



Issue #2: Fall 2007

"The Healing Nest" is the official newsletter of Rising Bird Healing Arts.

This newsletter is for clients and friends of Rising Bird Healing Arts. You may send all correspondence and newsletter contributions to Courtney Putnam at cputnam@rising-bird.com.

Rising Bird Healing Arts

Massage • Reiki • Holistic Healing

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The Healing Nest

The Official Newsletter of **Rising Bird Healing Arts**

A healing space for the mind, body, & soul.

Courtney E. Putnam, MFA, LMP, CRP

Turning Inward

I do have to admit: the transition from summer to fall is one of the most difficult transitions for me each year. I try to tell myself that fall is "cozy," and it isn't until the heart of fall that I admit to myself that yes, curling up with a book in front of the fire is indeed cozy. Who cares if it's pouring rain outside. I usually mourn summer for about two months before I can enter autumn with positive intention.

Now that we are fully into autumn, I have finally found some positive intention, and I am noticing how much I have turned inward.

I want to read, watch movies, curl up with a blanket, wear sweaters and boots. (This last July I was certain I would wear sandals forever, and look at me now!) I also find myself wanting to take care of myself more intentionally. I have been taking more baths, receiving more massage, and drinking more tea in front of my full-spectrum light box. And due to the decrease in light, I find that I have to take *more* care of myself. Is this true for you, too?

And even though I cherish spring and summer, what's interesting is that fall and winter really do reflect very prominent aspects of myself:

introversion and reflection. So, this year, I am going to attempt to embrace (and dare I say celebrate?) the these unpredictable days of autumn with an open heart. And part of this process of acceptance means that I must embrace all aspects of myself — including my dark, dank, and soggy autumnal sides.

In honor of our autumnal sides, I present to you a collage piece I created in Alia Calender's amazing workshop "The Fruitful Darkness." This piece is called "The Creative Night," and it reflects my passionate, creative side that responds so well to the stillness of the dark.



What do *you* find fruitful about the fall? How do you take good care of yourself until the arrival of the bright green days of spring?

Rock Love

I will admit it: I have a deep and insatiable love for rocks. My favorite place to commune with rocks is in the Naches River, which runs through the Wenatchee National Forest here in Washington State. My family has a cabin near the Naches and my favorite time to visit is in the summer when I can immerse my sun-heated body into the glacial-cold waters of the river. I spend hours (yes, literally hours) making rock pools in the river. My arms and legs become numb from the cold, but I don't mind this. (This is great for shin splints and tendinitis, by the way!)

A friend once remarked to me as I was building, "I've never seen anyone take so much pleasure in stacking rocks." It's true! The rocks feel smooth and supple in my hands and I feel so strong lifting them in order to build the walls of my pool—even as the current threatens to knock my creation over. That's the beauty of it, though: my pools are not stagnant entities, but rather art pieces for nature to do with as she pleases.

So, why all of this talk of rock love? Well, as it so happens, I have added rocks to my practice, but this time they are not as cold as glacial waters or as heavy as those from the Naches. These rocks are basalt stones, heated to about 120 degrees and used in massage. This healing modality is most often called Hot Stone Massage, but is sometimes also called Healing Stone Massage. In either case, the purpose is the same: to warm the body, to soothe the nervous system, and to aid in relaxation and healing.

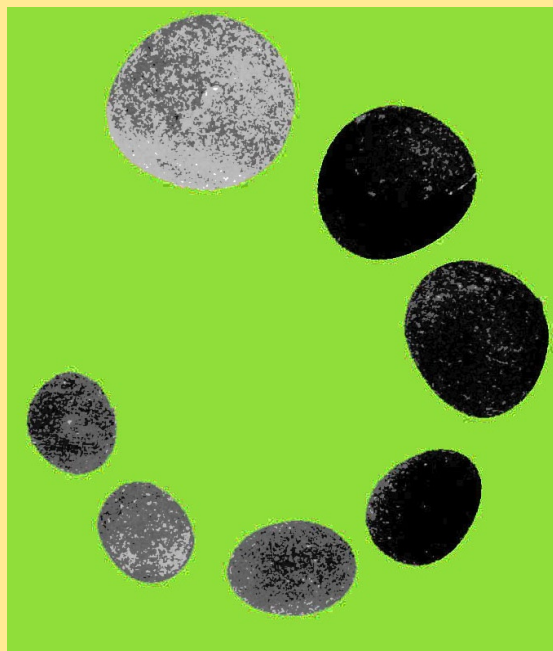
Basalt is a "fine-grained rock of volcanic origin, dark gray, dark green, brown, reddish, or black in color. Basalt is an igneous rock, i.e., one that has congealed from a molten state."* Due to their high iron content, basalt stones retain heat for long periods of time, penetrating your muscles deeply and evenly, and helping to soften your tissues and to calm your nervous system. These stones have been smoothed naturally by the waters from which they came, so the shape, consistency, and texture of each stone is unique. I have small, thin stones to place in between your toes to larger stones for your back, which can retain their heat for the length of a massage.

