

The Clinic Strikes Back

You don't really know what it's like to be admitted to a hospital and to surrender all freedom, self-responsibility and pride to a group of men and women bearing sharp instruments and deadly chemicals until you've actually experienced it yourself. Let me tell you how it went for me, when after 44 years of adulthood lived without contact with the medical industry I was forced to choose between a) death or disability and b) a week of medical care in a typical hospital in Germany.

I am still working on figuring out what this all means for my present personality, my further presence in this material realm and my life's paths and goals. That sounds a bit complicated, I guess. I could simply ask: where do I go from here? This protocol of my experience is an attempt to gain at least a partial understanding of where I now am so that I can answer that question.

All the nurses said that it doesn't seem fair that I should have suffered a heart attack. But I think things only seem unfair when our view is limited. When I was in my twenties, during one of my few lucid moments, I had a definitive-seeming „message“ delivered to me that I would not live beyond 49. I did, however. So as of today, I've been allowed over 13 years of extra time to walk this path on this planet in this universe, expressing and impressing through this incarnate form. A huge gift! Perhaps, in part, because of my lifestyle. The paternal side of my family is full of heart problems. So I guess I'm fortunate to have staved off the inevitable for so long. Or something like that. I'm being a bit of a pollyanna here, but why not?

It wouldn't really have mattered to me if I had left this life with a heart attack, but there are some things I'd like to organize before I do in fact leave, just to make it easier for my family and friends. And apparently there are some more experiences (such as living with stents and being obliged to take ASA every day) that I have been given the opportunity to have. The I GING cards and the Angel Oracle cards that I drew a few days before the incident both indicated that radical changes are now due. I had no idea that they would look like this! From the Shamanic Oracle deck of cards, asked about what my approach or focus should be in the wake of the changes that the other cards had announced, I drew the "Seer" card. Not a surprise, but again the question is: how to realise the potential of this path?

Friday, 7th of June 2019

The apparent beginning of this episode looked like this: Friday morning at 3.30 a.m. I woke up suddenly with pressure on my chest. Christine and I had been battling with some pretty heavy, deleterious energies that had accumulated in our flat. This happens from time to time and we have still to find an efficient method of cleansing. It is something that has priority because both of us tend to relieve people of junk which then sticks to us and afterwards makes itself at home in our home. We have been working on methods, but we aren't yet consistent enough with it and so every now and then the various „elementals“ gather and rob Christine of sleep and make me have wierd emotions and unpleasant dreams ranging from disturbing to sic, and sometimes plague us both with physical manifestations. So I thought it might be good to get up and clear my spirit; I went to my room and sat down to meditate. The pressure eased, but it was not entirely gone and I returned to the bedroom to sleep another two hours.

I had an appointment at 9 to give a group of seniors in a retirement home a trial lesson in qigong. The director wanted to offer them either taiji or qigong and had called me to see if we could come to an agreement. The retirement home is in Reutershagen, about 8 kilometers through Rostock to the west end of the city (we live at the southeast end). I hopped on my pedelec and started off and immediately realised that the pressure in my chest was far from gone. Indeed, the faster I pedalled, the more it became a biting pain. Shit, I thought, this could end up complicating my life. Or could end with me

leaving my body in the ditch and not returning to it. The pain was like what you feel when you go out jogging in freezing weather and breathe in too much frosty air. The things it could be kept running through my brain, but a part of me knew what was really going on – the more stubborn part decided to deny, or at least suppress the obvious.

I did the hour of qigong and that did me good – it pretty much eradicated the pain and the pressure, with just a tiny reminder of an incapacitation somewhere in the depths of my chest. The group was cute: half of them stood there in front of their walkers, they actually laughed at my jokes and they really did their precious best to follow the movements. After we were finished the 80-year-old beside me turned to me and asked: „do you think artificial intelligence is really smarter than we are?“ A total non sequitur. I nearly broke up.

On the way back home I tried the stress test again, carefully putting more power into my legs, pedaling faster. I didn't want to believe what I knew was the truth. The pain increased immediately; I felt like I was breathing frost crystals that were lacerating the insides of my chest. I stepped up the power assist on the pedelec and was grateful that the bike had a motor. Along the tree and bush-lined path to the zoo, past the Darwineum with its families of gorillas and orangutans (do they have heart problems too?), through the Barnstorfer park, past the clinic where I teach qigong, past the supermarket, the school and kindergarten where my taiji group gathers every Monday evening, around the bend bordering the old Diesel Motor Works and finally the last curve up Mooskuhle to our building.

At home I went about my chores slowly and deliberately and when Christine arrived from work at noon, we talked it through. Having seen that the qigong was good for me, I decided to drive to Graal Müritz in the afternoon and do the scheduled training there with the cancer patients, but as in the morning, that tiny reminder of pain remained. I tried to call my brother-in-law George, he is, after all, a children's cardiologist, to ask for some advice but he didn't answer the phone. Christine kept gently asking if I didn't want to go to the emergency admission at the Südstadt Clinic, but I didn't like the idea of sitting for hours in the hospital while people coughed and moaned all around me. And I was still successfully suppressing the voice inside that was trying to tell me the truth.

