

Hope



*"For the breath of life is the sunlight, and
the hand of life is the wind."*

Khalil Gibran

There is a lot going on right now. A major fundraising effort for a future foundation has just begun. But what is this idea all about? Maybe it's about wandering back and forth, between time and timelessness...

The other day, the horses at the winter pasture by Ödsmål conveyed an image of the planet, nature, all living things - as a coherent whole. All species seem to perceive it that way. Not as an idea, but as an actual reality. Funny describes the air, the atmosphere itself, as tiny droplets of water. Steam. In this way, all stories are conveyed through us. Nothing is separate from anything else. Yet we humans experience a unique form of separation. The horses at Ödsmål described it as a veil. Like the surface tension in a glass of water. Like a stretched soap bubble; our subjective interpretation of the world.

They described a duality in human beings, and they did not place any value on it. It was just an observation. It was as if we were experiencing the world twice. First the experience, then the awareness of it. Which thus became the individual interpretation.

Perhaps this is a talent that humans have. An asset. But when our interpretations of the world are not grounded in the common reality that we share with all other species, then this quality risks becoming destructive. Then we no longer understand the long-term/full consequences of our actions.

Instead, we confirm our interpretations of the world through conversations with other people. The created world becomes real, and we have no reason to believe otherwise.

All other species, of course, also have their own individual experiences of life. Life's insatiable desire to experience more life is constantly creating new, unique life forms. Our senses vary. This whole world consists of a myriad of experiences, which only life itself can contain in its entirety. All these experiences are what they *are*. They are personally experienced, but not reinterpreted, as human beings are. They are in direct and constant contact with all other experiences. Like one big "world-self", encompassing all contemporary life. Hence the perceived dissolution of linear time. Non-linear time as constantly ongoing, and thus not as mobile as linear time. A perpetual now, re-creating itself.

Our human mind finds it difficult to comprehend this simultaneity. Instead, we store our experiences individually, as if we were stacking plates on a shelf. In this way we have time for the double interpretation, the anchoring of understanding. We seek comprehensibility, logic, patterns and connections. It helps us in linear time. We can look both forward and backward, and perhaps it helps us to place ourselves (linearly) in history.

But what would happen if we did as the memorial bearers do, and instead pulled out all these threads - leaving the space completely free?

The image from the Guineapigs of the empty human. Without the ambiguity, and the blind faith in their own interpretation of existence. Humanity; without an ego. It would be a human who has fully let the world in - and is therefore also fully alive. Is that what we long for?

A long time ago, I had a momentary glimpse of what the world would be like if experienced from a completely non-empathetic perspective. Despite all the pain I have felt over the years in meeting others, this lack of feeling is the single most frightening thing I have ever experienced. A world without empathy, is a silent world. The loneliness is indescribable. Human isolation, in its purest form.

Nothing is gained by making yourself less vulnerable. It just seems that way. The pain of *not* feeling anything, is strangely greater than anything else.

Man experiences a distinct interpretation of his own world. In a sense, a boundless freedom, but without a real participation in a shared reality, an undertone of meaninglessness arises. There is something about the very sense of value. Which can only arise in the encounter with another living being. *In the encounter itself.*

In the silent world, without empathy, the only marker that would show that something is alive would be that there is a movement, something self-generating. That there is a difference. That movement, or growth, belongs to no one. Perhaps it belongs to the individual who discovers it. Or the one who can dissuade other owners from taking over. We dispose of resources, in relation to each other. Not in relation to the one we are dealing with: land, water, animals, trees and plants. In a world without empathy, they cannot possibly own themselves. They do not exist. Not as persons. Not as an actual *someone*.



So, what do you do if you are a being of another species trying to reach a human being? Somehow trying to signal that something must happen. I think of Pyret, the pony who started all this. Through a single encounter, with a terrified little kid, in the aisle of a stable in a riding school. I've told that story so many times, without ever having understood what really happened. But perhaps it's not about understanding?

From my side there was a curiosity. I wanted to get to the inside of her, to the thing that kept her from being cowed and broken down like the other horses. I wanted to reach something that could be described as her innermost *being*.

At the same time, I was terrified and didn't dare go near, physically.

If I really get into that feeling, what is it about? Fascination, sadness, longing and above all a kind of indefinable, wordless magnetism.