Hot stones may be used to provide deep, soothing heat to your tired or tense muscles. The stones may be used stationary on the body to promote relaxation and to soften muscle tissue. The stones may also be used in the massage itself, providing warmth and aiding in the release of tight muscles by utilizing the contours of the stones for some deeper work. Heated stones may also

be used for energetic healing by placing hot stones on the seven major chakras.

When my own massage practitioner uses hot stones during my massage treatments, I always seem to go to a deeper level in my relaxation. The penetrating heat softens my muscles, and I am able to let my guard down. The weight of the stones is comforting to me, rather like the nurturing feeling I get when my cat sleeps on my belly or chest.

So, it pleases me to be able to "stack rocks" in my practice now, even if I am not immersed in 40-degree water, listening to that soothing rush of the river. My nature CD with the sound of rushing water will have to do until next summer when I can start building my rock pools all over again.



Hot Stone Massage Rates:

*Sixty-minute session: \$80
Ninety-minute session: \$110*

* From <http://www.answers.com/topic/basalt?cat=technology>

Client Contributions

In my last issue of "The Healing Nest Newsletter," I offered two creative prompts. The first was to create a self-portrait of yourself using collage or some other art medium. The other prompt was an exercise in writing about or from your body. Thank you M.S., Kristen, and Binky for your beautiful and inspiring contributions! For new creativity prompts, please visit the last page of this newsletter. And please consider contributing your creations.



"Happy Birch Day"
encaustic collage

by **Kristen Clapper Bergsman**
www.laughingcrowcurriculum.com

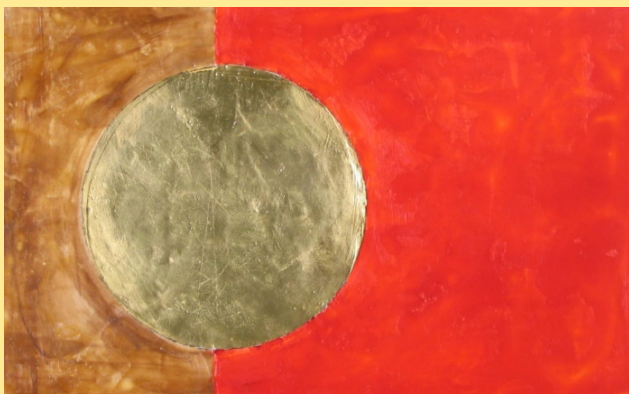
Excerpt from "Skin Hunger"
by M.S.

In the poem "Leaves" by Walt Whitman, he says our "very flesh [can] be a great poem." I want my cells to celebrate their own individuality—a story to be read like my DNA. My own "fingerprint." A picture of my life so far. A continual story that changes constantly like my body's chemistry. My hormones change each month, and yet it's not something I usually "celebrate." But why not? My blood flows like the ebb and flow of life. It means I'm alive. I should celebrate and rejoice that I'm capable of creating another life, let alone my own. No one teaches you how to create your own life.

The earth a grainy brown, the lifeblood in red, and the female as a large golden jewel of an orb. It is quiet and serene. It is me.

Bright, dancing, beautifully colored chaos. This is me too.

I can glow boldly like the sun or softly like the moon. I can laugh. I can sing. I can cry. In the fall of my life I am shaking off the chains of youth which so many cherish above all. The chains fall from me like leaves from a tree. I know that to be me is to be let loose. Free from the self imposed need to impress, prove myself, or behave in a certain way. I have set my own standards. I have character. I have compassion for my fellow human.



I now understand that life is what you make it. It is up. It is down. It is short and precious. It can be gone at any moment. With that knowledge every day becomes a gift. Tears are the price we pay for love.

