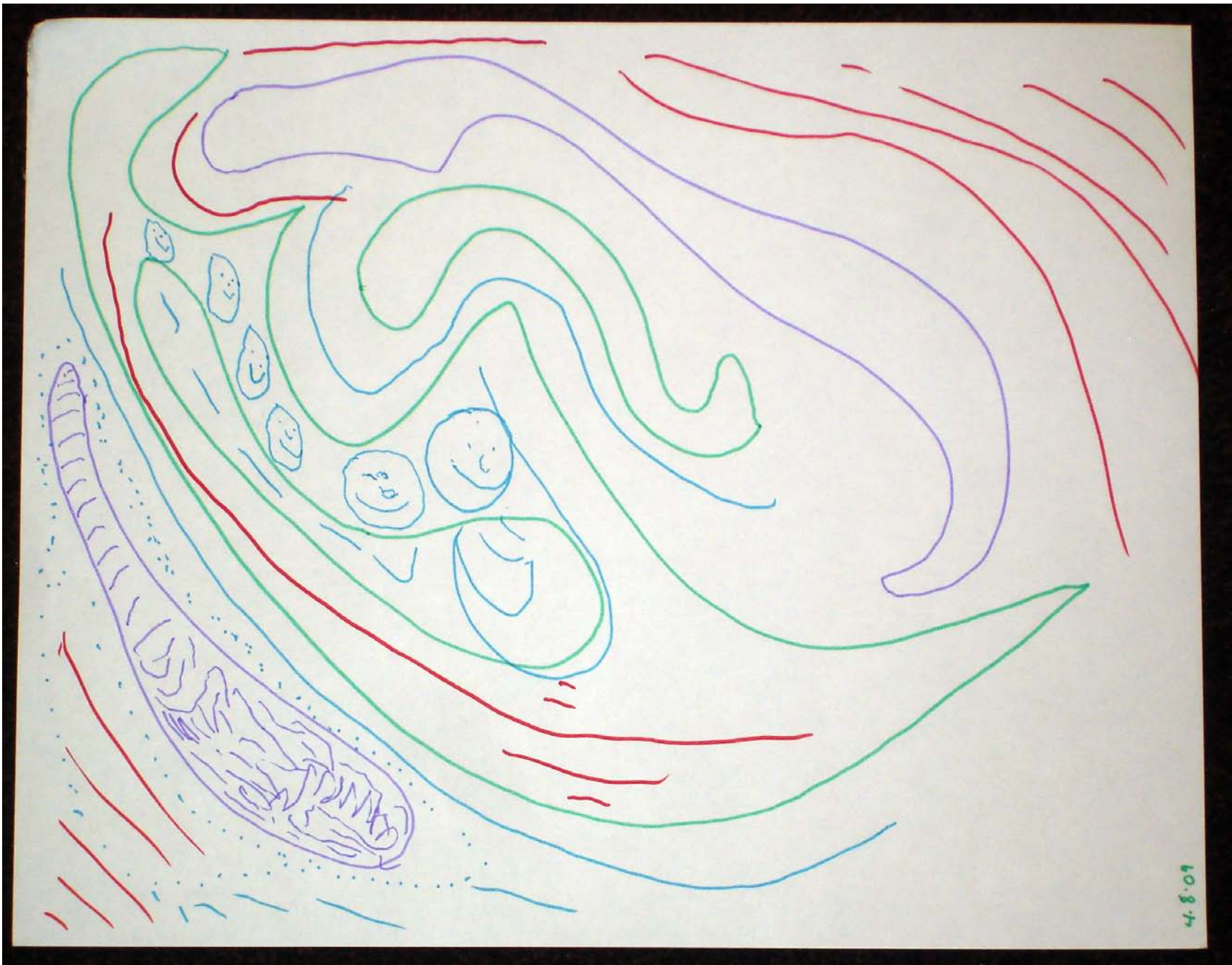


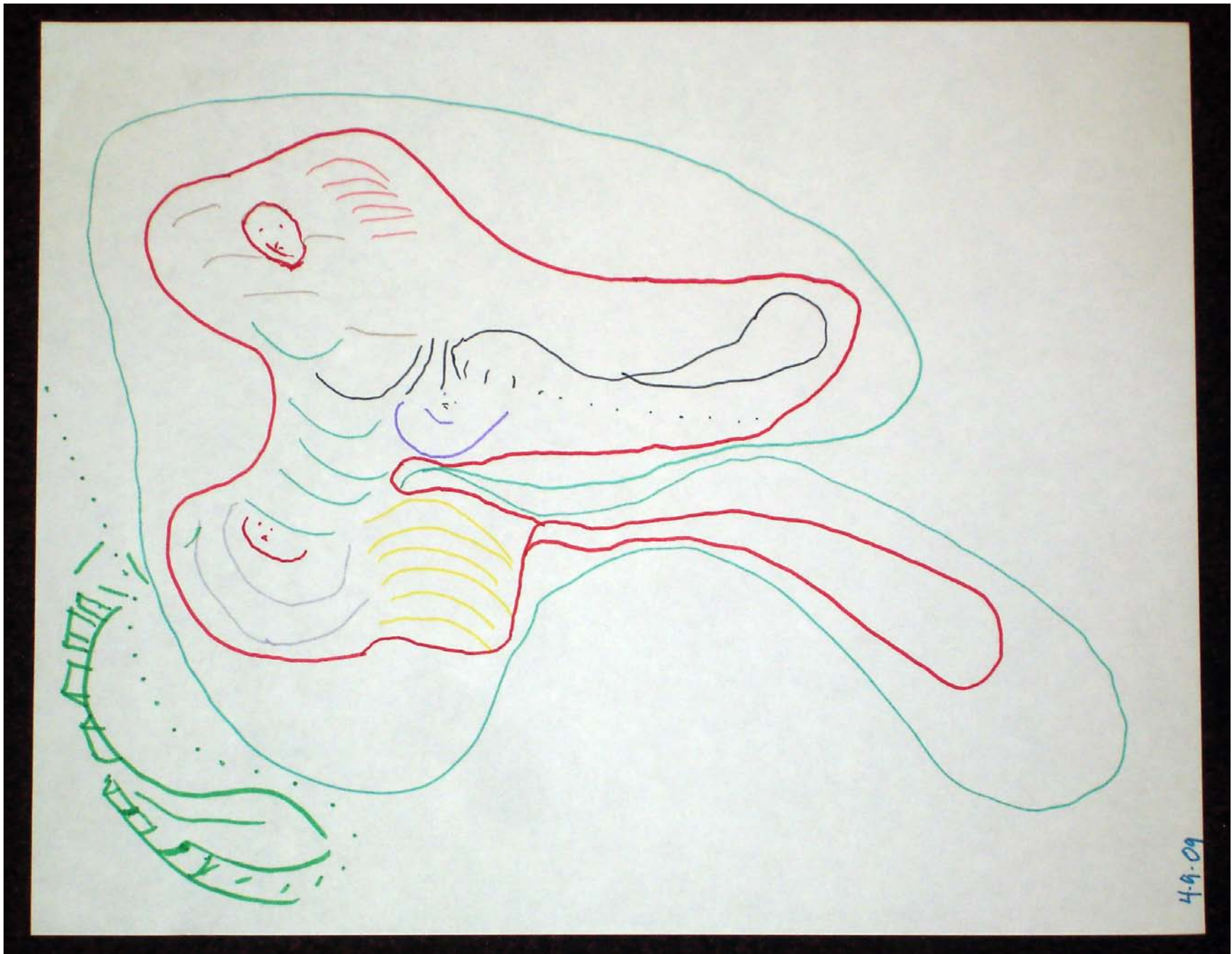
Emerging Loving-Kindness

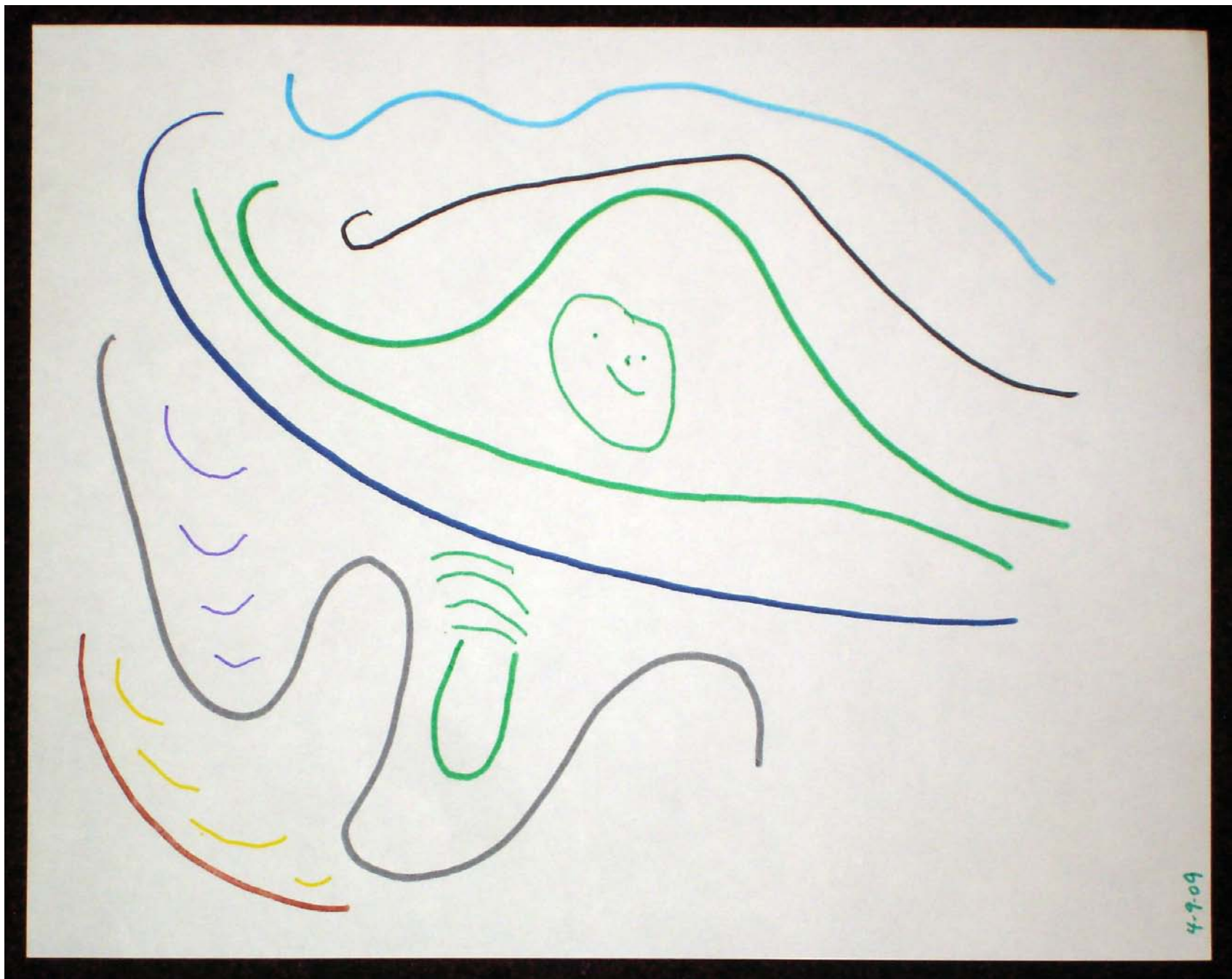
The assignment one evening in the study circle based on *Reflections on the Life of the Spirit*, was to do a collage based on the following quotation:

"Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone, let your heart burn with loving kindness for all who may cross your path."