What was it all about for her? What was the opening that made her turn around there in the stall and choose to make contact? Maybe the question was open; *who are you?*

Desmond, another riding school horse - in a different place - repeated that very question much later. We were going to have a one-day course with a group of people and horses, the very first of its kind. And I had no idea what we were going to do.



Desmond conveyed an image of blindfolded people. So that one of the senses, which contributes to our risk of jumping to conclusions, would be shut down. Perhaps one of our greatest obstacles is just that; our ability to judge. Not the analysis itself, but the underlying *evaluation*. Which thus also becomes one of our most fundamental fears. How will the world judge us?

If I can't see the person I'm meeting, I can't see how they see me. This would facilitate the conditions for a real encounter, according to Desmond.

Half of the course participants had to put on blindfolds and spread out in the riding hall. While the other half fetched a number of horses, who expressed an interest in joining. The fact that the horses were not completely loose was a necessity for the blindfolded people to dare to let go of control and fully engage in the meeting. A safe haven, with room for vulnerability. These are the cornerstones of the new foundation, according to the horses.

One could say that Desmond's practice embodies the whole concept of man's way back into creation. In this way, we are constantly repeating variations of the same exercise. Who are you? *Can we reach each other?*

A sanctuary: what is that? A landowner, for whom we have been grazing for many years, says parenthetically that three beautiful, hilly natural pastures - bordering on the friendly river Grimån - are to be replanted. Just like that. Twenty-eight years of a close relationship between grazing animals and the land is broken. Hidden glades and gently grazed slopes down to the river. Pathways, which over years of trampling form winding patterns between tufts and bushes. People and animals, engaged in low-key conversations. Now it's all over. In its place; straight rows of identical small trees. Which, when they are big enough, will be harvested like grass. Stumps and sticks. What remains, when man has had his fill.

The surrounding forest will also be cleared. And because the terrain is so difficult, roads will be built through the pastures. There will be no room for animals anymore. They do not bring any immediate economic benefit. I think of all the work that goes into those open spaces, meadows, and woodland glades. All the mules, grazing. All the insects, the threads in the soil, the mycelium, and the stories of the water. The diversity of species.

When other species describe life's most basic principles, they always highlight life's irrepressible desire to experience itself - from ever new perspectives. Everyone who is born, grows and develops in a unique way. Each and every one of us, are the only one of our kind; representing the personal experience of life. One could say that *variety* is one of the absolute cornerstones of life and nature.

For some reason, humans tend to try to counteract this. We grow one and the same thing, on the same surface. We breed one kind of animal, which is then kept separate from all the others. We seek uniformity, create monocultures, segregate and separate.

