



The Circle

Volume XIX Issue 2 Winter 2010

Weaving our Stories...

"We constantly weave life events into narrative and interpret everything that happens through the veil of story. From our smallest, most personal challenges to global issues that affect nations and generations, we make the world fit into the story we are already carrying. This unceasing interplay between experience and narrative is a uniquely human attribute. We are the storytellers, the ones who put life into words." - Christina Baldwin, Storycatcher

Across cultures and across time, stories have been a part of our universal human experience. From our birth to our death, stories -those of our own and those of others— become the framework within which we explore, define and communicate our beliefs and values. They become vehicles through which we can imagine new possibilities and through which we find meaning in our existence.

When we are young and still unconscious that we are amid our own unfolding narrative, stories are often told to us to impart the wisdom and beliefs of our family, our ancestors and our society. From fantastical tales to simple anecdotes, it is a tool that helps to explain the certainties and the mysteries within life.

As we age, the stories deepen and become more complex. We begin to understand that we each play an active role in the creation of our own personal story: we are the authors of our own lives and therefore, we need to be conscious of the kind of story we are writing for ourselves. We also become conscious that we each play a unique part in the collective human story.

It is important to be aware and cautious of the stories we are using to reflect our experience of existence, and more importantly, to define what is possible for the story yet to come. Until our present generation, many of our shared stories were an attempt to relate knowledge within a spiritual, historical or moral context— stories from our religious texts such as the Bible, the Torah or the Koran; from fables, fairy tales or mythological cycles; from our ancestors own life experiences. Regardless of how we view the morality within these tales today, they were created and woven from a consciousness that attempted to impart a deeper sense of meaning than the tale at the surface. In our current culture, many of our stories are brought to us from the media, through television, movies and music, often without any consciousness whatsoever. We have created a new sort of pop culture mythology that boasts a shiny surface but offers a vacant depth.

At the same time, we have entered into an exciting, and yet dangerous stage in our global story. We are amid the time of the cliffhanger...where our story is on the brink of a momentous turn. There are many of us who are wondering about and attempting to influence how the story will unfold when we turn the collective page. Will we turn the page into a new era of compassion and peace...or will war and our nuclear arsenal change the story forever? Will global warming and its consequences define our human narrative... or will we begin a new chapter that changes how we live upon the earth? Will rising religious fundamentalism wipe out all but a few sanctioned stories or will we enter an era where we share our spiritual sagas, honouring their differences and diversity, while recognizing that



they all emerge from the universal tome of the sacred? What story do you wish to be a part of?

It is time we begin to edit and rewrite our present human story, so we ensure that our

understanding is filled with possibilities and potential. It is time for us to seek, to share and to create stories that will help us recognize that life can be filled with meaning, adventure, complexity and harmony. It is time to feed on stories that will nourish us with a sense of the extraordinary range of human capability, and reveal ourselves as creatures of power, compassion, nobility, and joy. Now is the time to emerge into a story of hope.



Being a Blessing on the Earth

Stories and tips for inspiring action:

🌱 **A Homegrown Revolution!** Can you change the world, starting in your own backyard? A family in Pasadena, California have shown it's possible. The Dervaes family—Jules, Justin Anais, and Jordanne—transformed their regular city lot, surrounded by urban sprawl, into an “urban homestead”. Through time and hard work, they were able to remineralize their depleted soil and now grow 99% of their produce. Inspired by that success, they moved on to other aspects of sustainable living such as energy. They have harnessed solar power for two thirds of all their activities and created a homebrew of bio-diesel fuel to run their cars. Find out more about their processes and what you can do at: pathoffreedom.com

🎬 **Reel-y Powerful!** According to MNN - the Mother Nature Network- the following films are their choices for the top 10 eco-films of the year. These documentaries examine everything from the negative effects of the American agriculture system to leading a zero-impact lifestyle.

1. **The Cove**...exposing the tragic slaughter of thousands of dolphins due to Japanese fishing practices.
2. **Food, Inc.**...giving you an unflattering view of the industrial meat business in the US.
3. **Fuel**...examining our global oil addiction and the powerful companies who control it.

4. **No Impact Man**...chronicling one man's journey to create a zero impact lifestyle.

5. **Thirst**...revealing the escalating struggle over the world's water .