~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 16





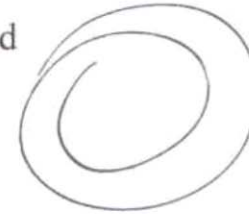




Ocean



Strong energy
coming from the motion of the bird
That's the start,
the focus



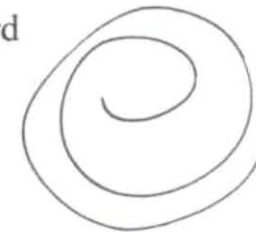
Being willing to really bond
It's all fitting together in the unity



This bird is the beginning

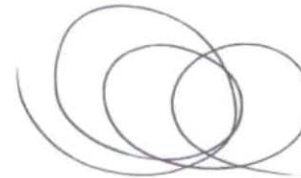
All the people are circling around the bird

the motion
the movement:
strong union in the early stage

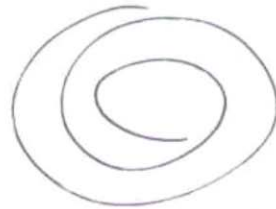


It is in this shape

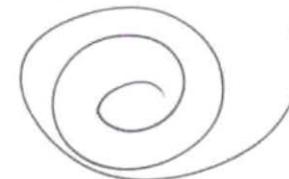
and spacing



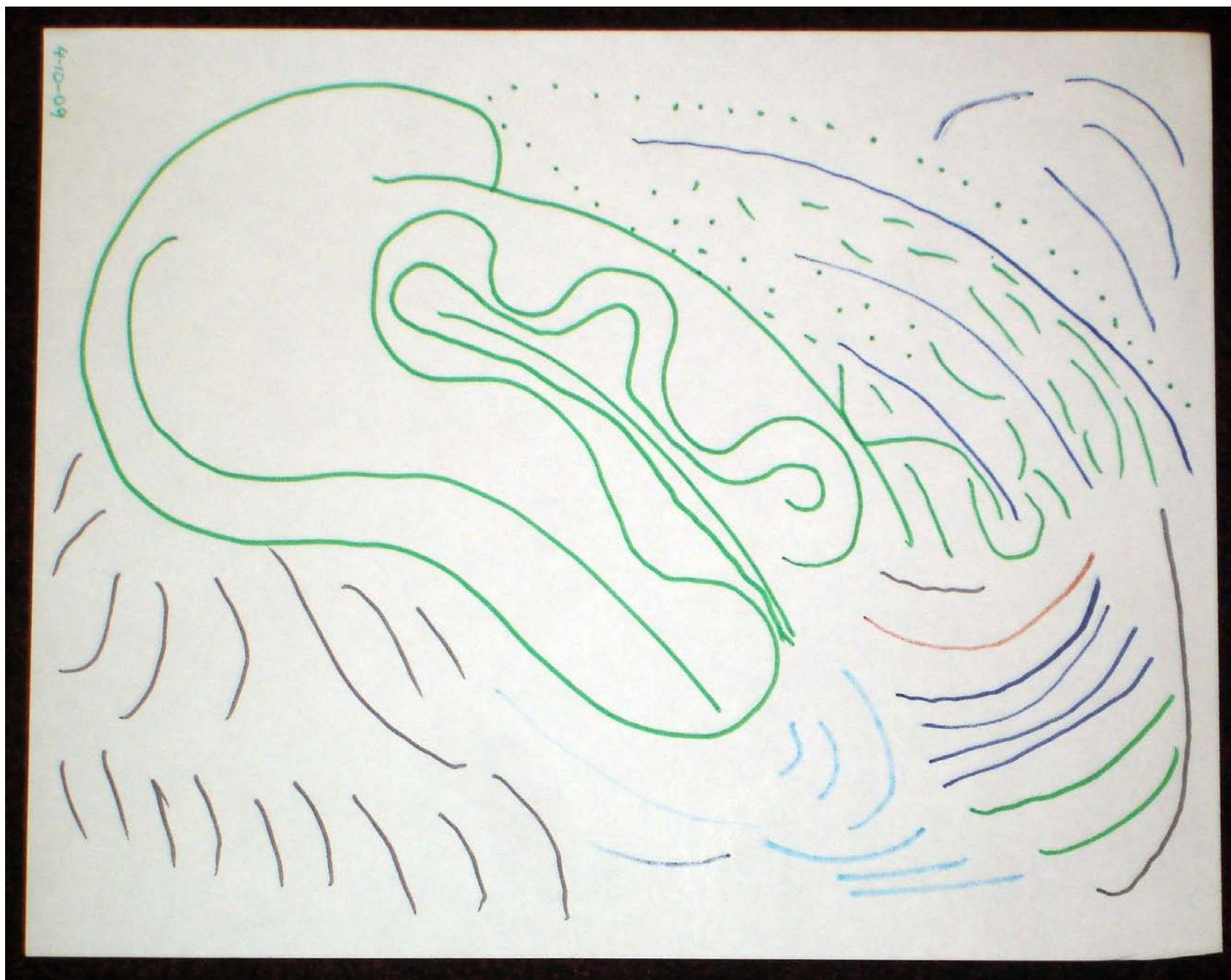
It's all floating around
around
around

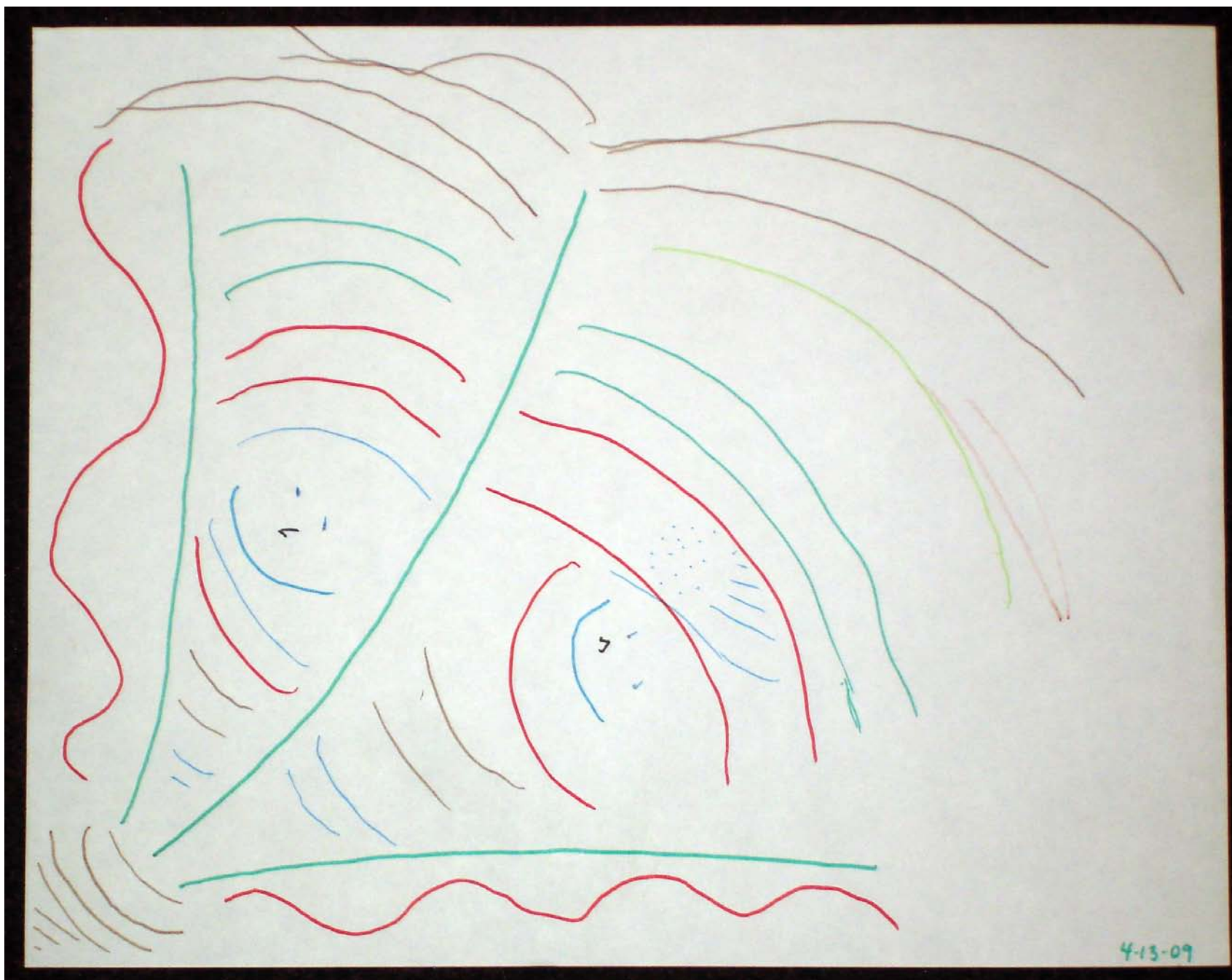


All the shapes are in motion
They all work together
None of them is still



-Craig Farnsworth 4/10/09

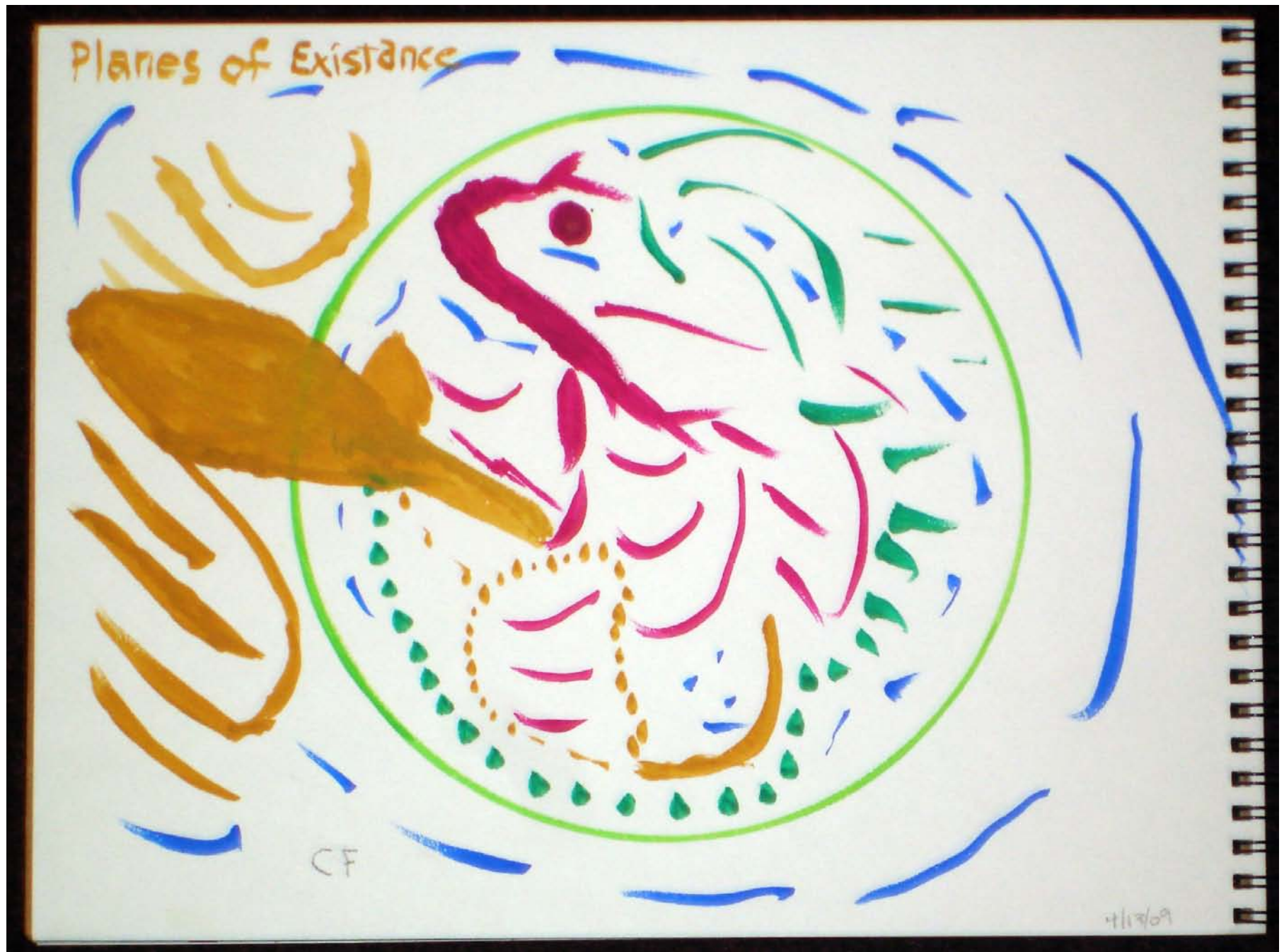












Planes of Existence

Ahhh...

This is...

I don't know what this is
but I think it's very important.

Maybe it's an alien force,
it's similar, it's friendly,
but it's overhead.