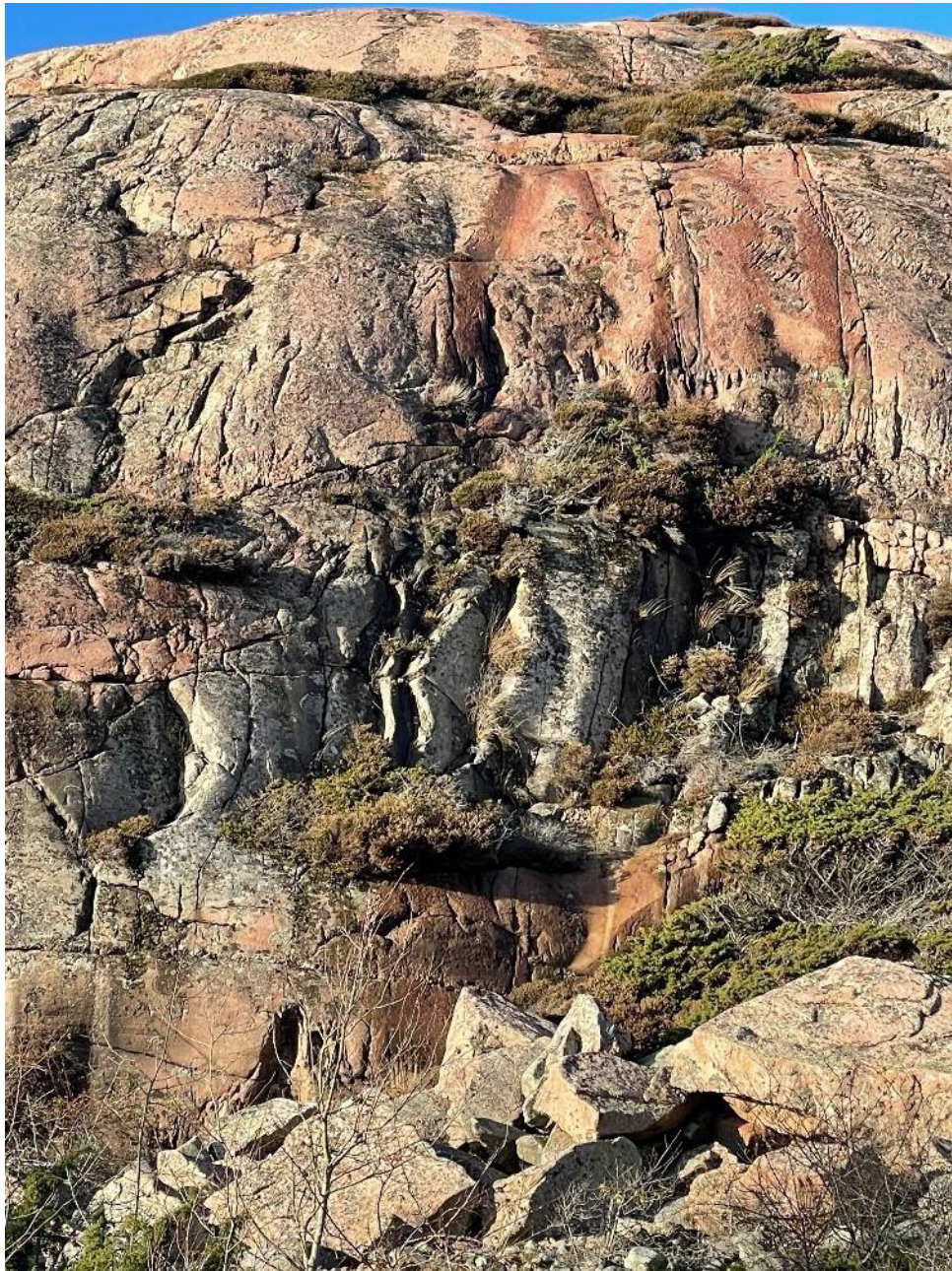
There is an unprecedented mass extinction of species. But we don't feel it, not inside, not really. It's something we read about and try to understand. Even without empathy - using our understanding - we could choose to protect lands that promote diversity. But that only happens on a very small scale. Because as long as we don't feel that it affects us personally, we seem to be unmotivated to act.

Who are you? The way back into creation. We can only rebuild the world, and help to heal what we have damaged, by re-establishing this connection. One encounter at a time.

If every tree, plant and animal individual is a *somebody*, a real person - only then can we meet. It can never be an idea. It must be felt. I must face the world with a burning passion, with a longing that is greater than anything else. I must burst that sound barrier and surrender despite all the fears, all the musts, and all the old habits.

Who are you? Like a whisper, right into the void that surrounds us. So that I finally let go of my interpretation and let the real world in - with full force.

***Only from your heart
can you touch the sky***



What do you do when you break down? When the world no longer holds together. As Celeste speaks to the broken, muddy ground of the winter pastures, you see a multitude of unraveled threads. Yet the picture is hopeful. It's as if the ground has an inherent capacity to heal itself and reconnect. If only there is enough time and space.

Is it the same with us humans? A certain load strengthens, just like with the ground. But then it becomes too much. I wake up in the small hours with an anxiety attack that no deep breathing in the world can touch. I have to let the world in, but I don't dare. It's too much every time. How many seconds does it take for a harvester to cut down a tree body? When I had just moved here - almost thirty years ago - 300 hectares of forest were cleared, not far from here. The forest machines worked non-stop, around the clock. After a week or so, I started bleeding internally. My kidneys somehow collapsed, which no one could really explain.

This time it's the heart. I'm lying on a cot in the medical center, with ECG leads attached all over my body. The rhythm is broken, and it feels like all the anchors are slipping. The pulse of life, the flow, the connection we share with all other life, is disrupted.

Does it make sense to hold courses, trainings where you practice the empathic extension of the self - when the pain in the world is so great? When I give lectures, the question always arise whether this can be turned off. As if there was a button, where you could turn empathy on and off. I've often been advised to create bubbles and shelters of all kinds. I understand that's well-intentioned, and that healthy boundaries are something else. A clear sense of self and healthy integrity. But beyond that, I just want to scream outright.