Finally George called back and recommended I go, if only to assure myself that it was not a heart attack or angina pectoris or something equally vile. So Christine drove me to the emergency admission at shortly before 10 p.m. and there was no one else there except the doctor and a nurse. The doctor, a somewhat overweight woman in an ill-chosen jumpsuit, bade me in after less than five minutes of waiting and I described to her the symptoms, but also the lack of any other symptoms typical of heart failure – no cold sweats, no dizziness, no nausea, no pains in my arms, legs or upper back. Also the total lack of any sort of risk factors: I don't smoke, drink alcohol or eat fatty animals, well actually I don't eat animals at all. I get a lot of exercise, spend a lot of time outdoors and seem to handle what little stress my life offers me fairly well.

She hooked me up to the ECG and measured the signals. Everything perfect. Not conclusive, given my paternal legacy and the symptoms, so she sent me to the emergency department to have blood tests done. Sometimes, apparently, the blood test will show up markers for damage to the heart that don't show up in the ECG.

Christine and I walked over to the emergency department; that's where the ambulances unload their cargo. Down the hall, to the left, through the frosted glass double doors. Not a creature was stirring, nor to be seen until we passed through the doors; the hospital was, understandably, steeped in a sepulchral silence at this late hour.

I registered at the desk near in the bleak waiting area. Because I have no medical chip card (my insurance doesn't want to go to the expense of issuing one I guess), they copied my ID and had me fill

out forms by hand. At the end, after indicating who my next-of-kin was, I had to sign that I would take responsibility for any and all costs related to the services that would be rendered on my behalf.

There were only three other people waiting in the semi-darkness: a young man trying to subdue his eight-year-old son and a man in his mid-thirties reading with restless legs paging through an automobile magazine. I don't know how he could make out any of the words in the gloom; perhaps he wasn't reading at all.

A woman was wheeled out in a wheelchair to talk to the man and his son. She was sobbing. The doctors had said that her wound had become infected deep down near the bone and she couldn't leave until that had been treated. The wound was, as far as my eavesdropping ears could discern, the result of an operation she had undergone. Great, I thought, if that isn't an omen. My first encounter with a patient treated here is with one who had incurred a deep incisional surgical site infection. Hope the doctors wash their hands before they touch me.

I was called in and led to a little stall where they did another ECG and took blood and asked me all the same questions as the jumpsuit doctor in the emergency admission had. Then I waited. I thought of going to the bathroom; my bladder was starting to make itself noticed. But they'd told me to stay prone on the bed. Sometime around midnight the head nurse or whoever she was, could have also been a doctor, came in with a grave expression on her face and said that the blood tests had shown conclusively that I had suffered or was suffering a heart attack. Totally atypical and they were also very puzzled, but the evidence was there.

The nurses gave me one of those gowns that are open in the back. My real clothes were thrown into a big plastic bag, along with my watch and the rest of my dignity. The doctor called the head cardiologist at home, got him out of bed and prepared me for an operation. A nurse shaved my groin. I was given drugs of some kind. And I was told to follow one strict rule: as of this point in time, I was confined to the bed, not allowed to sit up or stand up and after the operation would be required to lie on my back perfectly still for eight and a half hours. I suppressed the urge to panic and flee, thinking both of my bladder and my poor back.

The head of cardiology who would be doing the surgery turned out to be Dr. Koerber. I've met him and know him a little – his wife, who also works in the clinic here, is a taiji student of mine and also a regular participant in our meditation workshops, as well as being a cancer symptom carrier whom I taught guolin qigong to some years ago.

When Dr. Koerber arrived, a tall young man with a red beard who reminds one of a Viking, he did an ultrasound examination and then explained to me how he would proceed in the operation. I was wheeled up to the operating room, half heaved and half climbed onto the operating table, my groin was painted with iodine, I was given a local anesthetic and a short time after that Dr. Koerber punctured the artery in my groin. I watched the progress on of the catheter on the screens to my left. Once the tube had worked its way to the heart, it spewed a little bit of contrast medium every few seconds, enabling us to see where the coronary vessels were too narrow. It looked a bit like a gangly black spider appearing out of nowhere. Some of its legs were too thin and had bulbous joints. The whole picture pulsated to the beat of my heart.

The operation wasn't all that painful – some pain when pressure was used to lead the catheter up the artery and of course the cut into the groin was not nice, but otherwise pretty innocuous. Except that issue with my bladder. By the time the operation was in full swing, the pressure on my bladder had grown to distracting proportions and I began to tense up my lower torso. This was not good at all, for it would impede the surgeon's work. The assistants quickly set a bladder catheter, but it took me a

minute or two to relax enough to let the urine flow into the bag. Pissing while lying down is just not my cup of anything.

There is little joy in lying on a hospital bed while people rummage around in your insides, inserting little metal parts dangerously near your heart, sticking a tube up your noodle and moving humming metal plates up, down and across your torso. But it was fascinating, especially when I realized how routine this was for the three people in the room.

Towards the end of the procedures, as the surgeon was pulling the catheter out, another vessel close to the entry point in my groin burst. The surgeon cursed and immediately staunched the flow of blood with his hands, applying half his body weight in pressure, or so it seemed. I pictured him letting go for an instant and the blood squirting in a miniature fountain up to the ceiling to leave a dark red Rorschach blot for the next patient to puzzle over. He didn't let go, even for an instant.

The operation at an end, the three men wheeled me out of the operating room and held just outside the door. A nurse came with a foot-wide bandage on a roll. The men asked if I could raise my butt off of the table. I grabbed the handle dangling above my head, glad of the opportunity to move my body even the smallest bit, and pulled my torso and hips up enough for them to get to work. They began wrapping my hips and upper thigh tightly with this somewhat elastic roll of material. I thought of mummies and leaky pipes. Around and around, four times, five times, pulling tightly. When they were satisfied that I had been immobilized but that blood could still circulate to and from my legs, I was allowed to lower my body to the bed again.