At this moment in time, life is good. Tomorrow, who knows? I'll just have to wait and see. Whatever it is though, I'll enjoy it.

—Words and encaustic paintings by Binky Bergsman



S.A.D.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (S.A.D.) is a common issue for many of us in the Northwest—and especially during the fall and winter months.

Those of us who do feel adversely affected by the lack of light during these dark months must find ways to take good care of ourselves. I'd like to share a few of the ways I have tried to stay afloat during the S.A.D. months in my life:

* Full-spectrum light therapy.* I have a 10,000 lux light therapy box and sit in front of it for 30 minutes to an hour for a mood "boost."

* Dawn machine. This light box gives me a 45-minute dawn in the morning: the light gradually gets brighter in the morning, helping to wake my body gently.

* Fresh foods. While my body craves carbohydrates this time of the year, fresh fruits and vegetables truly help me feel more energetic and vibrant. When I eat a colorful salad I imagine that I am consuming a bit of spring.

* Walking. A very wise psychiatrist friend of mine advocates walking outside for at least 20–30 minutes every morning. Even when it is cloudy out, we still absorb the necessary light into our eyes.

* Sleep. I tend to want to over-sleep when I am depressed, but it is important to get plenty of uninterrupted sleep. So, I strike a balance. I allow myself a bit more hibernation sleep during the winter months, but if I do sleep in, I make sure to take a good, long walk in the morning.

* Aromatherapy. I add fresh, vibrant scents to my baths and lotions. I tend to use the citruses— grapefruit, mandarin orange, lemon, and tangerine. These scents wake me up and make me feel the energy of the sun.

When depressed it can be hard to do any of these things, so try to be gentle on yourself and praise yourself for small accomplishments.



*I offer **Full-Spectrum Light Therapy** as a regular offering in my practice. A thirty-minute light therapy session, which also includes an aromatherapy foot soak and a warm cup of tea, may be added to any session or be used as a stand-alone treatment. Cost: \$25.

Autumn Special: Inner Stream

October – December 2007

This fall, embrace the river within you. Explore the current of your life and find the peace and insight in the resilience that is your inner stream. Be comforted by the cleansing energy of flowing water and the deep relaxation that comes with warmth and healing touch.

This two-hour special begins with an herbal foot spa and a warm cup of tea. While you sip and soak, I will guide you through a reflective inner stream exercise. Using the stream as your visual metaphor, you will represent an aspect of your life through drawing.

If you draw the stream of your relationships, do you notice a straight line or a winding river with clear twists and turns? If you draw the history of your health, are there murky and stagnant moments or is there an even flow? Please come to the session with an issue you'd like to explore. All handouts and drawing materials are provided.

The bodywork portion of this session begins with a healing stone chakra treatment using heated basalt river stones. Relax while I place heated stones on each of your energy centers, allowing the warmth of the stones to direct your awareness to your chakras.

Due to their high iron content, basalt stones retain heat for long periods of time, penetrating your muscles deeply and evenly, and helping to soften your tissues and to calm your nervous system. These stones have been smoothed naturally by the waters from which they came, so the shape, consistency, and texture of each stone is unique.

An integrative massage follows with the use of these healing basalt river stones.

Cost: \$110. Gift certificates available.



Current (Updated) Sessions and Rates

Bodywork Sessions

I offer integrative massage and Reiki sessions tailored to fit your particular needs and concerns, and I hold a soothing and safe space for you to relax and heal.

Thirty-minute focused session: \$30

Sixty-minute session: \$60

Seventy-five-minute session: \$75

Ninety-minute session: \$90

Sixty-minute Hot Stone Massage: \$80

Ninety-minute Hot Stone Massage: \$110

Fifteen- and Thirty-minute Chair Massage: \$15 / \$30*

Add Sugar or Salt Glow: \$20

In this treatment, salt or sugar (your choice), combined with emollient and essential oils, provides a refreshing scrub to invigorate your senses.

Add Aromatherapy Treatment: \$20

This treatment includes an aromatherapy foot bath, hot towel treatment, and your own customized spritzer or lotion to take home.

Add Light Therapy: \$25

Sit for thirty minutes in front of the soothing rays of a 10,000 lux full-spectrum light box. Full-spectrum light therapy can help boost your mood and combat the effects of S.A.D. During the fall and winter months, this form of therapy is especially effective. Absorb the healing light as you soak your feet and enjoy a cup of tea.