6. **The Garden**...documenting one Los Angeles neighbourhood's fight to keep their community garden from being bulldozed by developers.

7. **Crude**...examining the decades long battle between the indigenous people of the Ecuadorian Amazon and oil giant Chevron.

8. **Frontlined: "Poisoned Waters"** ...an indepth look into the pollution of US waterways. Bonus! Watch it for free at this link: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/poisonedwaters/view/>

9. **A Snowmobile for George**...a quest to understand why G.W. Bush reversed regulations that would have banned super-polluting two-stroke snowmobiles...revealing the enormous consequences that can occur just from one small rule change.

10. **Garbage Dreams**...follows the lives of 3 Zaballeen (Arabic for “garbage people”) whose livelihood, sorting and recycling the trash of the 18 million residents of Cairo is threatened when the city decides to privatize its garbage services.

For more information, please visit www.mnn.com



The Circle's Founder Honoured with Person's Day Award

This year, in honour of the 80th anniversary of The Person's Case, the Women's Events Committee of London (a collaborative organisation made up of representatives from labour, education, faith, anti-violence, counselling, and other woman-focused groups, individuals, agencies and organizations) awarded 5 women in

London with their own “Famous Five” Person's Day Award, including Circle Founder Patricia McLean, osu.

Person's Day commemorates the ruling that women are 'persons' under the law. The 'famous five' feminist women, including Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney and Nellie McClung, were trailblazers for the rights of many women in Canada and the women who have followed after them.

The five women who received London's Famous Five Awards were honoured for the significant contributions to the women of this city as first wave feminists, leaders and mentors. The other recipients of this award included Jane Bigelow, former Mayor of London, Ontario; Winn Whitfield, activist and women's herstorian; Kem Murch, feminist filmmaker; and Dr. Mary McKim, psychiatrist specializing in women's mental health.

Patty was honoured not only for her tremendous efforts in founding The Circle and serving as our director for 15 years, but for her numerous contributions to women's issues , such as:

- 🌀 As professor at Brescia University College, she taught a course (that she designed) in feminist spirituality and impacting the lives of many students who ventured to explore, academically and personally, the evolution of women's relationship with the Divine and the Sacred.
- 🌀 Redefining authority within the Ursuline Community and being a part of their leadership team. This resulted in a more complex, but more inclusive, process for decision-making that honours the richness in collaboration and multiple perspectives.
- 🌀 Founding member of the Women's Events Committee
- 🌀 Founding member of Finders Keepers
- 🌀 Etc., etc., etc.!

Congratulations Patty from all of us at The Circle! We continue to be nourished by your visionary creation of a safe space for women to: explore our own experiences of the sacred, expand our consciousness around feminism and women's issues, tell our stories, connect our personal to the political, and nurture our relationship with the earth.



On Our Shelves...

Enjoy these and other books in our library collection.
Circle member loan period: 2 months

The Lovely Bones

By Alice Sebold

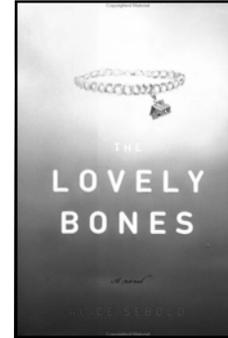
Little, Brown and Company 2002
(Motion Picture Release....15 January 2010)

Reviewed by Jill Payne

In Alice Sebold's mesmerising novel, *The Lovely Bones*, Sebold creates a space called the In-between where the raped and murdered protagonist, fourteen year old Susie Salmon, watches the reactions of her family, classmates, and neighbours on earth to the aftermath of her murder. From the In-between, Susie explains her frustration about the inability to tell her family about her murderer while the unknowing residents of Susie's suburb and high school deal with their pain by breaking and creating relationships. However, she is also captivated by her ability to see everything from her place where she can ask for her every desire.

Susie's views and comments of earth portray the often unfair life circumstances that happen daily. As her family tries to come to terms with the loss of their daughter and sister, Susie wants to ease their pain as her family tries to remember or fight against her memory to try to recreate the normalcy that existed before her murder. While Susie's father is consumed by the need to receive justice for the loss of his daughter, her mother re-examines her life, her sister hides her pain, and her brother feels Susie's presence and is comforted by it.

Love and pain are felt intensely throughout the novel, as the book begins with unimaginable pain and horror and ends with the presence of hope, forgiveness, and love. Sebold's novel is a fascinating creation that will keep you reading until the last word.