I was wheeled into a cardiac recovery room, hooked up to an ECG, an oxygen monitor and a blood pressure cuff and my bottle of urine replaced with an empty one. I was told to lie still until the doctor came at ten. It was two o'clock in the morning.

The next eight and a half hours were torturous at best. My spirit seemed stuck to the unpleasant body sensations and the back pain that increased with every ticking minute. Time stretched; I began to hate the clock for its inability to move. I tried everything I could think of to sink into a state of separation from the increasing agony, but it didn't happen. The tube up my willy seemed to grow larger and more irritating, blocking the flow of urine rather than allowing it to drain out of me. The constant irritation slowed the flow of time to almost a standstill. Grit grew in towards my pupils from the corners of my eyes, clouding my vision and making me want to scratch. I looked for distractions, I smelled the strange smells of the machine and heard the various sounds of the monitors, I tried to hum my brain into sleep but no; a flat, protracted cramp in time bound me to a tormented, superficial awareness.

I watched the sky slowly take form outside my window, light spreading like a welcome stain. It was four o'clock. Two hours had passed. A million times I berated myself for not accepting the offered knock-out drugs. What arrogance to think I could handle these few hours in full awareness of the signals my body was sending me. Of course I hadn't expected to be totally shut out of my subtle senses. My whole spirit felt raw, offended, like someone had taken sandpaper to it and exposed the fragile, bloody, subcutaneous nerves.

I don't know how I lived through the morning until the doctor came. There was a point at which I simply had to accept that it would take days, if not weeks, until the hour of ten arrived. I began to embrace the pain in my back with a sardonic grin and noticed how the pain squeezed cold sweat out onto my skin. Tick, tick, tick. Don't count, that'll make it worse.

Finally, at half past ten the doctor arrived, took a cursory look at the monitors, pressed his thumb into my feet and announced I could move. He would send in a nurse to take off the mummification bandage around my hips. Someone would also remove the bladder catheter. No leaving the bed, though.

The sigh of relief that I expelled when I was freed of the catheter and the bandage was probably heard in the room next door. Sure, I wasn't allowed to leave the bed yet, but I could stand for a moment when the nurses weren't watching, I could pee in the bottle, I could read and write and later on Christine's brother and our sister-in-law brought me fruit and special bottled water and a big bouquet of wild flowers. I wouldn't starve and the wildflowers gave me a feeling of hope.

Towards the end of the day I was given a roommate. A massive man with an inflated belly who seemed to think that everything was alright with him and was a bit taken aback that he should have to lie there at all. He was around 70 I think, 30 kilos overweight and diabetic. But he explained to the nurses at length how sophisticated his diabetes devices were and how they could measure his blood-sugar from twenty feet away and he seemed to take pride in knowing all the right terms for the markers and blood-sugar levels and other medical-technical stuff as he tried to give the impression that he had everything under control.

As the evening progressed things got increasingly worse with him. His breathing became shallower, his pulse increased to levels where they had to medicate it downward, his heart was pumping too weakly to allow him to turn from one side to another without extreme effort, puffing and groaning and banging the equipment around and attached to him. I wondered if he was a mirror of me? Was I also under the impression that I didn't really need to be here? Were my arrogant self-delusions causing me to be a nuisance to the staff and a pain to myself? Or had I learned the lesson given to me so long ago: humility? I didn't know. I was afraid to probe into myself too deeply.

I didn't sleep much that night in the room with my fellow inmate. He was constantly rumbling about and groaning, he couldn't pee in the bottle although he tried and somewhere around midnight the nurses inserted a catheter. He didn't have the feeling that it was working (I could sympathise) and it was very irritating (I could sympathise even more) and he wasn't about to keep these feelings to himself. He whined loudly that he also had to take a shit and that he wouldn't be able to pee until he'd taken a shit. This had the nurses rolling their eyes, but they did their best to help him. The night passed, further admonitions of the nurses were ignored and the early morning hours arrived before he finally quieted down and I could get some sleep.

Sunday, 9 June 2019

Nothing seemed to have worked for my roommate and he was in a truly miserable state when they wheeled him to another room or another ward after breakfast. I felt sorry for him. And I kept asking myself still whether I was like him. I felt embarrassed.

The physiotherapist arrived at about 11, a cheery middle-aged woman. I was happy to see her and was very much looking forward to learning what exercises I could do to speed up my recovery and support my heart and prevent further deterioration of my coronary vessels. They really hadn't looked good on the monitors. I was eager for a list of do's and don'ts so that I could start moving my stiff body and reanimating my neglected muscles.

"Okay, Mr. Beier. This is your first day of physiotherapy. I see here that they have ordered a four-day program. We have a four-day program, the short program, and a seven-day program, the long program." I sat up from my half-reclined position and stared at her with my idiot face, an expression that was becoming default the longer I lay around.

I reached for the cable interface of the ECG and asked "should I unhook myself?"

She gave me a puzzled look. "No no, just sit on the edge of the bed." My poor metal-encased heart sank. I saw what was coming in a moment of unwanted clarity. She measured my pulse. "Twenty-one. Okay, times four is, let me see... Eighty-four. Okay, pulse of eighty-four.