The pieces

Up above

A mandala

This is further

Not of the same nature

This is very similar to Ocean

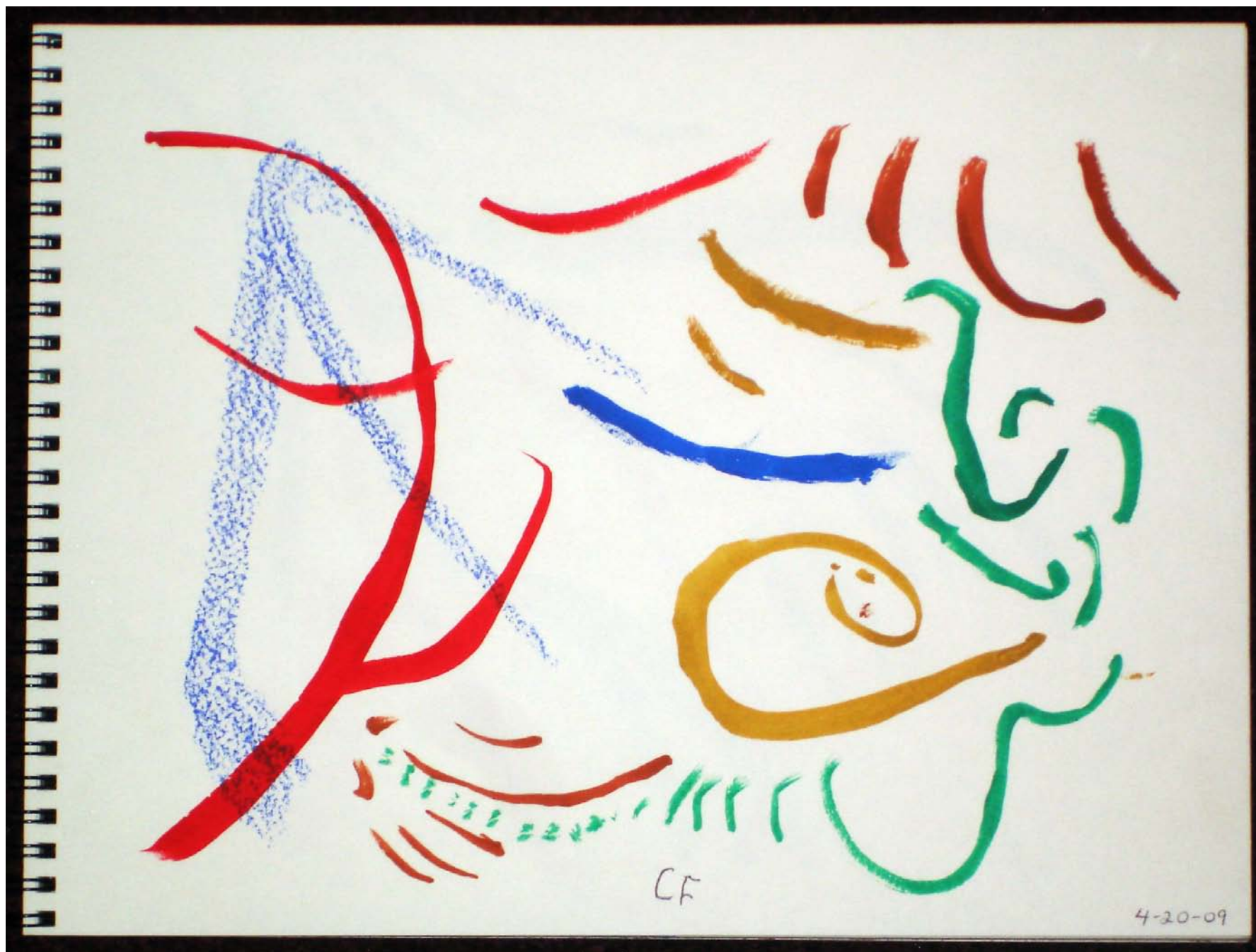
A face and the same flow

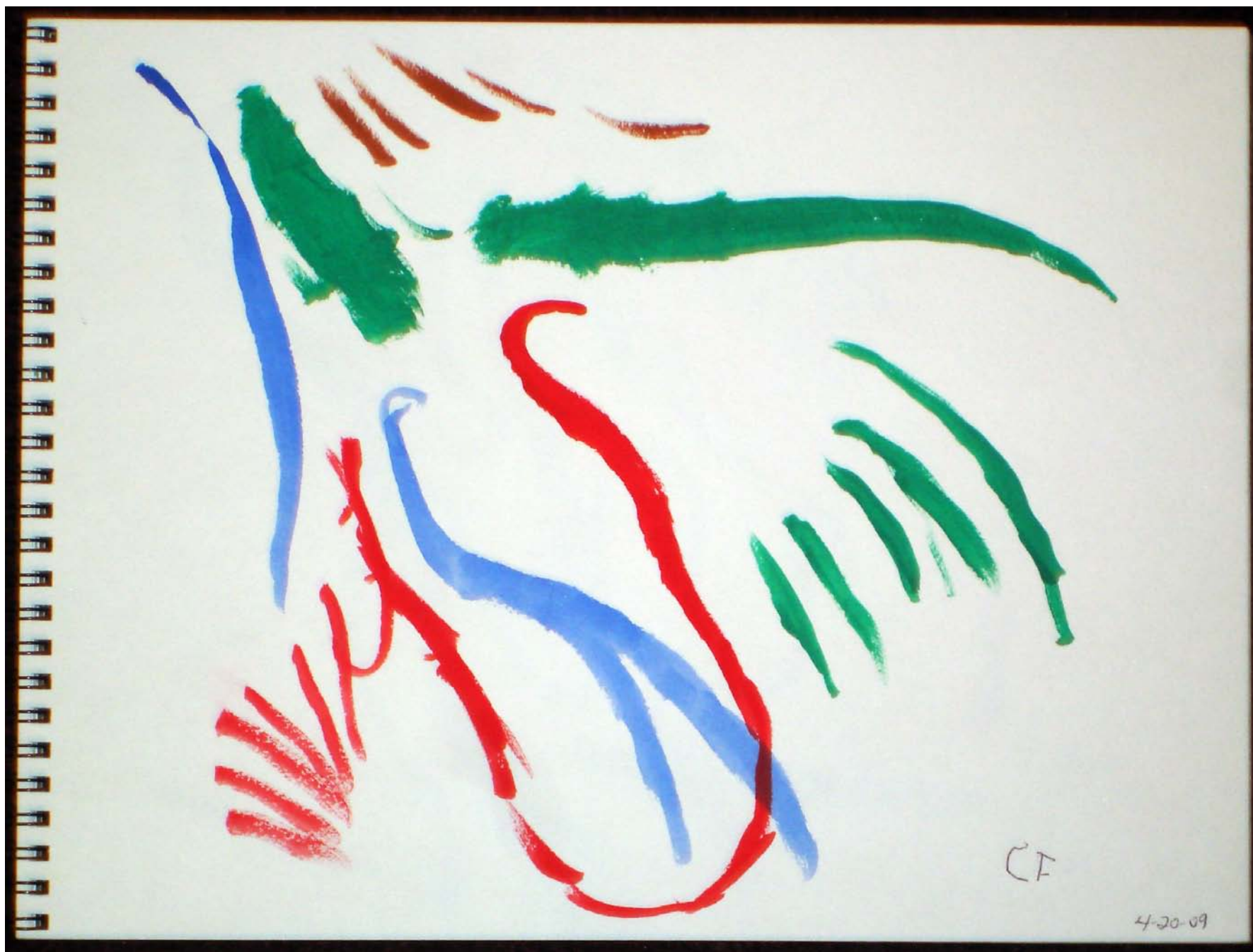
Two planes of existence

-Craig Farnsworth 4/17/09

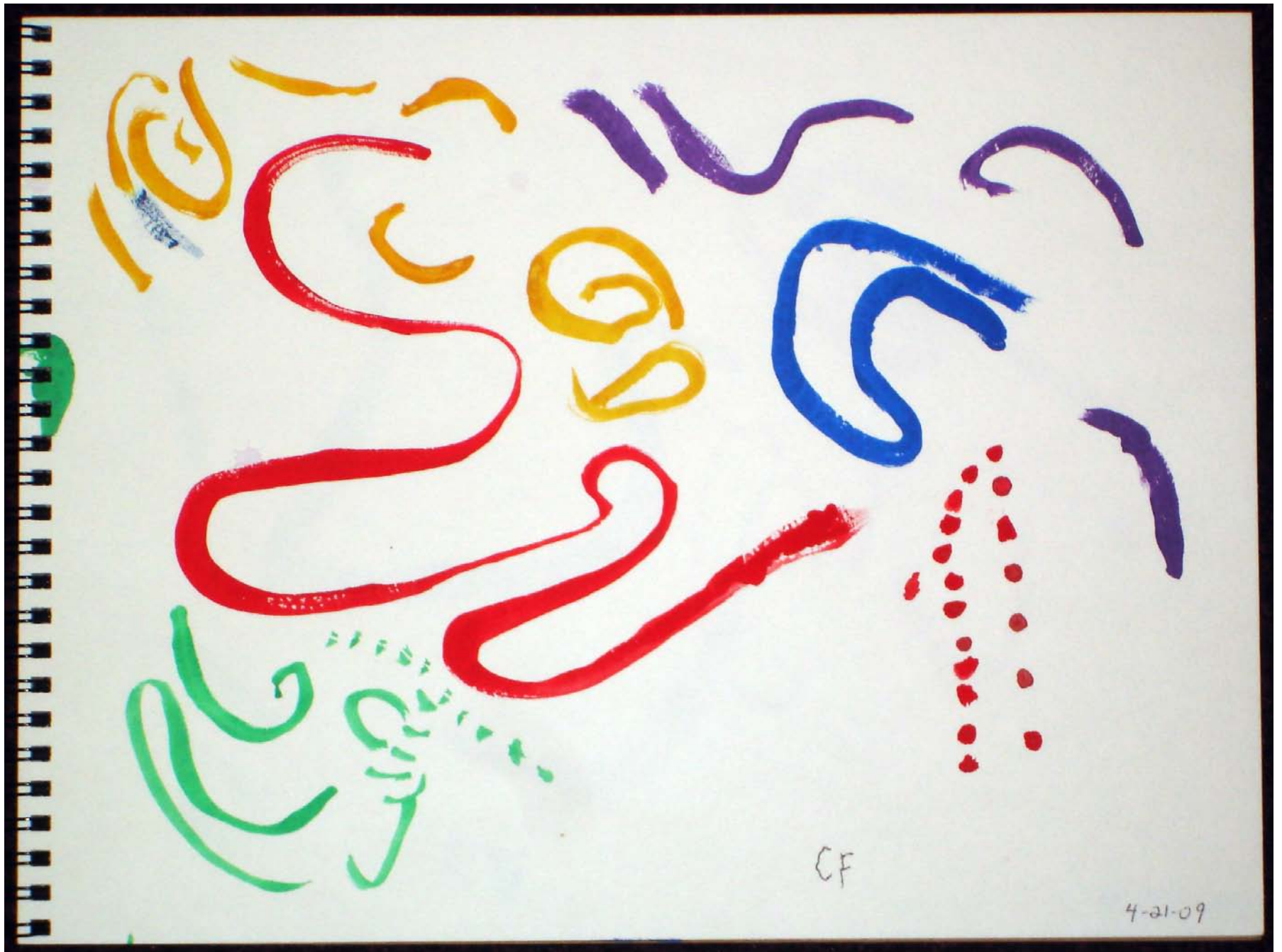












Dying with Eyes Wide Open

We listened to a CD of Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Ph.D., reading her creation, *The Radiant Coat, Myths and Stories about the Crossing Between Life & Death*. She spoke of dying with one's "eyes wide open". I took a few scribbled notes of her insightful comments that occurred between the stories. Noted below are some points that were most interesting and helpful for us:

- Death is our great companion and best friend who throughout our life nurtures, guides, doctors, and heals us, and at the end midwives and transports us and is our accompanying guide to the next world, the next life
- We ally with Death when we enter it with our eyes wide open; Death meets us rather than reaches out to grab for us
- **"Conscious Death"**, the conscious crossing to the next world, requires these:
 1. **Clear Memory** of where we are coming from, what we really are, and what the soul tasks are for us to do;
 2. **Clear Power** to die in our own way and choose the quality of our mundane life and soul life in the process; refuse to allow others to interfere in our soul's desire for restoration and healing
 3. **Clear Seeing** about worldly attachments and illusions so it's possible to let go of them; includes the gift of far seeing into the next world
 4. **Clear Knowing** that helps with developing the intuition about the rightness of the process and time of leaving; a time of infinite joy when you see both this world and the next; it includes an increasing sense of inner and outer harmony

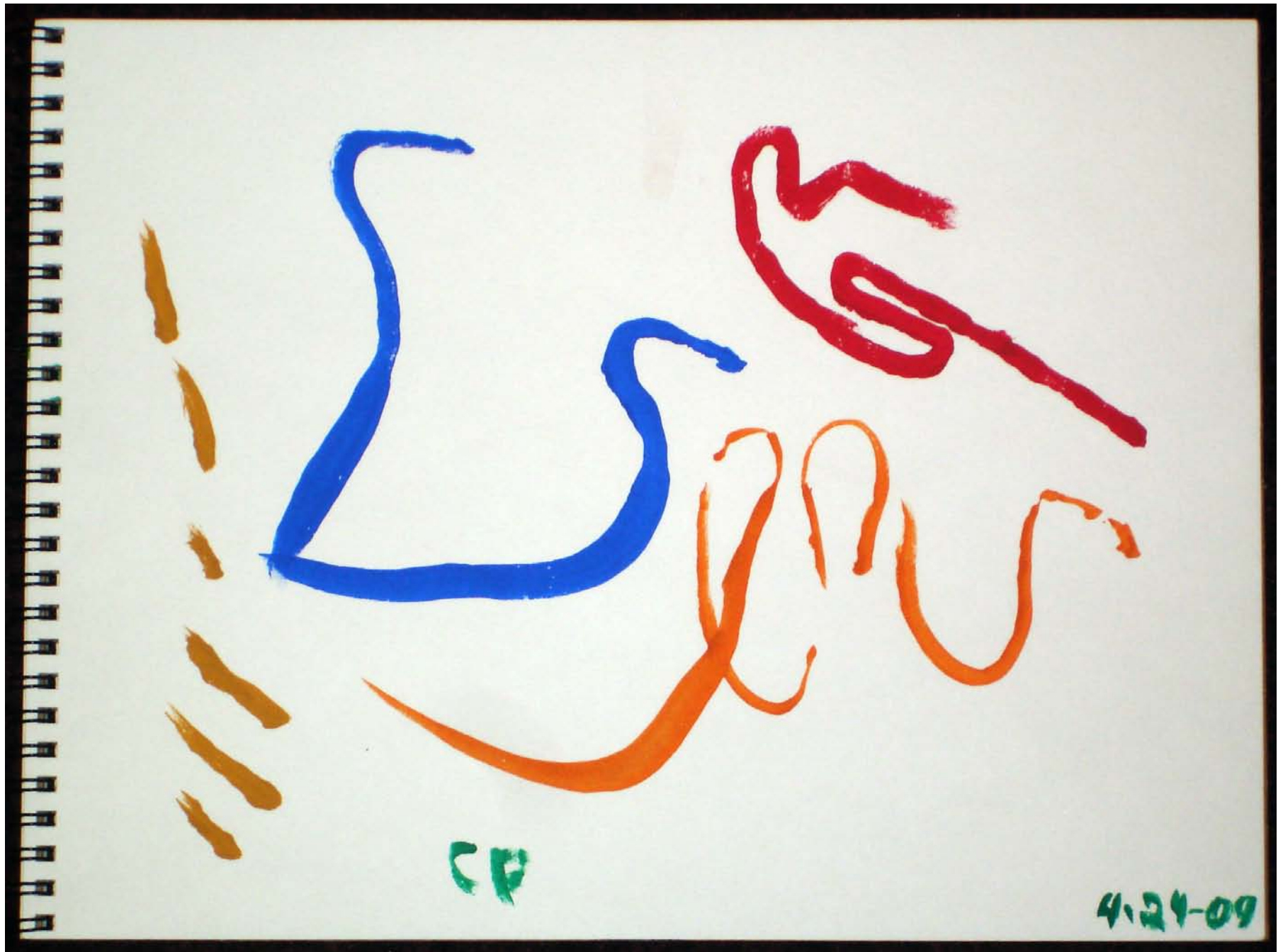
- Loving meditation and prayer helps us discover when Fate is ready to move us; we are chosen, we do not choose
- When the ego cries and grieves its perceived end, the result is emotions such as anger or denial, because the ego cannot go along for the journey
- Patience on this journey is required, as often the spirit is ready before the body is done
- Breathe forward to the next world, row to the next world, dance the next steps to being there, with eyes wide open have a clear birth and fly on

We have spent a couple of days thinking about these perspectives and discussing how they fit with our journey. I posed these questions to Craig, and to me as well (our responses are in the parentheses):

- Is he is in the mindset of trying to seek physical healing? (No, not anymore.)
- Are we using words these days that deny the possibility/probability of his passing? (Yes, at times.)
- Does he want to be in "Conscious Death" mode? (see below)
- Are we/he so attached to the creative process underway (music, painting, poetry) that this activity seems like a reason to stay here? (Maybe a little, but not really...it's more like these are legacy projects)

Craig's conclusion is that he wants to be in "Conscious Death" mode—Clear Memory, Clear Power, Clear Seeing, and Clear Knowing. I will shift, in response, the words that I'm using with him accordingly. Such an interesting adventure this all is...

~ Susanne Alexander, April 22, 2009