Surely, we don't need any more bubbles, boundaries, and frameworks. Of course we can't shut it off, we're not supposed to shut it off - any more than we already do. On the contrary. The only way through is to share our experiences. We are not meant to do this all alone. *We must do it together.*

That's what the foundation is all about when you ask the horses. A sanctuary. So that when we step into creation and get a glimpse of the reality we share with all other life; we experience a healthy and healing originality. A place where we dare to be, and where we can be fully ourselves. What I dreamed of creating for horses and other animals, they dreamed of creating for us humans. A meeting place - in reality.



A place that has been left alone to heal for long enough. A place that has been listened to. A space where the thresholds have begun to wear down. Where we've gone back and forth so many times that dreams have mixed in with reality.



Foxy reminds us of the importance of letting go. If we are to personify the world again, to make it real - perhaps we must first depersonalize love? I mourn the loss of the land with such a numbing force, I feel like my heart is going to burst. The graph on the ECG monitor looks like a heap of tangles. But what if I could love all the land, every tree and plant - equally? Not in the same way, but as a basic state?

I would still mourn the land. I would be worried about the future of the animals, and the pain caused by the exploitation would probably be just as strong. But there would be another kind of consolation. I can feel it momentarily when I allow myself to fall freely.

The news is talking about the mining industry in the north of Sweden. On a larger scale than what we are experiencing here, the reindeer now have to move. So that we can extract more rare metals, so that we can make more batteries. Fossil fuels are being replaced by electricity. We are racing forward, out of the common reality. We are prepared to do anything, as long as we don't have to slow down. The nurse, unplugging all the wires from the ECG machine, asks if I'm experiencing any stress in my daily life?

I own nothing in this world. No property, no other living being. Not even myself. Everything is on loan. Slowly I move towards an opening. At the same time as I have to fight for the animals here to have a place to live, I have to accept the loss. Grief must be given full space.

Blue light through the window in the early hours of the morning. Shadows of horses, moving among the hay bales in the meadow. Simon the Cashmere goat walks around thoughtfully. Their innocence is striking, like a blind trust. *They know nothing else.* It makes me think of a horse in Jordan that died during a major viral outbreak. I held his head in my hands as he left the body.

The last thing he conveyed was a sense of total innocence, and the knowledge that this was what would live on. Everything else is coincidence.

There is no other help for the pain. It is the only thing that can continue to exist despite all external circumstances. Humanity, emptied of content. Only the pure experience remains. *The world as it really is.* A place of peace. A space where we are not judged.



When the little stallion in Jordan dies, he is so brave. He just steps right out. The room is filled with a tenderness, like a loving indulgence of the whole world. He has no regrets; it wouldn't be possible anyway. This is possibly acceptance in its purest form.

Then he's gone, like the absence of a breath.

That's how easily we leave this world. That's how thin the line is. So why don't we care more about the time we experience? There is a single task, in which all roles in the herd eventually end up; the maintenance of living space, both within and outside the individual.

It also accommodates human creativity. In a place where we immediately experience the consequences of our actions, destructiveness subsides. Perhaps we can finally add something to this world. Something extra, that wasn't here before. Something that benefits the shared experience of life. Could that be a definition of art?