Now, move your right foot in a circle. That's it, just a few times around. Now, move it in the other direction. Good. Okay, now the left foot. Fine. And in the other direction..." I did as I was told, bit back my frustration, trying not to choke on it and held my mouth shut. What followed was stretching out and pulling back one arm and then the other, touching my shoulders with my hand, first one side and then the other. The whole time the physiotherapist held on to her clipboard and mostly looked about the room and out the window with an odd glance in my direction. When I had successfully touched both shoulders, she announced we were finished and read my pulse again. "Twenty-three. Hmmm. Recovery rate is not so good."

Recovery time? My pulse was being driven by my astonishment at the ludicrousness of this ritual. I couldn't tell her that. She added: "And if you practice these exercises a few times today, we'll get you up and walking tomorrow. We are on the short program after all. No time to dally." She put the clipboard back on the window and left the room, closing the door behind her.

Later, a long-time guolin qigong and taijiquan student of mine, Sabine, who is the wife of the surgeon who operated on me, came around to visit. A wonderful woman with a big heart and a will to make things better for everyone. She talked about a change in her diet according to a book called: „The Plant Paradox: The Hidden Dangers in "Healthy" Foods That Cause Disease and Weight Gain“ and how it has helped her and other people with various problems. Sounded interesting and Christine and I ordered the book. Perhaps there is a way out of this genetic trap. Okay, that's a bit dramatic and on the surface sounds pretty unfair to my ancestors so I hereby apologize to them, but in essence it is just that, even if it was my soul's choice to be confronted with this challenge.

I walked about a little, always aware of where the nurses were, ready to claim that I had to go to the bathroom and that was why I was walking on my own. I think they knew what was going on, though, and it was a bit of a game we played. In the late afternoon Dr. Tom Koerber grabbed me and did an ultrasound examination of my heart. We looked at the images together, saw where the weak spots were and that the coronary vessels in general are not in good shape. I thanked him for his time and for giving me something to work with. This surprised him, he didn't at first know what I meant. I explained: now that I know exactly what the symptoms are, I can go on a targeted search for alternative methods on different levels of effect that have a chance of returning my arteries to a healthier state. He could sympathise with that but I think he feels my search will ultimately be fruitless. According to mainstream medicine, heredity is a knock-out factor. Can't be influenced. I agree, looking backwards. But looking forward I see the possibility of dissolving the circle of debilitation I've inherited.

I slept well, all alone in the room. At four o'clock, when the early birds began to sing to the worms to lure them out of the soil, I awoke. The nurses had left one of the windows tipped open and the fresh air had undoubtedly helped to provide a restorative sleep. I felt gratitude.

Monday, 10 June 2019

After breakfast, an inedible oatmeal soup and a far-too-perfectly-formed apple, I was moved to a room with four beds. It smelled like poorly washed men with bad eating habits. The room was no bigger than the one I'd been in, alone, in the recovery ward. The sticky air was too hot and there was no way to reduce the temperature because the building is old and money is invested in expensive CAT scans and DOG scans and stuff, and not in the patients' comfort. The three men sharing the room with me were like triplets: beer bellies, overweight, flaccid faces, shortness of breath, hunched over their mini televisions. They looked like they would all snore at night. It was not pretty. I wanted to go back to the recovery ward. Rather ungraciously, I dubbed my new roommates the Dumping Triplets.

Later in the afternoon George and Ines and Christine came to visit. We spoke of this and that and it was pleasant to see them, but I began to feel gradually weaker and ever more beset. A flash of

recognition passed through me and I realized I was inadvertently taking on unfavourable energies (there's a huge choice of them in any hospital). I felt so poorly that I excused myself and returned to my room and lay down on my electric bed. Everything's electric here: I and everyone else here have to carry around a portable ECG that's constantly sending some sort of electromagnetic waves to computer monitors in the hall, doctors' room, nurses' room and heaven knows where else. Maybe to the NSA. The bed is electrically operated and goes up and down and bends. There are electronics everywhere, televisions everywhere, cell phones on every table. It's like taking a bath in acid. I kept renewing my protective field, but it was tiring, and some amount of disharmony got through anyway. And I'm supposed to find health in this place?! A hotbed of electrosmog. Okay, the Germans have it labelled properly, as I've already said: this is a "Krankenhaus" – can literally be translated as a "sick building".

As I lay down and reached for the Stillness I became aware of three presences near me – Jesus and two angels. Did I ever tell the story of the first time I ever saw Jesus was in a camping trailer that my first girlfriend's parents had taken on holiday? Lois and I were visiting them. At that point he did not contact me (or I was not able to establish any two-way communication) but he did make it clear that he was there for Barbara and Noah and definitely not for me. There wasn't really disapproval, which I thought fleetingly might be the case because I was meditating and using a Hindu mantra, just a feeling of being the subject of benign neglect. During a later meeting he told me that the religion that had developed around his myth was not for me to follow. I will admit to you (I'm telling you all of my secrets here) he is my greatest role-model and he does pop in now and again if I need help in my healing work. Especially if the client is a truly believing Christian (as opposed to what Richard Rohr calls a "Church-Christian").

I was more than a bit curious about why he was here now. I asked about whether he was here to lead me away, whether my time had come after all. He was non-committal. But the signs were suggestive: I was struggling with suspicious feelings in my chest, my experience of people passing on has always been of three angels accompanying them away (plus, sometimes, relatives who had already passed) and here were three beings, two angels and Jesus, an angel-like presence. A cold sweat bled out onto my skin. I was confused – was it my time to go after all or not? I asked for a little more time to tie up loose ends. No answer. The awareness of them faded and I was left with the question: WTF was that about?