Sharing from My Daughter, Michelle

Dad:

Oh how complicated this is and yet so simple really. On one hand I struggle with: how much you were not around when we were young—sure you were there physically when you were not traveling for work but you were not emotionally present; how much you struggled with your relationship with your son where nothing he did ever seemed to be good enough; how much it seemed like your daughters could never do anything wrong in your eyes; how much we did not learn to share our emotions because you were not emotionally present... These are the timeless rants, the "my parents have wronged me" rant that feeds the pain but does not allow healing. But this is all in the past and I have moved past all of this when much is under the bridge, when I'm a parent too and "get it" better. When I am an adult with an adult relationship with you—where I understand how much pain you were going through. All those times when I thought you were distant you were crying out/trying to not be, but not knowing how. I understand and I love you.

And despite all that (or because of it) you are an amazing human being. With all your personal struggles growing up you figured out how to follow your passions in music, work hard to serve a Faith different from the one you were raised in, truly love and care for and serve every member of the human race with all of your heart. I truly learned about service from you in an amazing way. I learned that service is the KEY to what we do in everything in life, how to make people know they are welcome, how truly not to judge people based on their race, struggles, etc.... You opened your heart and home to so many who needed our family's help whether with a place to stay for months on end or with a safe haven from the world for an evening. Your love of music infused into me a deep love—the sound of your guitar will always calm my soul!

How will I live without you? You are my father who God gave me, the magical relationship that no one can replace, the one who provided for and protected me. You always pray for and love your children to the best of your ability and I understand that now. You will always be praying for, loving and protecting us no matter where you are. I love you.

~ Michelle Farnsworth Tashakor, April 28, 2009

The Angels Are Back Visiting

A few days ago, Craig invited the angels to come back again (they last visited March 30), and they have appeared on some nights. He tells me that this time they are in color. Which then told me that last time they were in black and white—not a question I thought to ask! He still did not recognize anyone. Last night, however, his friends who have already passed on, Kevin Clavin and Pleasant Montgomery, visited him throughout the night. He seemed to think they were in regular clothes when I asked, but it was clear Craig thought this was a very mundane question about something so momentous and significant!

Craig said he came close to passing over and joining them, but there was still something stopping him. He felt that part of it was expecting an important visit today from his son David. They read through some of Craig's journal entries about Dave over the years

(I compiled them while working on Craig's book), and they laughed, cried, and shared. So, very important time together.

