

From the Kitchen

24 June 2009

I was given this body and I take it for granted that it will carry me wherever my mind needs to go. However, some infinitesimal bug and a few million of its relatives have decided to take over and I have all but ground to a halt.



I was fine yesterday, doing what I wanted and needed to do, when I wanted and where I wanted. I came home and we had dinner – a lovely turkey mince with grated vegetable fry-up. Then I felt unusually tired and slunk off to bed. No, I wasn't tired, I was exhausted, wrung out, totally pooped. I tried to read for a while until even that was too much effort.

Within minutes of turning the light off I started to sweat and the glands in my neck were swollen. I dragged myself up and out to the kitchen. I took a large swig of vitamin C, garlic, horseradish and anything else I thought might help and then crawled back to bed. I gave myself up to the unstoppable oozing of my skin.

I love a good sweat, accompanied by a good fever. It makes me feel alive and it really pisses those bugs off. They can't hack it. It's a case of 'If you can't stand the heat ...'. In this state I am aware that my body is doing something it was made for: protecting itself, fighting off invaders and giving them what for. And the dreams that come with fever. Wow! Better than any drug (or so I'm told). Vivid, clear, colourful, outrageous, unforgettable. Wonderful grist for the mill of future story-telling.

Today I sit here in the warm kitchen, feeling a bit worse for wear. My head is fuzzy and seems incapable of producing words of great wisdom. I sat at the computer for a while and found the experience strange – foreign, not my normal way of interacting with things around me. Yet, when I drove to the forest with the dog earlier, the driving seemed to happen without a thought, fuzzy or otherwise.

In the forest I found a small, secluded area, surrounded by low tea-tree. The sun shone in to this space through the canopy and I lay back on my coat. The dog plonked down next to me. I ignored him and he eventually wandered off to explore. I dozed off and explored my inner realms.

These inner places are magical. Anything can happen. Nothing is impossible. Since childhood I have withdrawn there when the outside world became too difficult. In these realms I can feel in control – not as the dictator, but more as the interpreter who fits everything together and helps make sense of it.

Healing can take place in these inner realms. Maybe it is the only place that healing *can* happen, with the mind and intention out of the way.

A wet tongue on my cheek pulled me out of the reverie in which I had been floating. I turned my head to acknowledge my panting companion. Just behind him I saw a cluster of 'golden tops' – magic mushrooms to some. Maybe their emanations in the balmy winter air had fed the dream I'd been enjoying.

Now back home, my clarity has left me again. I'm aware of my (still) sore throat, the effort that goes into thinking about anything, and the heaviness in my limbs. I'll probably be in bed before my wife comes home; to sleep some more, perchance to hallucinate ...

Tomorrow I need to have the cottonwool lifted, as I'm due to sell my expertise, experience and insights for a day for a buck or two. It's a wonderful feeling, being valued enough to have someone pay me for all that. It's different from winning writing prizes or having someone appreciate one of my stories or poems. Here's someone willing to put his money where my mouth is.

I will go out on the road – 'have pen will travel' – looking for adventure as my trusty dog and I wander the countryside, finding lodgings wherever there is need of words – words to sort out conflict, words to woo a loved one, words to set the world to rights. The dog doesn't mind where I go, so long as he gets his food, his exercise and provided he can tag along. I read my latest verse to him and he wags his tail, his head slightly twisted to the side. I'm sure he understands the words, though the underlying nuances may escape him and he has no sense of the carefully crafted double entendres.

There, I told you I might hallucinate again.