



MERRY CHRISTMAS
and
HAPPY NEW YEAR





**BEST WISHES FROM ALL OF
US AT FRISKERÖD**



Perhaps something inside us has to break in order for something greater to take its place. Rumi says: "**keep breaking your heart until it opens.**"

Christmas is in many ways the festival of love. And perhaps Funny is right when she mentions that love is often misunderstood, not as an emotion, but as a state of being. What do you do when it gets too hard? When it comes to this, Funny is very clear. We also live each other's stories. The idea of karma and consequence is not an individual one. It's not possible to make a career as the most alive, or spiritually aware individual.

We cannot exist without a context. The goats convey an image that looks like a flash of light. It has a rounded shape. It's a bit like looking at the horizon. In this glow you see a multitude of future, or possible, little goats. Like an almost materialized idea. A possibility.

There is life force, like the soul. As the foundation of all independence. And it comes from something unrecognizable. Something that cannot be defined in worldly terms. The image of the roundel. The place of all ideas. Like the edge of the horizon, the meeting place. Where the timelessness of the soul touches matter. The life that might be.



In this meeting point there is an experience, like a sensation. The experience of the moment of creation. And maybe that could be called love. The very basis of the experience of life. It's an image of a flame being lit. That it's lit means that it materializes. And immediately there is an *experience*.

But there is also another kind of love, more like an obsession. A passion, an irresistible pull. Like an intense yearning, or curiosity. A longing away from isolation and loneliness. That feeling could arise when we no longer experience love as in the power of creation. As if the two filled each other's void.



The goats speak about the human approach to what we eat. When goats eat, it's as if they are attracted to different plants, mainly by their sense of smell. In this way they get an instinctive sense of the vitality of plants. It also tells them how much and what to eat, to enhance the plants' own growth. If eating is to enhance the other, then the whole concept is very different.

They could see a difference between goats and humans here, and our more definitive approach. We eat things; harvest, sow, hunt and slaughter. There is an experience of power structures here, although it doesn't have to be that way.

If I was to relate to carrots, for example, as a large body - composed of many small ones. Then I might be able to harvest some and leave others behind - which might sprout. All in all, perhaps I could help to strengthen the survival of the carrot, from a wider perspective?

But the goats choose to put the question in an even broader perspective.

What can a human being do to increase the vital force of other living beings? Where in the body are the signals that would bring our species closer to such a possibility? How can we enhance the life around us?



*The last moving
of horses
between grazing
fields, at the end
of the season*



You see a goat walking towards the edge of a cliff. The longed towards the edge, going outwards; it's the same horizontal line. The same roundel and the same meeting point, only facing the other way. Is birth and death the same thing?

Is that what the message of love is all about? The miracle of surviving death (on the cross). To die and be reborn. To dare to face whatever comes your way.

We come from love, and that's where we return. There is no other way. Existence knows nothing else. Yet we forget...



This place was created out of a desire for freedom. An opened space. A place where there is enough space. A place where you could be welcome just as you are. Without the need to be perfect, shiny and polished. Obedient and well-adjusted, cute, or in any way appealing in the eyes of others. A place for the kind of love that never judges.

A place where there is space and tolerance for physical abnormalities, and the changes that come with natural ageing. And where there is time to heal injuries, without the need to continue performing (unless you want to).

Had I known then what trials were to come, I probably would never have dared. We are scrutinized, criticized and judged - more than any other business I know. But we also get more support than I ever thought possible.



The other week I put a blanket on a horse, who is making a big change in his muscles, while healing an old injury in his back. He was so proud that he had dared to challenge his old fears and was experiencing a new-found zest for life that was truly unmistakable. Still, I worried about what other people would think if they saw his "unmuscled topline".

He was so sad and ashamed when I hid him from the world, under the covers. Despite everything we have fought for here, for almost thirty years, and despite all the beautiful words - I was acting out of the deepest and perhaps most basic fear in human beings; the fear of not being accepted, and in the worst case excluded from the group. The fear of not belonging, of being abandoned. The fear of being judged.

It was that fear he had just got rid of - And perhaps that was what scared me the most?



As we look for ways to create a foundation, it's not just about managing and preserving pasture, but also about creating a stronger structure. Where we are more clearly united and can support each other.

I refuse to live in a world where there is no room for outcasts and deviants. So many other species remind us that all living things contain equal amounts of *life*. The spark, the meeting of spirit and matter is just as great, miraculous, and incomprehensible in all of us. *All life is a miracle*. It doesn't matter how big, or small you are. How short, or long, one's lifetime is. The amount of life, the immeasurable spark of life, is the same - no matter what. The only thing that seems to follow us past the threshold and over to the other side is our intentions.

***"Here is to those who never stop
believing this world
can be so much more than it is,
who knows there is a rose
inside of this bud
and to those who never stop using
their lives to water it."***

Chelan Harkin

The goats lie in one of the cubicles. You never know what they will do next. That's life with goats; there are no guarantees.

They sense the connection between the movement of the mind and the elasticity of the body. And how a constant change of direction affects our consciousness. It's a freezing late afternoon, as a small number of students bounce thoughtfully around the field together with the goats and sheep. It's a fascinating exercise. The thoughts never seem to have time to take hold. They mostly flicker by, as if at random. The presence in the body intensifies. Like dots. Imagine how much joy you miss, really.



Every morning starts the same. The goats, sheep and some of the ponies, having realized that the fences are goat-adapted (i.e. the goats can walk under and out, without damaging the fence), are eagerly waiting for the morning feed - just outside the door.

Then everything goes on at the same time in an exciting way. Water has to be replenished everywhere, while the horses that are supposed to be fed are rampaging around the yard, doing everything they can to eat from the neighbor's bucket. The ducks, chickens, sheep and goats find this amusing too. The dogs try to keep order, with the direction of their instincts somewhat unclear. The cats and guinea pigs are probably the calmest at this point.

Then it's off to the next winter pasture. Cleaning, breaking the ice in the water tubs, and then: listening. It's as if time stands still for a moment. The sound of hoof and hoofbeats. Horses, cows, sheep, and goats eating hay.

Now the stories are taking shape. In between...



I sincerely hope that 2023 will be a friendly year. A year of much listening. There is always another story, behind. Beyond. It's that same line again. The horizon, as described by the goats. The meeting point.

The memory-bearing horses in Jordan always talked about how stories could only emerge in the moment of sharing. I thought they memorized everything by heart. But it was the other way around. It's the stories that make *us* come alive.



Storytelling in the winter pasture

When we are born, we become part of a long line. We step into time. Across that horizontal line. The moment of creation; the manifestation of a universal love, in a physical form. And once that happens, we become mortal.

We want so much to document and memorize everything, because all experiences are constantly dissolving and returning back to the source. But that source is also within us. If we completely empty ourselves of content, as the guinea pigs and Funny describe, then everything will be contained. To listen is to *be*, in emptiness, in silence.

But that space can only arise if I have the courage to really live in the time in between, with all my senses open and with all the risks that entails. Every time I step into time, small parts of it will fall off. But even the un-lived time will disappear, and that is a greater sorrow. I wish 2023 went a little slower than previous years. I don't want to be done with anything. I don't want to become finished, or end anything.



I don't want to know where the road leads. Small glimpses of a greater reality are enough. Small everyday events, the repetition of intervals. It's probably best that way, stepping into the future unaware. With a desire to contribute in some way - one small step at a time - to a more empathetic reality.

THANK YOU
For this year
For all the help and support
for the time and listening
Thank you for all the stories,
that only arise when you share them...