Craig is sleeping much more and having moments of mental confusion. He struggles to remember how to paint and which silverware to use. He is mixing up names for me, his mother, his sister Nancy, and his eldest daughter Michelle. He greeted me recently with, "Good Morning, Mom!" Our communications are in shorthand, questions that take yes/no answers, and lots of guesswork. But, we are making it work as best as we can.

This afternoon was an emotional time again as our hospice music therapist Virginia "Ginny" Kallay came to visit and played the song she composed to one of Craig's poems, "Here Comes the Sun" (see poem in The Journey – Part 1). How blessed we are by such talented people accompanying us!

~ Susanne Alexander, April 28, 2009

More Angels Gather

Craig has woken up so happy these last couple of days and full of a wonderful energy. I ask him each morning how his night was and what happened. Last night he said Kevin and Pleasant visited, but also "the girls" showed up, too. There were more people than he could name or that I could identify with questions. Baha'i friends from our area (the girls) who have passed were there: Janet Weaver, Deb Cunningham, Becky Huff, and Pearl McGill.

For the first time, Craig also saw his Dad. And lots of light. I was teasing about him "partying" with the angels, but that didn't seem to be the right word. He thought "communing" was more the nature of the experience.

On the one hand, all of this is good news. I'm glad there are people waiting to greet Craig with love, and that he's headed for a positive place. On the other, it's a little bittersweet...these are signs of him moving on.

The hospice nurse today said that Craig's vital signs are still excellent, and there are no indications that his body is shutting down. Seeing the angels is not on a linear timeline...there is still no way of knowing how long Craig will stay here.

~ Susanne Alexander, April 30, 2009



Happy

I make this very happy
There's all that's happy
Happy faces
Like a pier
Outline looks like green
Boat in the water – red
Green – also a boat
Gold – also a boat
I went sailing

~ April 29, 2009



The Color Blue

This is the center
It's eaten, its good, it's a stomach
Both sides are complementary,
This one and this one
This part and this part

~April 29, 2009







CF

5-6-09





Passing of The Gathering Place Support Group Friend John Schaeffer





Here

Expansive
Started small
And grew big
Small to large
Large space

~ Craig Farnsworth, May 12, 2009



Flowing and Glowing

Flow in the pattern
Flow here and flow there
Different colors
Flowing means it's developing
Flowing patterns
Glowing and glowing
It's special
Not just patterns, it's movement
Flowing, flowing, flowing...

~ Craig Farnsworth, May 12, 2009



The Prayers: The Same

I'm done but...

The book...

Are the place that points

This belongs...

One and the same,
One and the same thing,
the same thing,
the same thing,
the same thing,

Very connected...

These are prayers...

The prayers, the same.

-Craig Farnsworth 5/15/09



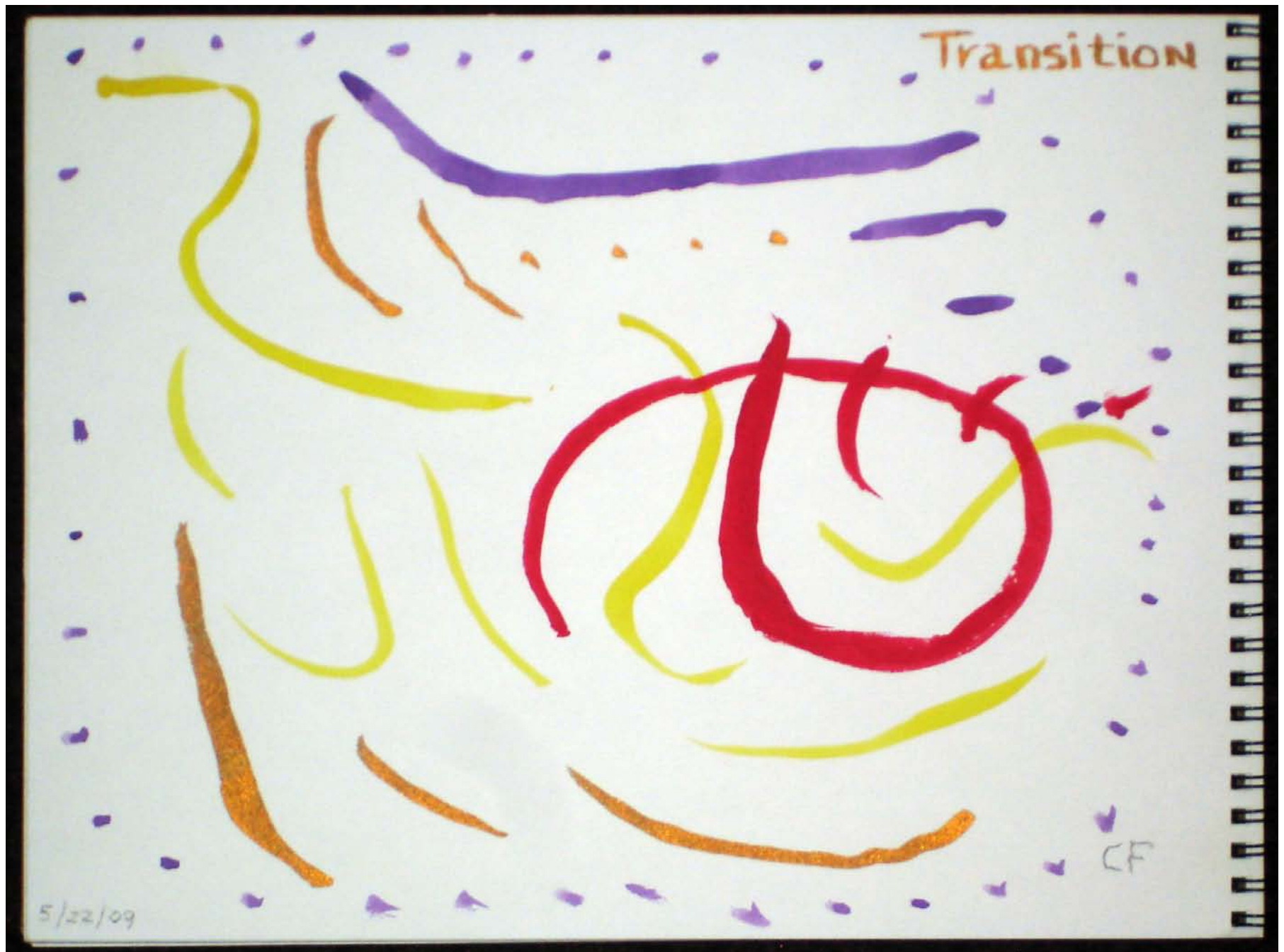
Rolling Thunder

Rolling, rolling, rolling thunder
Thunder
Lightening

~ Craig Farnsworth, May 21, 2009



Painting done for next door neighbor and good friend Frank Rodgers



Transition

I don't know when...

This is the key

Locked door

The path is unclear

But is where the lines

This is the key

Very close

Very close

They're this level of lifting out

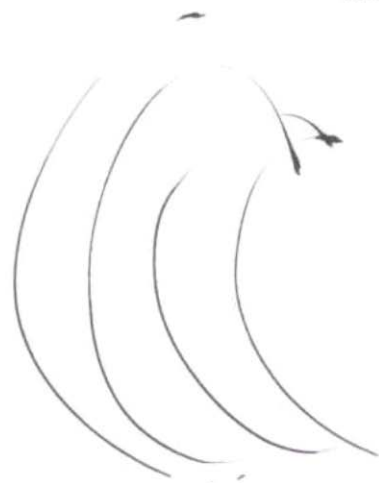
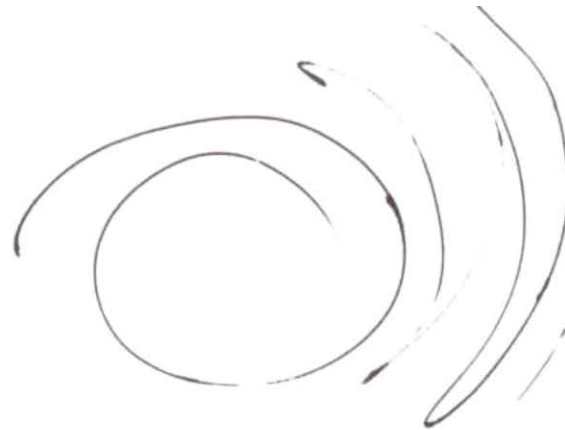
Lifting out

Lifting out

Very close

Very close

-Craig Farnsworth 5/22/09





Me Too

The angels
They left home
I want to leave home, too
Left home
And angels are helping
Being harbingers
Preparing the way

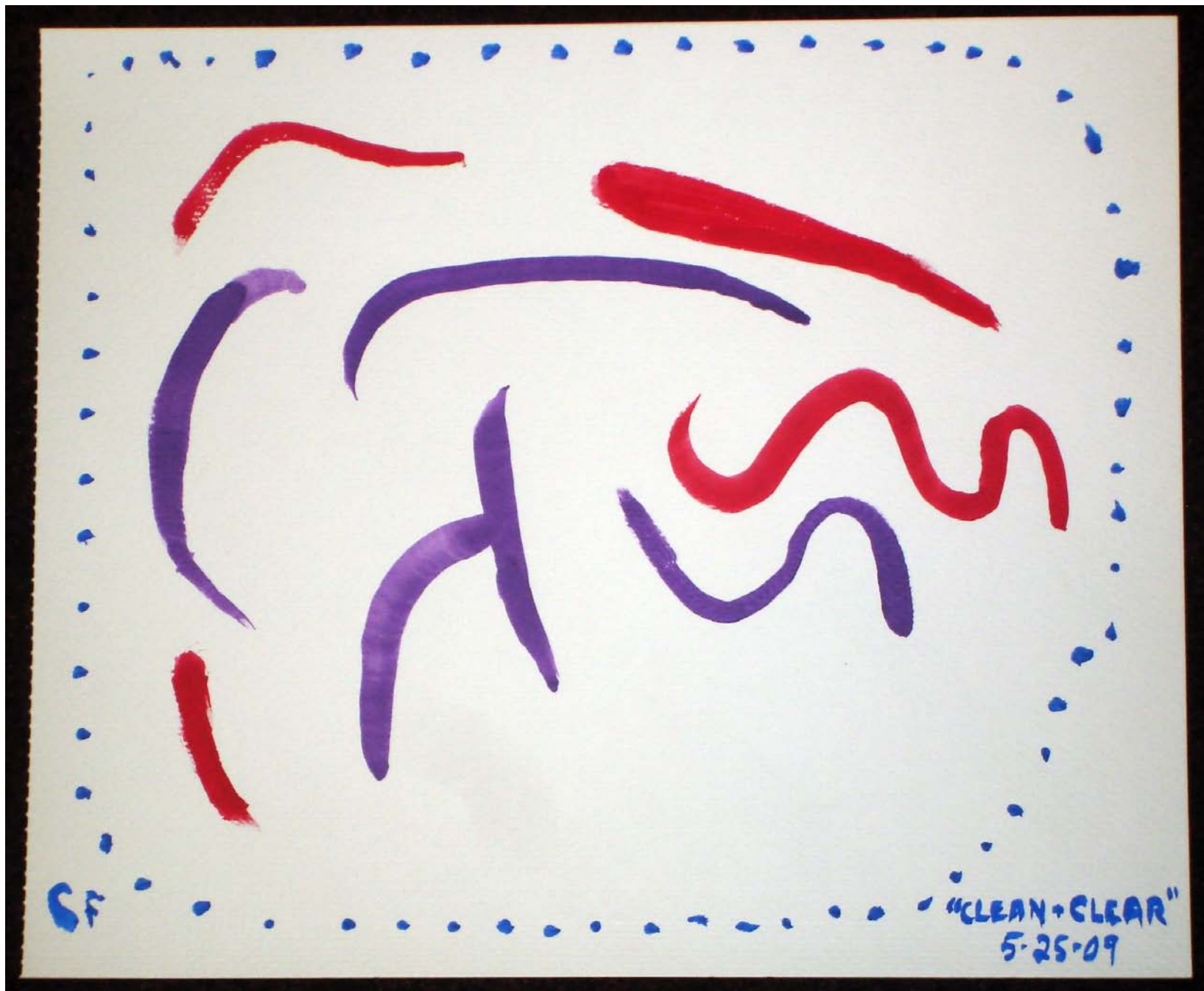
~ Craig Farnsworth, May 25, 2009



Me Too, As Well

The angels are coming from different places
Different words
Harbingers
Singing and singing in new ways