Just in case it was a message that I wouldn't be leaving this stupid place in one piece, I texted Christine telling her to bring a pad of writing paper with her tomorrow so that I could write down important things for her to know. I texted my brother and asked him to help Christine with my Canadian TD/CT bank account should I in fact slip away in the next two days. And I started mentally listing the loose ends I have that should be tied up or cut off or whatever. I thought of the strange encounter and realized that no answer is also a kind of answer. The phrase sounded nice, but it didn't help at all.

Soon I was able to realize that a definite part of the message was about the fluidity of future events not yet entirely being turned in favour of me continuing on here on this earth. Could still go differently. It remains to the very moment I'm writing this, a gripping tale indeed.

In writing, I slip into the present, for I'm reliving the afternoon vividly. There is nothing to do. Walks are restricted by the 40-meter range of the ECG monitors and the unspoken assumption that we are all too damaged to do more than lie about and read tabloids or watch soap operas and sports. I haven't had my television activated and have no interest in it. I read and type this account and listen to music. Time flows more smoothly than it did the first eight hours after the operation and I can find Stillness beneath the surface reality, but the present personality is simply bored. So many thoughts clamoring for attention, for sustenance, for primacy. I slip back into the moment and the afternoon's memories are blotted onto my retaining consciousness.

The triplets began to fall asleep one after the other in front of their televisions. As they fell asleep, they began to snore. As if on cue. As if my prediction had cemented the event into the course of the future. I could hear them through my earplugs. I could hear them through my earplugs covered by my noise-cancelling headphones. A basso continuo of persistent snoring punctuated every 30 to 50 seconds by dry coughs of varying intensities and garnished with the occasional fart. Oh dear, mixed metaphors. Forgive me. The air did not improve. I did not sleep until I was finally able, perhaps around midnight, to release myself into my exhaustion.

I should have invested in the expensive noise cancelling earphones I had wanted to buy but was too stingy to spend 300 euros on. Live and learn. Hopefully.

Tuesday, 11 June 2019

I woke up at 3.30 a.m. when the nurse came in noisily in order to give one of the snorers some medication. Probably sleeping pills. The interruption might have been less disruptive if she hadn't left the door to the hallway wide open. The acoustic detritus of a very vocal argument plied through the opening and shook out whatever inclination I might have had to sleep further. I did manage to doze for almost an hour, but then two of the triplets began coughing again in quick succession and there was no end to it so I sat up, put on my noise cancelling headphones (that of course didn't cancel all of the sounds but enough to make me feel comfortable) and began to meditate.

I focused my awareness on my heart and felt emotional pain coming from a thousand lives streaming through my chest. But I also felt the unfolding of a quiet, unconditional love that spread around me, through the room. After five minutes I noticed that the coughing coming from two of the Dumpling Triplets was beginning to ebb. The third dumpling was relatively quiet; only a light, sibilant undertone made its way through the plastic and metal covering my ears.

The longer I meditated, the less they coughed. By the time I'd sat for 30 minutes, the coughing had ceased. I was, however, awake and so I grabbed my Anton Styger book, went out into the hallway, and did some reading.

After breakfast it was announced that I would be wheeled down to cardiology in a wheelchair.

Okay, now it's getting really stupid, I thought. Or critical. Probably the former.

Because the doctors couldn't and can't find a cause, they were getting desperate. They ordered I be hooked up to a 24-hour ECG, hoping to find irregularities in the electrical impulses even though all of my ECGs up to that point had been clean, including the one I was carrying around in the ward and which had been running constantly for over a day. So now I had 12 cables hooked up to me, was taking medicine to lower my fat levels although my lipid charts are fine (just in case we missed something, Mr. Beier, and besides, they have other benefits), taking a thrombosis medicine although I've never had problems with thrombocytes and the levels were also fine, taking antihypertensive drugs although I didn't have high blood pressure. In for a penny, in for a pound, right?

The young nurse who was given the job of wheeling me down and then back up again after I'd been wired, asked me: „Do you mind me asking why you're here? Are you part of a study or something? “

“I had a heart attack” I said, “but no one knows why. Doctors really hate not finding a monocausal event or factor, so now they're desperate. Hence the double ECGs.”

“Oh.”

Physiotherapy amounted to taking my pulse, walking up one flight of stairs, walking back down again, sitting down and taking my pulse again. The young physiotherapist said to me: “I think I know you. My

mother was in Graal-Müritz in the oncological treatment facility. I went to her qigong training with her. Was that you?"

"Yup."

"Wow, the world's a small place, isn't it? I enjoyed the qigong and so did my mum."

"Thank you."

The social services worker came by early in the afternoon to try to convince me to take a so-called Anschlussheilbehandlung, a follow-up treatment in a clinic for three to five weeks. His whole demeanor read: just get a signature and get out of here so you can get yourself a cup of coffee. Easy job. I told him I couldn't afford it. I explained my situation and he was really upset, the poor guy. "That's terrible. But what about your health? That should be your first priority!"

"Sure," I said. "But if I go to one of your spas and as a result have no money to buy food or pay the rent, that's not really much of a help, is it?" In the end he had to accept that I wouldn't apply to my medical insurance or to my non-existent pension plan for a follow-up spa and he left near to tears. Actually, I might consider it for a moment if I really could afford it, but I work in these sorts of clinics and I see what the patients do all day (and what they have to eat) and honestly, I'd go crazy. Besides, even Dr. Koerber, the surgeon and head of cardiology, said to me "between you and me Ron, you'd be lost in one of those therapies – you're better off arranging your own therapy if you can assure me you'll stay within the limits of what your body now needs".

Okay, decision made.