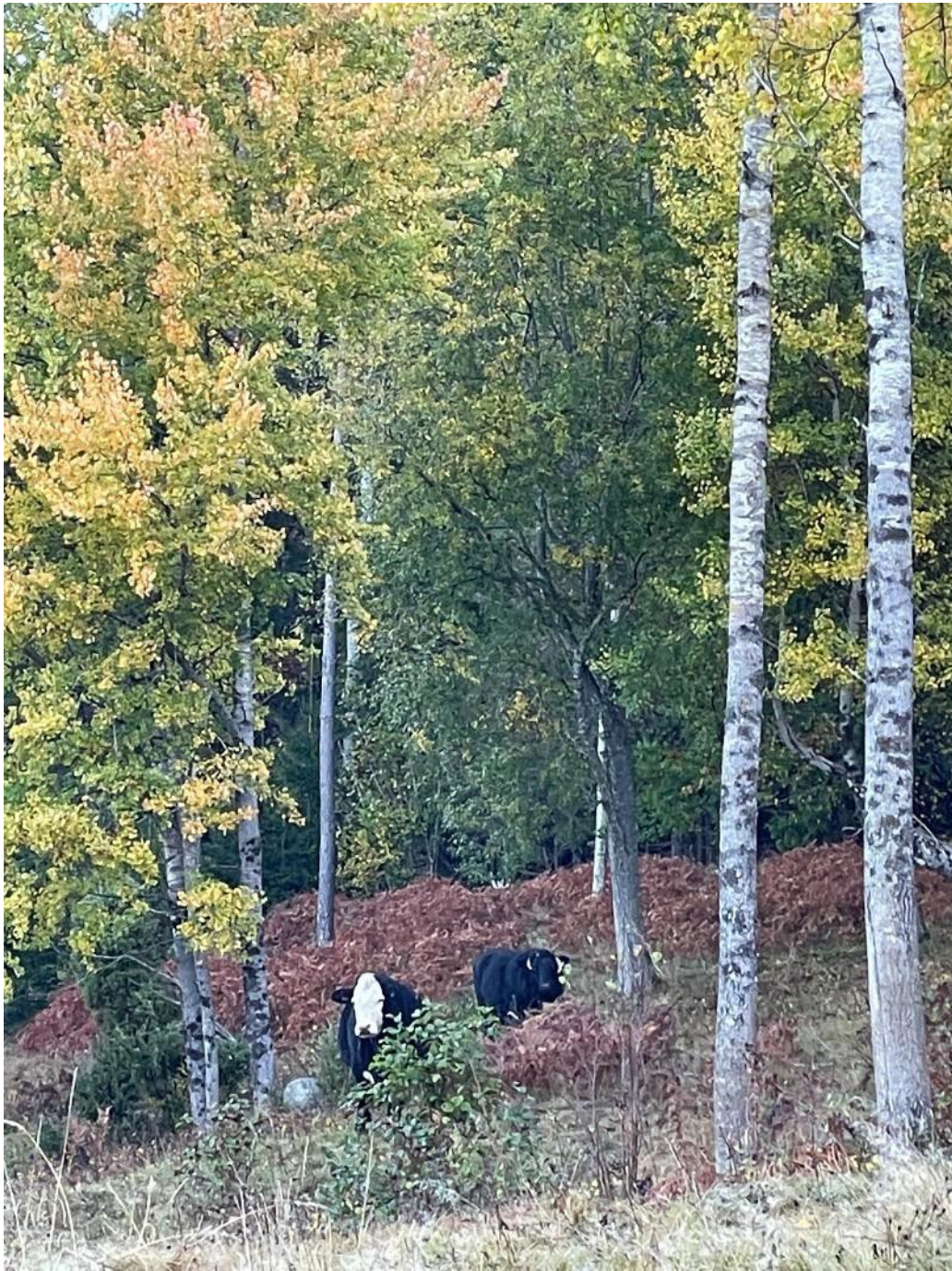


A loss creates an involuntary space. I wish so much that this time would never end. Early mornings down at the river Grimån, with grazing cows and horses. All the stories and the sense of belonging. Imagine how quickly everything can change.

Half of the pasture is gone, as if by magic. There is no visible, passable road. The dream of the foundation and the self-owned land is a fragile thread, like a prayer for mercy. Now the question is; give up, or give oneself away?

His last breath; the Jordanian stallion. The warmth in my hands. *I receive you; you can let go.* His words, not mine. It is I who die, while he lives on. Trust, the sixth line of the Hashemite horses. When all the doors are thrown wide open, and you give everything you have back to the world. There's nothing left to lose.

The healing of pain is within the pain. That's how Rumi puts it. All the land in the world, all the invisible threads that we take for granted. Because we don't see them. Because we don't think we need them. What if out of this sorrow, a ray of hope could be born?



Many thanks, to all of you who contribute in various ways to maintaining this space. Both in terms of day-to-day support, such as hay-sponsors, and urgent contributions to the creation of the Foundation. We have a long way to go, and I sincerely hope that together we can help keep the dream alive. Right now, we are experiencing grief. But there will be joy. *This too, shall pass.* My job is, and will be, to listen to every individual story. To keep moving back and forth, between the isolation of man and the wholeness of creation.

Sharing these stories, like an unbroken thread, ultimately creates a tapestry. Images that can help us remember. *To re-member*, as my Maori teacher used to say. To yet again become a member, a co-creator in this world.

THANK YOU