~ Craig Farnsworth, May 25, 2009



Clean and Clear

Singing beautiful
Singing clean
Singing clear
Beautiful
Clean, clean, clean

~ Craig Farnsworth, May 25, 2009



Song

We were laughing, singing

Singing the songs

Singing the songs

Singing the songs in here
Singing the songs here
Singing the songs

Singing the songs
The same thing this time

this is the song
the song also
this is the song

This is the song, this is

Yeah, this is a song

Yep, yep
This is a song

-Craig Farnsworth 5/29/09



Locking

The key

The lock

That's the other key

...the key

The sidelines

these are just there

{Is the door locked or unlocked? Susanne asks.}

Maybe there are locks in some way

unlocked in another

Maybe they're all unlocked

-Craig Farnsworth 6/5/09

Intimately ~ Touching ~

SMA 6-5-09



The ~ Dying ~ Process



Angels Singing

Next world
Angels standing all together singing
Look different than they did
There are more of them
Three different things happening
Evaluation going on

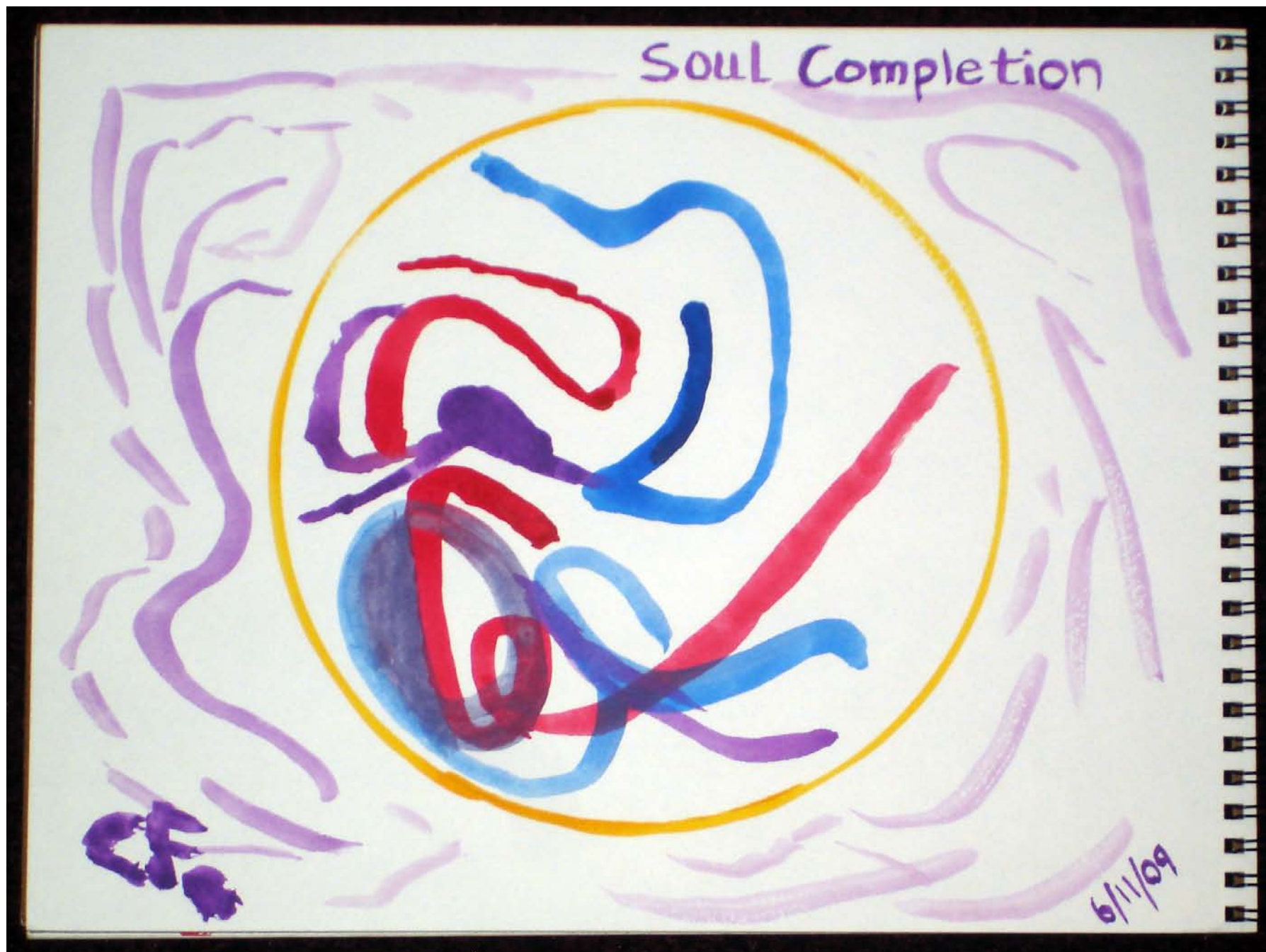
~ Craig Farnsworth, June 6, 2009

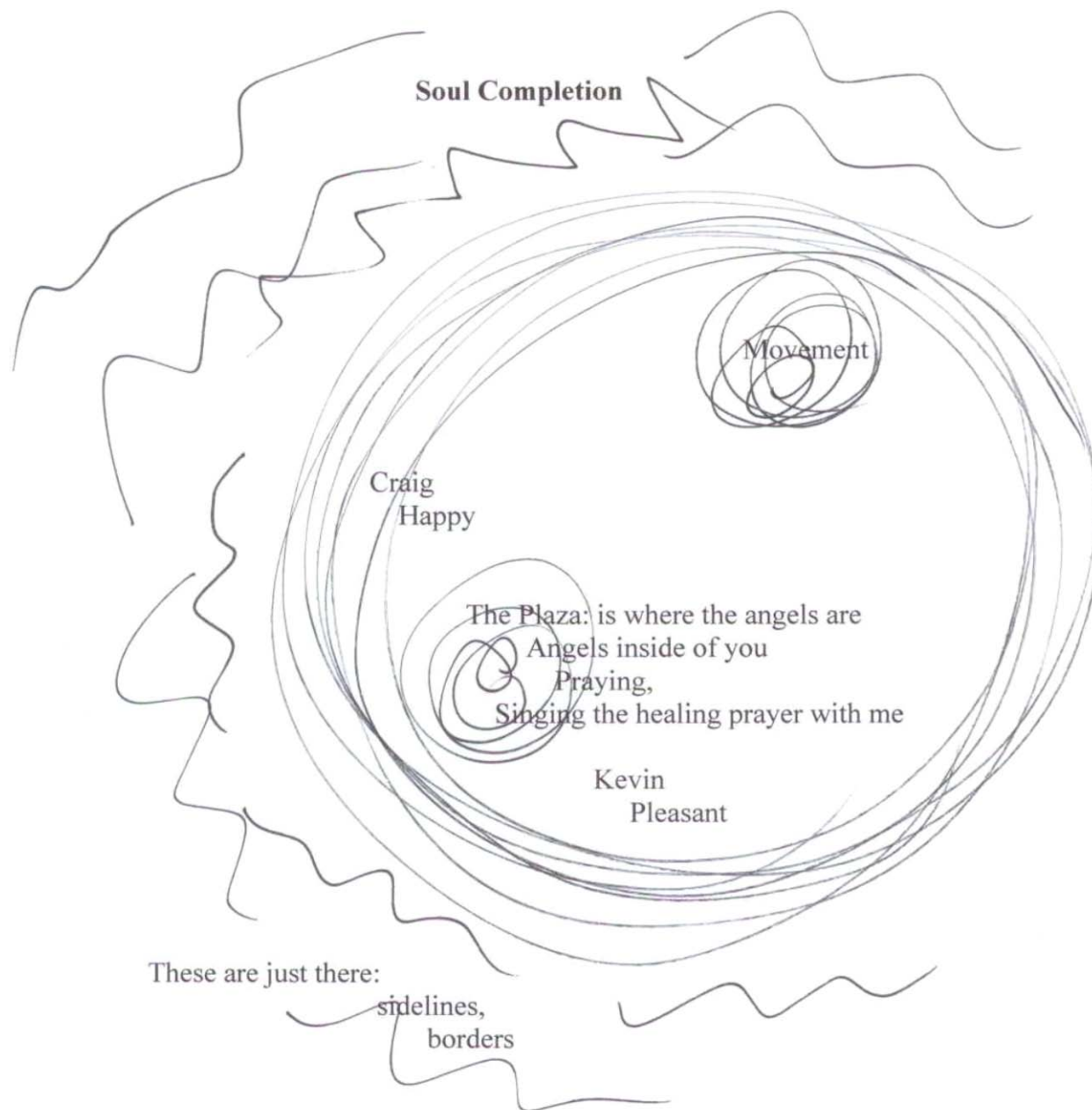


Living Up

Narrowing passageway
I'm going along it
Traveling on a river
There's a plaza, an arrival place, a compass
Traveling here, arriving there
People with me throughout history
Very nice at end, less people
More help at beginning, less at end
I'm in the middle, I want to be at the end
There are things to walk over first

~ Craig Farnsworth, June 6, 2009





-Craig Farnsworth 6/11/09

Honoring Service for Craig A. Farnsworth

November 10, 1951 to July 1, 2009

Welcome and Reading – Holly Timberlake

Three Tools of Healing - A Message from Craig

Each of you has received a copy of the Three Tools of Healing poster that has been a companion for me throughout my healing journey.

When I received the initial brain tumor diagnosis in July 2007, I took this poster with me to the hospital, along with extra copies. One copy went on the wall in my room, and the others went to medical staff, in my chart, posted at the nursing station, and to visitors. It traveled along with me and was posted on the walls of a variety of hospital and rehabilitation rooms. Each medical provider and caregiver, whether at home or elsewhere, received a copy. Friends and relatives stopping by our home took copies. I gave public talks focused on the poster's message. All in all, I gave out hundreds of copies of this inspirational message to people.