I was dreading the night because I suspected it would be a repeat of the previous night. At 9.30 my son Jeremy called, and we talked for twenty minutes or so and then I lay down in the hopes of getting to sleep before the snoring kicked in. The nurses had asked if any of us wanted a sleeping pill and my direct neighbour, who had kept me awake the night before, immediately and eagerly accepted. The rest of us declined.

My neighbour had not yet fallen asleep, so he was only coughing occasionally, sometimes in harmony with the man lying at the other window, sometimes in counterpoint. I lay down and summoned all the techniques that had worked for me in the past in order to fall asleep as quickly as possible and indeed watched myself drift away after about ten minutes. My joy at seeing sleep come almost kept me awake.

At a few minutes before midnight I was awakened by a strange, muffled clanging noise. I couldn't identify it, but it was very near. It repeated itself and I realized that the man in the bed next to me had made the noise. I don't know how. He flopped over on his right side so that he was facing me and began snoring. I left the room.

I sat on one of the few chairs in the hallway, trying to sleep in an upright position, utterly exhausted and unable to let go. The subdued sounds of the ward at night were strangely comforting – the nurse typing on the computer, a medical orderly sorting out drugs and arranging them in little trays for the patients' next day, the occasional beeping of the monitors, muffled coughs, groans and snores coming from behind the closed doors of the rooms.

After half an hour I heard footsteps approaching and looked up to see the nurse and the orderly come up to me. "Mr. Beier, would you like to sleep in the treatment room, it's empty tonight and maybe you can get some sleep in there. I know it's difficult in the room you're in." I almost cried; I was so grateful to her.

Bless the Lord for nurses. In all of this rolling out of new experiences ranging from interesting (the operation) to unpleasant (the food, the mobility restrictions, the bladder catheter and many many others) to downright torturous (lying absolutely still on my back for eight and a half hours), the real light within the darkness has been the nurses. They are easily recognizable as sent from God. I wish I could return to them even a portion of what they have given me during this trial. Yes Lord, I am grateful, and I see Your presence in every one of them, shining out like shook foil as GMH once wrote. Thank you!

I was able to sleep. I slept blissfully, dreaming ordinary dreams, dreams from my own fields and not imposed upon and intervened by others, dreams to help me sort and smooth. I awoke to sunlight streaming through the window, my heart full of gratitude and relief.

Wednesday, 12 June 2019

In the morning a doctor I hadn't seen before sent me to have an x-ray of my thorax. Where's the logic in that? Did they think I'd broken a rib? Or were they just trying to amortize the expensive equipment?

In order to be x-rayed I had to leave the ward and in order to leave the ward they had to shut off my Big Brother ECG monitor. I was free for about half an hour (more if I had been bold enough to lie about how many people were waiting in the x-ray department) and was able to walk down to the entrance and step out into the fresh air while the doctors and nurses were otherwise occupied. What joy it was to breathe real air, exchange words with the trees, feel sunlight on my skin. I should have stayed out longer. Once back in the ward, they hooked me up to the ECG again so that I couldn't move outside the range of their radio connection which meant to the nearest waiting room just around the corner.

There is not one square meter of this building which is not chock full of putrid energy patterns. Even the chapel, though they are different there, is not free and didn't give me any respite or sanctuary. Poor Christine, she is perhaps even more sensitive to these things and has to make heroic efforts to keep her wits about her when she visits.

I told my friend Fred in Israel what had happened. Dear Fred. We are in contact regularly and have been telling each other about our lives for many decades. He was, as were others, shocked that I should have suffered a heart attack and come near to leaving this plane. His exact words were: "God forbid something happens to you." Something HAS happened to me Fred. And it is a gift. All of it. It remains to be seen what I make of it. That's my free will. I am grateful, even if I do go on about the conditions here. There is something to learn, there are challenges, there is the opportunity to open my path towards God in new ways. What more could I ask for? And if I leave this material plane for a while, then that is also the will of God and I can think of nothing more beautiful than to align myself with that will and sing God's praises. „Be thou my vision, oh Lord of my heart, naught be all else to me save that Thou art!“

But, as I told my brother when he visited me later in afternoon, I would be pleased to stay for a while on this plane in this form. It is a pretty fascinating place and I think the opportunity to move on my given path and, with the help of those near to me, increase my capacity to love (which amounts to the same thing, doesn't it?) is still vibrant and shining, perhaps even more than ever. He countered that he had been afraid that I would be just as pleased to move on out of this world and I had to admit to him that the option is somehow no less appealing.

Shortly after ten, one of the Dumpling Triplets, the man who had come to the clinic for a colostomy, was sent home. Once they're done with you, the staff expect you to pack up and leave quickly. No more than 40 minutes ticked off from the doctors telling him he was released to a fresh bed standing empty in the space he had occupied for days.

In the afternoon the nurses rolled a new patient into our room. I nearly cried out when he was wheeled in and I immediately fled into the hallway. There was so much physically broken in and on him and he was hosting so many draining forces that I immediately felt weakened. He kept trying to make eye contact for some reason and I knew that that was a bad idea. This is exactly what I have recognized as problematic in my dealings with those around me: I unintentionally start taking on their burden, trying to relieve their suffering.

I did my best all afternoon to avoid reaching out to the new Dumpling, for I knew what it would do to me. It wasn't easy. Evening came and the sky was filled with the portents of a thunderstorm. The air in the room was a yellow mass of viscid pestilence. The new Dumpling Triplet turned out to have an inflammation of the lungs on top of everything else he was packing, and he readily vocalized his discomfort. I tried to dispel the dark dread hovering over me. I felt more and more pressure squeezing me as the minutes and hours seeped out of the day.

