

Lynn's Zen
By C. Lynn Perry

It's a Marvelous Night for a Moon Dance...

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The other Saturday night was my rotation as the keeper of The Girls' girls. I rounded up our respective teenaged ladies and brought them back to my house for a sleepover. Or, as our Miniature Selves refer to it: a Stay-Awake-All-Night-Party!

After a really cheesy séance and a few surprisingly successful rounds of Ouija Board, I had barely settled back down after telling them to go to bed for the gazillionth time when I heard a noise outside. I went out back and there they were... all five of them. Dancing! Dancing, mind you! Under one of the biggest, fattest, fullest moons I have ever seen! It was one of those summer moons that hang all big and low and bright and orange-y in the sky.

I can only remember seeing a moon like that once before. And that was last summer.

Our Miniature Selves were at Kat's that particular Saturday, as she drew the short straw and was keeper of all our female offspring. Barb and I had gone over to Mona's. Mona has a horse farm complete with swimming pool, stables, and quite a bit of good, flat pasture land down a hill beyond a thin line of Georgia Pines. Two of her mares had recently foaled and Barb and I wanted to see them, swim in her pool, drink her margaritas, and eat her out of house and home... so naturally we invited ourselves over!

That night, there was one of those moons.

It was one of those hot summer nights with absolutely no breeze, temperatures in the 90s, and humidity in the upper five thousands; so we were outside by the pool trying to beat the Georgia heat. Barb had slipped off to the stables, and Mona had gone inside to whip up a batch of her world-famous margaritas, so I was temporarily left to my own devices. I was entertaining myself by standing with that moon to my back, and using the kimono I wear as a swimsuit cover-up to hold up my arms in order to create giant 16-foot-tall angel shadows on the tree line.

And that's when I heard her.

I looked to the field, and there was Barb, running. Now, Barb used to run track in college, so she's fast, I'll tell you! She was tearing it up, and amazingly enough, all those horses got their spirits up and had started to follow her. Their hoofs were churning on that pasture like a surf, their fluid manes picking up the moonlight like the breaking of waves. I just had to stare at her. We've been friends forever, but it was the first time I ever saw her run.

But that's not what captured me.

I watched her run like she was running for her life, a beautiful water-nymph outrunning a surf of horses. Maybe, outrunning the tidal wave of the divorce that was taking over her home. Or, maybe she was running towards something... towards hope, or perhaps towards salvation.

And, strangely enough, I felt guilty. Guilty I had seen her; that I intruded and did not turn away; guilty that with all that was going on in her life here I was toying with my own shadows. So, when she returned all sweaty and breathless, a light in her eyes that hadn't been there in quite sometime, this trespasser said nothing of the grass plastered to her legs like seaweed. Instead, I poured her a margarita, now knowing that she would not drown.

The other night, as I stood there watching our Miniature Selves dancing in the moonlight, I once again retreated into my own shadows and tamped down the urge to join them. I didn't want to break the spell. I watched their young bodies spin and turn, arms waving up to heaven amongst tiny whirlpools of fireflies, like little faeries, reaching for stars! I could feel their complete and unadulterated joy! My little spirits... my little goddesses.

And that's when it dawned on me why Barb was running.

She wasn't running from or toward anything! She was running back. Back to herself; back to that Before Place that I believe we all carry within us. You know, the Before-We-Got-All-Damaged-And-Banged-Up-By-Life-Place. The Before Place our Miniature Selves were creating for themselves in my backyard at that very moment.

And, right then I said a little prayer thanking God for all the wild, wonderful, spirited women in my life; big and small, young and old! I knew then our Miniature Selves would always be Ok because they had at least learned how to dance in the moonlight. Run or dance, it doesn't matter. It's about the *knowing how*. And, I looked up at that big, bad moon, hanging in the sky like the largest communion wafer ever, just ripe for the taking.

And I held up my hands and I laughed.

I didn't say anything to my daughter, Hannah, that night. I waited until the next morning, and I said to her the same thing I said to Barb the day after:

"I saw your spirit out playing in the moonlight last night. And, girl, it was drop-dead beautiful."