I'm convinced that practicing the "Three Tools" (medical treatment, prayer, joy & laughter) contributed to my healing, helped to sustain me through life-threatening events, enhanced the quality of my life, and extended my life. The poster inspired me, gave me hope, and sustained me throughout a challenging time. I hope it does the same for you. *Love, Craig*

[DJ] Music: "O My Servant"; The Bahá'í Chorale; **Words:** Free thyself from the fetters of this world, loose thy soul from the prison of self. Seize thy chance, seize thy chance! O my servant! Didst thou behold a sovereign immortal, thou wouldst strive to pass from this world, fleeting world, fleeting world! O my servant! O my servant! Be not content with the ease of a passing day, be not deprived of everlasting rest. Trade not the garden of eternal delight for the dust-heap of a mortal world. Up from thy prison ascend unto glory, Up from thy prison ascend unto glory, and from thy mortal cage wing thy flight, O my servant!

~ Based on Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words* (Persian section), #39, #40, and #41; music by Ravi Shankar; choral arrangement by Tom Price

A few dear friends have joined Craig and Susanne in their home and participated in a spiritual study circle using *Reflections on the Life of the Spirit*. The last section of this book was on life and death. Members of the study circle will now read quotations from these Bahá'í Writings about the soul.

Readings:

Joyce Ashman: "Know thou of a truth that the soul, after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God, in a state and condition which neither the revolution of ages and centuries, nor the changes and chances of this world, can alter. It will

endure as long as the Kingdom of God, His sovereignty, His dominion and power will endure. It will manifest the signs of God and His attributes, and will reveal His loving kindness and bounty.”

Lynn Harris: “...The honor with which the Hand of Mercy will invest the soul is such as no tongue can adequately reveal, nor any other earthly agency describe. ... The nature of the soul after death can never be described, nor is it meet and permissible to reveal its whole character to the eyes of men. The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying Their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High.”

Linda Gruenspan: “The light which these souls radiate is responsible for the progress of the world and the advancement of its peoples. They are like unto leaven which leaveneth the world of being, and constitute the animating force through which the arts and wonders of the world are made manifest. Through them the clouds rain their bounty upon men, and the earth bringeth forth its fruits.”

Vanessa Mullins: “... The world beyond is as different from this world as this world is different from that of the child while still in the womb of its mother. When the soul attaineth the Presence of God, it will assume the form that best becometh its immortality and is worthy of its celestial habitation.”

~ Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 155-157

Music: Nik Tressler and Debbie Boyd-Tressler sing a version of a Bahá'í prayer that Craig arranged to the tune of “Amazing Grace.” This song was an inspirational gift to Craig in December 1994 during the final days in the life of Kevin Clavin, his friend and coworker. It was powerful for Craig ever since, and he sang it on many occasions, including funerals. **Words:** “Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succor in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.” ~ Bahá'u'lláh, *Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 85

Reading:

Melodie Yates: Many people have memories of Craig's musical offerings of voice, guitar, and flute. Here is a Bahá'í quotation about music that Craig loved: “We, verily, have made music as a ladder for your souls, a means whereby they may be lifted up unto the realm on high....”

~ Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, para. 51, p. 38

Tribute from Spouse: Susanne M. Alexander

Music: Judy Parsley

Reading:

John Cunningham: “A friend asked: ‘How should one look forward to death?’ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá answered: “How does one look forward to the goal of any journey? With hope and with expectation. It is even so with the end of this earthly journey. In the next world, man will find himself freed from many of the disabilities under which he now suffers. Those who have passed on through death, have a sphere of their own. It is not removed from ours; their work, the work of the Kingdom, is ours; but it is sanctified from what we call ‘time and place.’ Time with us is measured by the sun. When there is no more sunrise, and no more sunset, that kind of time does not exist for man. Those who have ascended have different attributes from those who are still on earth, yet there is no real separation.

“In prayer there is a mingling of station, a mingling of condition. Pray for them as they pray for you! When you do not know it, and are in a receptive attitude, they are able to make suggestions to you, if you are in difficulty. This sometimes happens in sleep.”

~ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London*, p. 96

Reading:

Matt Dunlop: “The words, the deeds, the attitudes, the lack of prejudice, the nobility of character, the high sense of service to others—in a word, those qualities and actions which distinguish a Bahá’í must unfailingly characterize their inner life and outer behavior, and their interactions with friend or foe.”

~ Universal House of Justice, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 637

Tribute from Children: Michelle Tashakor, David Farnsworth, and Leah Farnsworth present a photo slide show and eulogy

Reading: **Nancy (Farnsworth) Tolles, Craig’s sister**

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. The earth is the Lord’s, ... and they that dwell therein. ... Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. ... Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty.... Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.”

~ *King James Bible*, Excerpts from Psalms 23-25

Music: “Amazing Grace”; **Holly Tolles** (flute) and **Zack Tolles** (guitar)

Prayer:

Marj McCabe: The following prayer helped Craig to stay steadfast in faith, and reminded him as he was losing the ability to speak that prayer is more than words:

“Make firm our steps, O Lord, in Thy path and strengthen Thou our hearts in Thine obedience. Turn our faces toward the beauty of Thy oneness, and gladden our bosoms with the signs of Thy divine unity. Adorn our bodies with the robe of Thy bounty, and remove from our eyes the veil of sinfulness, and give us the chalice of Thy grace; that the essence of all beings may sing Thy praise before the vision of Thy grandeur. Reveal then Thyself, O Lord, by Thy merciful utterance and the mystery of Thy divine being, that the holy ecstasy of prayer may fill our souls—a prayer that shall rise above words and letters and transcend the murmur of syllables and sounds—that all things may be merged into nothingness before the revelation of Thy splendor.

“Lord! These are servants that have remained fast and firm in Thy Covenant and Thy Testament, that have held fast unto the cord of constancy in Thy Cause and clung unto the hem of the robe of Thy grandeur. Assist them, O Lord, with Thy grace, confirm them with Thy power and strengthen their loins in obedience to Thee.

“Thou art the Pardoner, the Gracious.”

~ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í Prayers*, pp. 69-70

Reading:

Ban Twaddell: “The fleeting hours of man’s life on earth pass swiftly by and the little that still remaineth shall come to an end, but that which endureth and lasteth for evermore is the fruit that man reapeth from his servitude at the Divine Threshold.” ~ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 234

Reading:

Nevin Jenkins: A few years ago, Craig wrote down a statement of the purpose of his life. He stated it as follows: “The purpose of my life is to be a loving servant-leader. This is my calling. This is my life. The values at the heart of who I am are: service, generosity, inspiration, dependability, compassion, community-building, hospitality, and steadfastness. What I can be counted on for is: listening with compassion, speaking encouragement, and acting with integrity and service.” As Craig neared the end of his life, he stated that how he wished others to remember him was that, “He lived to serve...”

Tribute from Friends: Nik Tressler and Debbie Boyd-Tressler

Music: **Ginny Kallay**; Craig’s poetry and her music compositions

Prayer for the Departed:

Rick Eastburn: “O my God! O my God! Verily, thy servant, humble before the majesty of Thy divine supremacy, lowly at the door of Thy oneness, hath believed in Thee and in Thy verses, hath testified to Thy word, hath been enkindled with the fire of Thy love, hath been immersed in

the depths of the ocean of Thy knowledge, hath been attracted by Thy breezes, hath relied upon Thee, hath turned his face to Thee, hath offered his supplications to Thee, and hath been assured of Thy pardon and forgiveness. He hath abandoned this mortal life and hath flown to the kingdom of immortality, yearning for the favor of meeting Thee.

“O Lord, glorify his station, shelter him under the pavilion of Thy supreme mercy, cause him to enter Thy glorious paradise, and perpetuate his existence in Thine exalted rose garden, that he may plunge into the sea of light in the world of mysteries.

“Verily, Thou art the Generous, the Powerful, the Forgiver and the Bestower.” ~ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í Prayers*, pp. 44-46

Memory Sharing – When Was Craig of Service to You?

- Family (first)
- Friends (following)

Farewell Recording from Craig

[DJ] Craig’s farewell message (pre-recorded)

Please Sing: Craig was well-known, especially among the Youth, for singing the song below. He pre-recorded it (along with Judy Parsley) and requests that you all please join in singing it.

[DJ] We Shall Not Fail

We shall not fail, we shall not fail

Please God we may achieve it, we shall not fail

We’ll go on foot, we’ll go on foot

Please God we may achieve it, we shall not fail

Cities and towns, cities and towns

Please God we may achieve it, we shall not fail

We’ll raise the call, we’ll raise the call

Please God we may achieve it, we shall not fail

Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá, Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá

Please God we may achieve it, we shall not fail

This we can do, this we can do

Please God we may achieve it, we shall not fail

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Please God we may achieve it, we shall not fail

We shall not fail, we shall not fail

Please God we may achieve it, we shall not fail

The Life of Craig A. Farnsworth

Craig Farnsworth was born in New Brighton, Pennsylvania, to Robert (Bob) and Lucille (Lu) Farnsworth on November 10, 1951. He was their first child, but his sister, Nancy, joined him 18 months later.

Craig attended high school in Chagrin Falls and then graduated from high school in Philadelphia in 1970. He attended Hiram College, graduating with bachelor’s degrees in Elementary Education and Applied Physics. While there, he played saxophone in the Jazz Band and managed a coffee shop as a volunteer. He sang and played guitar in the Hiram Road Show, a group of Bahá’í musicians. Craig later took coursework through Landmark Education in personal and community transformation, as well as training to be a marriage educator/coach.

Craig first encountered the Bahá’í Faith at his early church home, Federated Church in Chagrin Falls, where Bahá’ís Pleasant Montgomery and Arlene Nedd (now Green) visited his Sunday School class. He became a Bahá’í during his time at Hiram through interactions with Mary Jane Barbee (now Volkmann) and Marj McCabe.

Craig married Lynn McClive in 1975 at Green Acre Bahá’í School, in Eliot, Maine, where they were both working. They later moved to Northeast Ohio. They had three children, Michelle (1976), David (1978), and Leah (1981). Michelle married Hooman Tashakor and later had Craig’s first grandchild, Karida, who is now five years old. David married Christina Faught, and they have a two-year old son, Aidan.

Craig married Susanne Alexander in 1999 in Akron, Ohio. He then gained stepdaughter Jennifer (Coates) DeMaria, who is married to Frank DeMaria. Susanne and Craig committed to do their best to create a strong, happy family and to make an adventure out of most anything. They agreed to coach one another through personal healing and growth, with a great deal of success. One of Craig’s children referred to him as a “born-again father”.

After four years as an elementary school teacher, Craig gained long-term employment with AGA Research as a research engineer, project manager, and program manager. He developed new appliances and achieved six patents during that time. He then went into technical sales, first with Tridelta Industries and later with Radix Wire Company in 2000. Throughout Craig’s employment, he maintained a high level of commitment

to customer service and satisfaction, to excellence, and to keeping his managers informed. Together with Susanne, he founded Marriage Transformation LLC, a company that offers relationship and marriage coaching and materials. He helped create books, but he primarily served as the company's business and distribution manager. He co-presented workshops in the U.S., Canada, and China with Susanne.

Music was a significant passion for Craig. He played the guitar for children, youth, and adults at many Bahá'í gatherings. He collected flutes and often played them for others. He raised his voice in song at choir concerts, prayer meetings, events, funerals, and gatherings of all types. A highlight was being able to sing with the 400+ member Voices of Bahá choir on the stage at Carnegie Hall in 2002.