The visits in the afternoon from my brother and a client of mine, who happened to be in the hospital for a biopsy, were pleasant but even there I began to sense, more acutely than I had before, how I automatically allow for a draining of my own energy, some part of me wanting above all to give those around me relief from their burdens. My brother Ralph spoke candidly about how he and Heather had been surprised in the last couple of years at how drained I had sometimes looked when I visited them and had wondered if I wasn't taking good enough care of myself.

At half past seven the thunderstorm broke open the skies over Rostock and my spirit cracked. I walked to the end of the hall where I could look out a window and saw the torrents flooding the streets. Thunderous claps shook the panes and sheets and bolts of lightning in quick succession blinded me. I began to weep. Misery took hold of me and despair. I saw myself with eyes that could recognize only doubt and misgivings, uselessness and failure. I couldn't separate what was mine and what had overtaken me – it was all mine and it was too much. I couldn't breathe my spirit into the Stillness, I was trapped in my tormented present personality.

I wept amidst the fog around my heart, tried to accept the feelings of futility and senselessness that arose when I looked at my life. Even fear, an emotion which has seldom visited me in my years here on earth, even fear began to seep into my being. I watched the questions arising in my mind: why have I made so many mistakes and bad decisions in my life? Is this the sum of 62 years of life – a flesh bag of misery who has achieved nothing worthwhile? A weak and vulnerable spirit whose small grasp of the timeless realm of unity is lost at the smallest provocation. I witnessed coward's thoughts swirling through my spirit, trying to take hold. There seemed no choice but to let them encase me. Perhaps I could just go away, forever...

I wept. I felt the pain in my heart acutely – different from the pain of the heart attack, less focused and more primal. Out of the fog I noticed the storm beginning to wear itself out. I felt a comforting tiredness wrap around me and returned to my room, where the snoring was somewhat subdued, playing out in an inharmonic duet between my neighbour and the new Dumpling. There was more farting than the night before. I lay in a pool of thoughts and emotions and still couldn't separate mine from others, but I was slowly able to separate from their urgency, identifying with the omnipresent Stillness that had, of course, never left. I fell asleep.

I awoke abruptly at just after midnight. There were still low rumblings from outside to accompany the acoustic/olfactory/subtle energy oeuvre that had the room in its grips, but the sky had mended. I fled into the hallway, knowing that I wouldn't be able to fall asleep amid the full force of The Symphony of Bodily Emissions, Opus One. Again the nurses had mercy on me and rolled my bed into the treatment room. Bless them. I cried in gratitude.

Thursday, 13 June 2019

The treatment room is on the east side of the building. The sun broke out of the clouds as I was sitting and meditating. It was shortly before six. My body soaked up the warmth and I felt the relief of a storm gone past. Now I had only to wait to be released from the place. It was enough. I didn't know if I had passed the test (the real one, the one my soul had chosen for me before entering this plane, not the ones they do in the clinic). It doesn't matter. If I didn't, I'll be back. I think that's the way of things. I have a feeling, though, that this interlude has helped put me back on course. It's up to me to keep on course. Christine will help. This is our pledge to each other, has been our pledge over the millenia again and again. And all of those souls wrapped up together with me in this labour of love, my family and friends, continue to help me find and open the light, again and again and again. How can I be anything but grateful?!

And so, the morning of what was to be my last day in prison dawned. The doctors had intimated that I would be able to go home after breakfast, but the nurses knew nothing of it and put me through the same routine as every day: weigh in (74.9 kilos), check blood pressure (110 to 76), ask if I'd taken a shit the day before (thank God yes), ask what I wanted for lunch (what!? I refused to answer that question. I wouldn't be there at lunchtime), got berated by the cleaning lady for having too much stuff on my night table (edible food sponsored by my brother-in-law), gave me the daily ration of drugs, brought breakfast (two slices of dark rye bread with some weird pasty stuff to spread on it plus one rock-hard plum), tapped off two little vials of blood.

I waited. Christine showed at quarter past nine, because the doctor had said I should be able to leave somewhere between nine and ten. The doctors were, however, nowhere to be seen. I started packing, even though I was still hooked up to the portable ECG. I walked up and down the hallway with Christine. I figured I'd have to wait for the doctors to do their ward rounds, they'd check me over, tell me what to do and what not to do, maybe have a short talk about the treatments I'd undergone and therapy that should be initiated and then they would tell me to pack and go. I sent Christine out and told her I'd call when I'd been inspected and approved.

Ten o'clock came and still no sign of the doctors. Quarter past ten I saw them start their rounds at the head of the hallway and figured it would probably take about 15 minutes for them to get to the room I had had to share with the Dumpling Triplets. I headed past the doctors, who were doing their rounds hiding behind a sort of white lectern on wheels upon which a large white monitor was fastened and jumped onto my bed to sit and wait.

I had hardly sat down when a nurse came into the room, looked around and called: "which one of you is Mr. Beier?"

"Me."

"Okay, you're leaving this morning. Pull up your shirt. We need your ECG for someone else. They're in short supply."

I took off my shirt and she fairly pounced upon me and ripped off the tabs holding the contacts in place. She left carrying the monitor and its cables like an anemic squid under her arm.