New Books on our Shelves:

Fiction:

Travelling with Pomegranates: A Mother-Daughter Story by Sue Monk Kidd and Ann Kidd Taylor
Still Alice by Lisa Genova
Her Fearful Symmetry by Audrey Niffenegger

Non Fiction:

Women of the Way: Discovering 2500 Years of Buddhist Wisdom by Sallie Tisdale
World as Lover, World as Self by Joanna Macy
On the Edge of Dream: The Women of Celtic Myth and Legend by Jennifer Heath

MORE Than Just a Fundraiser!



The Circle would like to express our sincerest thanks to the *many* volunteers who gave their time to help out with our More Than Just a Book Sale. This fundraiser would not be possible without you! At the same time, we are deeply grateful for all those who supported this fundraiser through book donations, spreading the word about the sale and by attending (and spending your money at!) the event.

We are happy to report that we raised **\$4472.87** for The Circle's programs and resources!

Call for submissions for The Circle's 20th anniversary special edition!

In honour of The Circle's 20th anniversary, we will be producing a special edition of our Circle Newsletter. Please share with us your thoughts, memories, reflections (maximum 150 words) and/or pictures of:

- ★ Your favourite Circle events/memories
- ★ Your experience volunteering for The Circle
- ★ What The Circle has meant to you and your life
- ★ Why you think it is important for a centre like The Circle to exist.
- ★ Exploring women, the sacred & ritual

Please email your writings and/or pictures to circle@uwo.ca OR send them by post to The Circle at Brescia, 1285 Western Road, London, Ont. N6G 1H2. **New Deadline: Monday 1st March 2010**

NOTE:

1. All submissions/pictures will become the property of The Circle Women's Centre; 2. The Circle reserves the right to edit submissions before publication. 3. Pictures and writings that do not make it into The Circle newsletter, may be used on a special 20th anniversary page on our website. 4. Digital pictures can be sent in .jpeg or .gif formats.

The Circle



The Circle affirms the experiences and hopes of women, and the creative process we choose to explore and mirror the sacred in our lives.

The Circle is a space that can be entered actively and imaginatively with limitless possibilities for involvement, where the seed of the sacred is released, shared and celebrated as power for transformation and change.

Planning Circle

Frances Abley
Carolyn Corcoran
Caroll Halford
Sheila Horrell
Brenda Hutton
Tracy Kelly
Julie Lee
Paula Marcotte
Kim Young Milani

Editorial Circle

Jennifer Hanke
Karen Huiberts
Jennifer White
Kim Young Milani

Dynamikos

Frances Abley
Jo-Ann Crandall
Mary Hagan
Karen Huiberts
Tracy Kelly
Julie Lee
Kristine Young
Kim Young Milani
Elizabeth Zarnoweicki

Brigid Circle

Frances Abley
Cheryl Ebel
Andrea Eichholzer
Ruth Douthwright
Ardath Finnbogason-Hill
Mary Hagan
Pat Mooney
Jennifer White
Kim Young Milani

Upcoming Events at The Circle...



Your membership is important to us - please renew!



Open Circle

...ritual, spirituality, activism and the mystical experience of women gathered to reflect on the sacred in our lives. Last Wednesday of the month, Merici Lounge, Brescia, 7:30 p.m. Members: free, Non-members: \$2. **All Women Welcome!**

- 27 January** **An Illustrated Herstory Tour for St. Angela: Brescia University College, 1919-2009** with Dr. Pat Skidmore. (** NOTE: This event will take place in the Brescia Auditorium . For more information, see the event notice below).
- 24 February** **Explore the Power of Gratitude** - Experience peacefulness and relaxation throughout your body, mind and spirit during this evening of guided meditation, and explore the power of gratitude as we offer it to our body and to all aspects of our life. Facilitated by Datri from The Happy Monks.
- 31 March** **Write from the Well: Exploring Sacred Poetry** - This interactive evening will explore the power of poetry to connect us with spirit and Self. We will use various poetry processes to make meaning, find insight and share our creativity. Facilitated by Jennifer Hanke.