Craig's commitment was to make a difference for others—"He lived to serve". Below is a list of many of the ways he participated in service. Building community and bringing diverse people together in unity was Craig's passion.

Craig Farnsworth - A Lifetime of Service

Dates	Service
1963	Participant in the Children's International Summer Villages program with international students, where Craig gained a foundation in building relationships with diverse people and gained an international outlook (Germany)
1971-1974	Volunteer manager for "The Cell", a coffee house/gathering place, with music, at Hiram College
1971-1974	Saxophone player in the Hiram Jazz Band and singer/guitar player in the Bahá'í music group called Hiram Road Show at Hiram College
1974	Teacher of children's classes and provider of music for devotions at Green Acre Bahá'í School (Maine)
1970's-2000's	Adult mentor to many youth and young adults
1970's-2000's	Volunteer Blood Donor, American Red Cross - VIP Hero
1984-2006	Member of School Board for Crimson Ark Bahá'í School; children's class teacher; singer for devotions/sing-a-longs
1988-2007	Member of the steering committee of the International Appliance Technical Conference, and Conference Chair of it in 1994

1980's	Maintenance Volunteer, Louhelen Bahá'í School (Michigan)
1980's-2007	Member Bahá'í District Teaching Committee; Member/chair Unit Convention Planning Team; Institute Coordinator
1980's-2009	Helper to others through loaning vehicles, moving furniture, and providing computer support and hospitality
1990	Participant in a Bahá'í teaching trip to Poland
1991-2004	Member of Planning Team for Midwinter Bahá'í Youth Conference; teacher; morning rouser; broom pusher; workshop leader; coordinator of youth service projects, sayer of "Goodnight you wonderful young people", and doer of anything else that needed to be done
1991-2000	Member of Bahá'í Choir of Northeast Ohio; sang and played duets with Judy Parsley, including for the Celebrate the Covenant conference in 1998 in Sarnia, Ontario
~1993	Charter member of the Unity and Diversity Council of the Chagrin Valley
1993-2002	Member of Voices of Bahá international choir; participated in Heartland tour in 1995; sang in Carnegie Hall in 2002
1993-2001	Facilitator of Honest Conversations Diversity Training in Chagrin Valley and Euclid; member of planning team for Race Unity Multicultural festivities in Chagrin Falls
1995-1999	Member of planning team for race unity activities, Chagrin Park, Chagrin Falls
1999	Moved to Euclid to strengthen its Bahá'í community
1999-2006	Workshop assistant; Coach for Self-Expression and Leadership course for Landmark Education
1999-2009	Chairman, Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Euclid and Bahá'í Group of Euclid
2000-2003	Member of planning teams for Race Unity Day in Euclid, including honoring Mayor Oyaski in 2000
2000-2004	Member of Executive Council of the Interfaith Suburban Action Coalition
2000-2004	Member and Secretary of Board of Trustees of Euclid Community Concerns, a civic organization

	addressing fair housing and community relations issues and working with neighborhood associations
2001-2002	Participant in the Leadership Euclid Program through the Euclid Chamber of Commerce
2001-2009	Tutor/Facilitator of Study Circles for Bahá'í Faith courses open to interfaith participants
2003	Member of Planning Team for United Nations International Day of Peace, Euclid
2003-2008	Data Manager for Bahá'í Faith, Cuyahoga County
2003-2008	Relationship/Marriage coach, co-leader of relationship and marriage workshops in USA, Canada, and China
2005-2006	President, Board of Directors, Better Together (formerly Cleveland Marriage Coalition)
2006-2007	Participant in Interfaith Thanksgiving Services in Euclid
2007-2008	Member, BRIDGES (Building Racial Interaction—Dialogue, Growth, Education, Solutions) steering committee and diversity committee in Euclid
2007-2008	VP of Membership, Positively Speaking Toastmasters Group in Beachwood
2007-2008	Participant in genetic brain tumor studies
2008-2009	Secretary, East Beverly Hills Neighborhood Association in Euclid

Craig was diagnosed with a Glioblastoma Multiforme brain tumor in the summer of 2007. He went through cancer treatments, diet changes, surgeries, and hospitalizations. He declared that he was going to be an exceptional cancer patient (www.ecap-online.org). Throughout the experience, Craig's loving spirit and positive attitude inspired and touched the hearts and lives of everyone. He said that the journey through responding to the diagnosis caused him to deepen his appreciation for and connection to God.

Helping Craig Continue Growing and Serving

Question: Through what means will the spirit of man, that is to say, the rational soul, after departing from this mortal world, make progress?

Answer: **The progress of man's spirit in the divine world, after the severance of its connection with the body of dust, is through the bounty and grace of the Lord alone, or through the intercession and the sincere prayers of other human souls, or through the charities and important good works which are performed in its name.** ~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 240

Thank You For Your Generosity!

We believe that charitable acts done in honor of someone who dies helps their soul in the next world. If you are moved to make a donation, Craig requests that you consider the following organizations.

Bahá'ís (only) may donate in honor of Craig Farnsworth to:

Bahá'í National Fund
Bahá'í National Treasurers Office
1233 Central Street
Evanston, IL 60201
www.bahai.us

Anyone may wish to donate in honor of Craig Farnsworth to his and Susanne's cancer support center (envelopes available in back of room):

The Gathering Place
23300 Commerce Park
Beachwood, Ohio 44122
Online Donations: www.touchedbycancer.org

Donations can also be made for research through the:

National Brain Tumor Society
East Coast Office
124 Watertown Street, Suite 2D
Watertown, MA 02472
www.braintumor.org/fdonate/

Our Appreciation

Thank you to the many, many people who generously gave thoughtful service to Craig and Susanne and prayed for them and their family throughout Craig's healing journey. They have felt well-accompanied! We welcome your ongoing prayers for Craig's soul and the healing of the family.

Pallbearers

Dave Farnsworth, Bob Tolles, Zack Tolles, Hooman Tashakor, Bob Horn, and Dave Leonard

Recessional Music: Craig's songs played by Kathleen Mylecraine

Funeral Tribute to Craig – July 2, 2009

By his wife Susanne M. Alexander

When the sun of someone's life sets in this world and rises in the next one, we realize that each of us knew the person in different ways. For me, Craig has the soul of a jazz man. He often heard melody when others heard noise. He would take the contradiction of notes or disunity between people and blend them together for harmony. When improvising, Craig's music was "free form." Sometimes he would sing according to the notes in the songbook; other times he would follow his own tune. Or, as his friend and fellow singer Nik Tressler would say, Craig would sometimes simply stop singing and nap!

Craig's poetry was beautiful and heartfelt, often vulnerable and amazingly honest. But, it rarely rhymed. His artwork had moments of realism, but was usually abstract and full of movement. When doing dishes, he would often create new and interesting places to put things away. Sometimes he would slow down and listen intently. Other times, he absolutely couldn't sit still or walk slowly. He was always a mix of notes and melodies.

People looked at Craig and saw a calm, peaceful gentle-man. But underneath, he yearned for adventure. His spiritual heroes were Mulla Husayn and Quddus, steadfast early Bahá'ís who wielded swords in battle and didn't back down from difficulty or danger. He wanted to float above the earth in a hot air balloon seeing new vistas. He wanted to scuba dive beneath the sea. He talked often of wishing he lived in the time of the explorers and could sail around the world. He once lauded the captains of these ships by saying, "It took courage to sail the open seas, running down the swells with the wind at your back." The posters I found that reminded me of Craig's adventuring spirit have been on the walls of his bedroom the last few months and are here on display for you all to see. During the last months when we reviewed Craig's lifetime personal transformation journey, I became clear that over time he learned to courageously captain his own ship and rely on God to guide the way. His life became a symphony of spiritual triumph.

As with music, Craig and I often had separate lines of melody. But, put together we created a wonderful harmony in our marriage. Craig and I have been clear throughout our marriage that one of our strengths was starting out as friends, and having our friendship helped to sustain us through good times and difficult ones. We learned how to communicate and consult effectively about choices, projects, books, finances, and problems. We focused on building family relationships. We balanced and enhanced each other's contributions to others. Our marriage partnership included creating the Marriage Transformation Project together, something that is benefiting thousands of relationships around the planet. A profound, life-changing experience for us was being able to go on pilgrimage together to the Bahá'í holy places in Israel in 2006. We laid our foreheads together on the thresholds of all three Shrines. The spiritual reverberations from that time have significantly influenced and sustained us during Craig's illness.

In the months prior to Craig's passing, we had the experience of being partners in planning this honoring service. Extraordinary and creative projects emerged out of our open discussions about his soul's journey, about what would honor his contributions to the world, and about what legacy to leave for his family, friends, and others. With the help of many people, we were able to collect Craig's recorded voice raised in song and create a CD. We compiled Craig's poetry, artwork, and written words for both display and a book about his lifetime journey of personal

transformation. Finally, we created a book entitled “Empowered Healing: Creating Quality of Life While Journeying with Cancer”. It has been a profoundly moving and amazing experience for me accompanying Craig on this last stage of his journey on earth.

Craig was honored, but also somewhat embarrassed, as I began collecting and listing his lifetime of service accomplishments...and I probably missed a few that only you know about. Craig followed Bahá'u'lláh's guidance to “be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in” (*Gleanings*, p. 213). When I asked him what types of service to others he really wanted to do, he always said he preferred to build things or dig ditches. Friends often remember him for his willingness to lend a hand, a vehicle, or a place to sleep for the night, week, or month. But, his list of service accomplishments more often shows him sitting in meetings and building relationships. He passionately wanted to make a difference with achieving what Bahá'u'lláh refers to as having the “entire human race as one soul and one body.” (*Gleanings*, p. 214) Building community, fostering positive interracial friendships, serving on executive boards...Craig adjusted his melody to steadfastly create unity. He felt that he lived to serve others.

Craig often helped me by modeling this quotation from the Bahá'í Writings: “Beware lest ye harm any soul, or make any heart to sorrow; lest ye wound any man with your words, be he known to you or a stranger, be he friend or foe.” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 73) He often influenced me to take a kinder, gentler approach to other people. Craig was committed to knowing our neighbors and being on peaceful and friendly terms with them. His philosophy was “Can’t we all just get along?” He did his best to create good wherever he went and help others whenever he could. Our neighbor Frank, who became a good friend, said truthfully about him, “Craig doesn’t have a bad bone in his body.”

Marriages built on unity and love last for all eternity, and I’m confident Craig’s soul and mine are linked forever. It will be a unique and interesting experience in the time to come to learn what it’s like to be married to someone who is spiritually with me but not physically present. I know that he will continue to be my guardian and champion wherever he is, and that he will watch over and continue to influence all the members of our blended family. I pray that God will bless his soul in the next world with abiding happiness. Farewell, sweetheart!

This book is a publication of the Marriage Transformation Social Action Project, founded by Craig A. Farnsworth and Susanne M. Alexander. Contact information for the project is: susanne@marriagetransformation.com; www.marriagetransformation.com; www.bahaimarriage.net. Kindly check with us before using this book for any purpose other than personal reading.

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Susanne M. Alexander, Relationship & Marriage Coach
President, Marriage Transformation LLC

PLEASE CONTACT US

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