Add Reflective Journaling: \$25

Enjoy thirty minutes of time to yourself and for yourself. Allow your creativity to flow onto the pages of your very own journal (provided), soak your tired feet in an aromatherapy footbath, and warm your body with a cup of tea. Process your hectic day, explore your inner thoughts and dreams, or play with some of my writing prompts. This journal time is especially beneficial for those who have a difficult time "turning off" their mind during a massage session.

* For outcall massage only. Quantity discount for businesses may apply. Please inquire!

Reiki for Animals

Reiki sessions for animals last approximately one hour, with a portion of that time spent communicating with you and your companion animal regarding particular health, behavioral, or emotional issues. Reiki time will vary based on the size of the animal as well as the animal's response to energy work.

\$60 for full sessions

\$30 for focused sessions

Note: Animals are always welcome at Rising Bird Healing Arts. It is, however, sometimes optimal to visit animals in their own environment to reduce the stress of travel and unfamiliar settings. As such, I do not charge a travel surcharge for animal Reiki sessions to homes located in the Seattle metro area.

Seasonal Specials

Each quarter, I offer a unique 2-hour holistic healing session, which includes bodywork, energy work, and other specific creativity or healing modalities. These 2-hour sessions are \$90 – 120.

Reduced Rates for massage students: Sixty-minute massage: \$50; ninety-minute massage: \$75

Please let me know 24-hours in advance if you need to cancel your appointment.

Cash and checks are acceptable forms of payment.

At this time I am not able to bill insurance. I can, however, provide a detailed invoice for your reimbursement purposes.

Consider giving massage as a gift for your friend or loved one. Gift certificates available!

Due to the additional time and added set-up required, a \$20 travel surcharge will be added for out-call massage sessions.

Creativity Corner

Here are a few creative exercises for you to explore. Feel free to take a whirl with these prompts and share your process and/or results! Submit your creations via email by December 15, 2007. Thanks!



Art Prompt:

When was the last time you fingerpainted? I will guess that for many of you, it has been many years—too many years! This art exercise is all about expression and tapping into your kinesthetic self. Color, gesture, motion. Try fingerpainting any pain you are experiencing in your body. What color is your pain? Feel free to be messy and express whatever it is you need to express. Now, paint your good health. What shapes and colors represent your optimal health? And how are these paintings different from one another? Are there any similarities? Non-toxic children's paints are the best to use, for they are better for your skin and easier to clean up.

Writing Prompt:

Did you know that the strongest muscle in the human body (for its size) is the masseter? The masseter is located in the jaw and it is our major chewing muscle. When I massage this area on my clients, very often I find the masseter to be quite tight and tense. I consider the jaw a Fifth (Throat) Chakra element, which has to do with communication, creativity, and expression. For this writing exercise, write in

the voice of your jaw. Is your jaw cranky or bubbly? Does it complain of aches and pains or is it pleased with the way you treat it? See what emerges when you let the strongest muscle in your body speak. What does it have to tell you?

Next ART SHOW at Rising Bird Healing Arts:

Thursday, December 13, 2007



Submit Your Creations!

Please submit your creations to me! I would love to receive digital copies of any of your creations—writing and/or art—for the next newsletter issue.

If you'd like to share your creations and/or process, feel free to email me at cputnam@rising-bird.com. I'd be delighted to hear from you!

The next newsletter is scheduled for January 2008.

A Wee Bit About Me:



Courtney E. Putnam is a Licensed Massage Therapist and Certified Reiki Practitioner, who offers a holistic approach to wellness. With a strong belief in the mind-body connection, Courtney holds a safe space for her clients to experience emotional as well as physical healing.

By integrating massage, energy work, and holistic wellness approaches, she invites you to experience a unique blend of healing modalities to support your body, mind, and spirit.

In addition to her bodywork endeavors, Courtney is a poet and visual artist and holds a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.

End Notes:

As a writer and visual artist, I find that incorporating artistic expression in the healing process is helpful and revealing. Feel free to visit my **Healing Nest Blog** for writing and art exercises, stress reduction strategies, and bodywork you can do for yourself at home. Also, visit my **Sessions and Rates** page for detailed descriptions of all of my services, including full-spectrum light therapy, aromatherapy foot baths, and reflective journaling time. • I created all of the artwork in this newsletter. Feel free to visit my "Quiet Girl Gallery" art blog for more examples of my work.