Another woman came in a few seconds after the door had shut behind the nurse. She did not introduce herself, had no name tag, and I hadn't seen her mugshot on the wall opposite the nurses' station. Was she a doctor? A nurse? Another clerk from the social services department come to convince me to "make my health my top priority" and sign up for a five-week follow-up treatment in a rehab center? She was carrying a fairly thick folder. She saw that I was not sporting a dangling ECG monitor.

“Are you Mr. Beier?”

“Yes.”

“Okay. We’re releasing you. Who’s your family doctor? This letter is for him.”

“I don’t have a family doctor.”

“Just give him the letter then.” She shoved a letter toward me but had obviously not understood; her brain was not conditioned for the fact that I had presented her with.

“I don’t have a family doctor. Never had. At least not since I was a child, and that was pretty long ago.”

She looked at me as if I had just slapped her in the face. “Well, you have to have a family doctor. You have to get these medications prescribed. We can only give you enough to last the weekend.”

“Can’t you just prescribe the medication you’re recommending? Or give me enough to last for a while so that I can find someone who’ll write me a prescription?”

She looked like I’d slapped her even harder. “We’re not allowed to give out more than a couple of days of medication. And we aren’t allowed to write prescriptions. You must go to a doctor today! There are enough of them around this area, just go pick one.”

I didn’t want to pursue it. I wanted to get out. I said okay, I would.

“Who’s your cardiologist?”

“I don’t have one of those either.” Her look morphed into one of exasperation. But she seemed to understand what I had said.

“Then find a cardiologist. You can’t go without one. Search the internet for cardiologists in Rostock. This letter is for him.” She shoved a second, seemingly identical letter into my hands. “And this letter is for your medical insurance.” The third letter seemed identical to the first two. Later, when I looked through them at home, I found out they were indeed identical, but the record of the anamnesis was pretty messed up with some blatant errors and the general prognosis was hyped up to make me appear on the brink of death. I figured this would be of good use when I confronted my medical insurance with the bill. Dire necessity and all that.

She shoved a clear plastic bag containing four boxes and a little blister pack of medication into my hands and pronounced: “this is your medication. Take it exactly as recommended.” I had thought that a doctor would talk to me about what medication to take, when to take it, for how long to take and maybe even mention possible side effects. This hadn’t happened. But I wasn’t about to prolong this procedure by asking this woman; she’d likely just tell me to discuss it with my non-existent family doctor. Or worse, she’d keep me in the clinic until someone had time to look through my files and tell me what drugs I should be taking. I just nodded and clutched the bag. I’d figure out later when to take what medication.

The woman took one more look at me, turned around and while on her way out of the door wished me a good recovery. I slipped on my backpack full of dirty clothes, tablet, headphones and books, dumped the documents and the drugs into one of the jute bags full of other stuff and headed out the door myself, telling the Dumpling Triplets to “keep your chins up, guys!”. Should have been double chins, but they were God’s creatures after all and who was I to mock them? No one. Less than no one.

Christine drove me home in the warm sunshine which was filling the streets and parks of Rostock. When I stepped through the door of our flat, I cried a little. Joy filled my breast; I breathed deeply and

thanked the Lord that I had had that experience and that it was now behind me. I now simply hope that I soon find an answer to what I am supposed to have learned from it. I think I have partial answers, but it is not yet anywhere near a complete answer with hows and wheres and a handy toolkit and instruction manual.

Later in the day I called my taiji student Dietlinde and asked her what sort of things I should do and what I shouldn't do. Dietlinde is a physiotherapist specialized in heart patients. She has integrated some of the taiji movements she learned from me into her heart-physiotherapy work and was very helpful. Then I called my brother-in-law Georg and asked him if he could write a prescription. This would buy me some time to find a family doctor, without having to put myself under pressure and run out to a doctor's waiting room on the same day I was released from almost seven days of clinic confinement.

Postscript on Sunday, 16 June 2019

So far no physical complications have materialized, other than the fact that the doctors haven't found any real cause. Maybe that's not a complication, maybe that's typical. Doctors don't really look for causes, they look for ways to eradicate the symptoms.

There does seem to be a definite sclerotic buildup inside and a consequential degeneration of the coronary vessels which, if I can't find a way to reverse it, will see me back in the hospital again in a few years for the next set of stents. At least I know what it is and can go in search of solutions. It seems just exercising daily, eating a healthy, mostly vegan diet, avoiding sugar and processed foods, doing taiji, qigong and yoga and meditating daily isn't enough for this bag of bones to keep healthy on the long term. There is an extra challenge built into the hardware somewhere. It'll be interesting to see if I'm able to find the key before the deterioration takes over my body's fate and I am indeed freed to pass on.

On the other hand, it could be a case of a major shift of focus having become necessary for my spirit's further journey and the experience I've just had was necessary to precipitate the change. In this case the approach is the same, just on a different level: search for where I'm supposed to go from here. And how.

I'll likely work on both searches simultaneously.

Oh shit, strong case of deja-vu just now. I hate that sort of thing. Usually means there's work ahead.

So, that's the story. Two things have become clear already: I must become more radical in my approach to my work and all things involved with „movement of energy patterns“ in order to protect myself better. And as my body becomes more and more sensitive, I have to refine my diet even more. Reform and change were the messages that the I Ging cards had yielded. Let go of the old. The present personality and the body sometimes crave the old, want to hold onto it as familiar and unscary and simply easier than reformation. A small battle ensues within. It is amusing to watch in many ways. We'll see if the symbiotic vibrational pattern which is my Soul, spirit and present personality can work together to precipitate a steeper inclination toward the Source, towards Love, towards God. If not, there's always next time 😊