Thursday 21 January 2010, 7:30pm

Luminous Entrance

A Eco-poetic Sound Opera for Climate Change Action
Featuring Penn Kemp, Brenda McMorro, Ruth Douthwright and Jocelyn Drainie

Join us for a participatory performance of the Sound Opera, Luminous Entrance. Penn Kemp's Eco-Poetry has been set to the folk-inspired melodies of musician/composer Brenda McMorro; with dancer Ruth Douthwright and percussionist Jocelyn Drainie. In paeans of praise or rant, dance, drumming & sound, together we celebrate our dear MotherWorld's enChantments! Visit our website for more information!

Cost at the Door: \$15.00 OR **\$12.00 for Circle Members**, Seniors, Students and the Under-Employed

Brescia Auditorium, Free Parking



Wednesday 27 January 2010, 7:30 pm

An Illustrated Herstory Tour for St. Angela

Brescia University College, 1919-2009

With Dr. Pat Skidmore, A Sophia Series Event

Building, celebrating, learning, sharing, laughing, growing – Brescia's people have always cherished: individuals, women's education, beauty, gentleness, nonconformity and the efficacy of persuasion. Join Dr. Pat Skidmore as she takes the spirit of St. Angela Merici on a pictorial tour of Brescia. Weaving 90 years of Brescia's history throughout photos, pictures and story...the evening promises a few surprises and explains a near-century of affection. (*This event will also serve as January's Open Circle).

Brescia Auditorium, by Donation, Free Parking

...and beyond

10 February - **5-Week Meditation Course "First Sphere"** facilitated by The Happy Monks. Five consecutive Wed. evenings beginning on 10 Feb. through to 10 March) 7.00 - 10.00 pm, \$395.00. Info: 519-495-2634 or info@thehappymonks.com

26-28 February - **Silent Directed Retreat**, Medaille Retreat House, Fri. at 7pm to Sun at 1pm. \$165.00. Info: 519-641-1379 or medaille@csj.london.on.ca

27 March - **Cosmology, Ecology & Justice** facilitated by Drew Dellinger & based on the work of Thomas Berry & Martin Luther King Jr. Ecology Villa, Ignatius Jesuit Retreat Centre, Guelph, \$50-\$55 +GST. Info: Barbara.susan.booth@sympatico.ca

10 April - **Taking Time for Self and Other Endangered Species"**



19-21 February 2010

Brigid Festival...."Enter the Matrix: Being Betwixt and Between"

With Dr. Mary Condren

\$225.00 or Circle Members—\$195.00

Registration is now open! Please see the enclosed brochure or visit www.brescia.uwo.ca/thecircle/brigit.htm for more details.



Thursday 11 March 2010, 7:30 pm

Stephanie Nolen

Award Winning South Asia Correspondent for the *Globe and Mail*, author of *28 Stories of AIDS in Africa*, *Promised the Moon* and *Shakespeare's Face*. In this Sophia Series lecture, Stephanie Nolen will share her stories of witnessing the strength of women amid great adversity. Based on her experiences as a journalist in Africa and Asia.

Brescia Auditorium, Suggested Donation \$10, Free Parking



Friday 12 March 2010, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Women Making Change Conference

In Celebration of International Women's Week 2010 and the 50th Birthday of the Second Wave of the Women's Movement Undergraduate and graduate students and community activists will present their research or give artistic presentations related to the theme "women making change." Join us for this day that is rich in diversity of topics and discussion.

Room 135 & 136, Brescia UC, Free, Free Parking.

Visit The Circle's Website for more details on these upcoming events!

Day of Prayer, Medaille Retreat House, 9.00am - 3.30pm, \$50. Info: 519-641-1379 or medaille@csj.london.on.ca

26-30 April - **Embodied Wisdom: Walking a Sacred Path** with Lauren Artress & Mary Hamilton. Loyola House, Guelph, \$575 +accommodation. Info: Barbara.susan.booth@sympatico.ca

Eight Sundays during the year - **Festivals of the Cosmos:** Engaging w/ our transitional moment facilitated by Mary Margaret Howard, Loretta Pellizzari, Lois Van Geel & other Universe Storytellers. Beginning on Sun. 31 Jan. @ 4pm...gather to learn about our moment in the cosmic story, celebrate together what is unfolding & imagine the world that is in bud ... For a full schedule & info: (519) 473-7148 or cosmicos@exculink.com.

Feel free to join us for any or all eight gatherings. Open to all.