

# *Connecting Family and Friends When Health Matters Most*

## **Journal of Kalli Rose Halvorson**

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 2009 8:42 PM, PDT** *written by Kalli Rose Halvorson*

Dearest dears,

Well, the current news is not good, in terms of life extension!

The left lung tumors "ate through" the lung sac, probably beginning around March or so. Now, every week, at least 1 liter of cancerous pleural fluid is generated around the left lung. This fluid increasingly compresses the lung, and thus often interferes mightily with normal breathing, walking and all other exercise.

This physical immobility and inability to breathe has been a more difficult adjustment than anything I've experienced thus far in my cancer dance. So I've started isometric exercises, and every stretch I can think of sitting in a chair.

We are draining the maximum amount allowed of pleural fluid--2 liters--every two weeks. The procedure is called thoracentesis, and the amount of relief it provides is truly amazing. However, each procedure does run a nasty risk of collapsing the lung, so eventually I might need a permanent "faucet" implanted in my thorax to drain the fluid regularly at home. (Sure hope I can still swim with this new bionic body part!)

Meanwhile, both lungs are pretty packed with small, medium, and large malignancies. Evidently, the most recent chemo, Avastin, didn't help. This means that for nearly 1.5 years now, no modern treatments (chemos, surgery, surgery) have helped to slow down the aggressive tumor growth in my lungs.

have a seemingly permanent cough and major shortness of breath. My chest feels distinctly uncomfortable here and there, since the tumors are pressing on nerves.

Therefore, I'm going to start experimenting with daily pain medications. Taking narcotics regularly is a big progressive step in the cancer dance, but daily discomfort is seriously getting in my way, and I don't see the point of suffering if it can be avoided. If I can obtain relief so as to maximize my quality of life, I'm all for it.

Pleural fluid also weighs heavily upon the stomach, which suppresses the appetite tremendously. Plus, coughing activates the gag reflex pretty regularly. So I lost 10 pounds in 4 weeks, and my naturopath is on the warpath getting my protein levels up to normal!

Next, lately I've been taking carboplatin, a reasonable chemotherapy choice. Treatments are every three weeks, and they are fairly hairy. Maybe this will buy me some time. Not many drugs are left: this is my sixth chemo treatment in three years, and I've already had all the "best stuff."

I continue, of course, with naturopathic and Chinese medicine.

So, I've turned a kind of corner during the summer of 2009.

Before, I always felt that I would hang in here on the Earth plane for quite a while, at least until 2012, and maybe even benefit from powerful new cancer drugs that would arrive in the next few years.

Now, I'm still open to miracles! but I'm also strictly prioritizing my time, and figuring out what I need to finish up. I have some writing

projects, some pilgrimages, some travel plans, and my CIIS defamation complaint appears to be moving ahead legally in September.

Finally, on some level, I am entirely well! PLEASE SEE ME THAT WAY. Considering all this physical stuff, I'm remarkably happy. Not that I'm entirely without fear of suffering and death--who really is?--but basically I trust the process, wherever it may be going.

I'm confident that I did what I came here to do, in terms of opening little portals to feminism and Goddess, although I could have done more, and still hope to do more with the time that I have left. When it's time for me to pass, it seems that it's because I am to serve in a new capacity, or perhaps just someplace else.

But my main source of happiness and gratitude is that I am nearly always held in Kali Maa's gentle, tender, loyal embrace. And her world, and my world, is nearly always a luminous place, especially when I'm sitting in my NASA anti-gravity throne on my awesome terrace, under a huge eastern sky abloom with heavenly lights and clouds. Here, my still-breathing body undulates peacefully, awash in the awesome calm of Oregon's trembling green leaves and branches. Jai Maa! Aum Namah Shivaya! [Sign My Guestbook](#) [Read Tributes](#)

**SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2009 10:44 PM, PST** *written by Kalli Rose Halvorson* Living a conscious death and embodying Durga Maa

Dear Friends,

Well, on the physical level, my cancerdance is becoming more arduous. Surgery, radiation, and 4 strings of chemo have not stemmed the growth of tumors in both lungs.

On another level, of course, all is well! Paradoxically, I am entirely healthy, in some important sense. Living a conscious life, and living the prospect of a conscious death, feel like the same thing.

And, since spirituality has always interested me more than anything

else anyway, it's as though I've received a promotion: proximity to death is a portal opening into a more vibrant embodiment of the divine.

So PLEASE SEE ME AS WELL, and know that it is the TRUTH!

Anyway, tomorrow, I'm leaving the Bay Area to be near my mother and four siblings, and to live in a greener, cleaner, calmer, less expensive environment in Oregon.

As this Venus retrograde takes hold, it's International Women's Day and the first day of Daylight Time. March 8 feels like a great day to move into the green of Portland, after 35 evolutionary years in the Bay Area's pan-cultural psychic seaport!

I'll be working with new doctors at the large teaching hospital in Portland, OHSU. I'll also be implementing everything I can learn from oncology specialists at the famous Portland institute of naturopathic medicine.

Anyway, here's how to reach me:

Kalli Rose (Tsering) Halvorson

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Portland, Oregon 97201

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I also have very good news on the legal front. My lawyer and I have definitely decided to move ahead with my lawsuit against the California Institute of Integral Studies. I lost heart with respect to my Ph.D. studies owing to a supreme trauma beginning in October 2005, just nine months before being diagnosed with cancer.

At this time, I organized an academic women's spirituality event that happened to celebrate the (cognate) contemporary Indic and ancient Mediterranean Goddess festivals of Durga/Kali and Demeter/Persephone. Astrologically, these festivals coincide in solar and lunar time with the Jewish holy night of Yom Kippur, so I was asked to reschedule or publicly apologize for my event.

Although under tremendous pressure to "cave in" in various ways from members of the CIIS student body, faculty and administration, I refused to reschedule or publicly apologize for the academic event that I had organized in honor of Goddess (specifically, the Western and Asian mysteries of the divine mother-daughter reunion).

I politely explained my refusal in terms of the history of CIIS; the history of my Women's Spirituality program; the history of women in patriarchy; and the U.S. Constitution. My statement of refusal was vetted by all participants in the event before being promulgated to the CIIS community (admittedly after a faculty member edited my statement without my consent, and delayed its distribution for 4 days).

Amazingly, my ongoing defamation as anti-Semitic by certain Jewish and Christian members of the CIIS community was subsequently upheld in secret meetings and correspondence for the next 5-6 months, without my knowledge. Not one member of the faculty or administration informed me of what was happening to my name, or stood alongside me publicly.

This occurred at a school founded by people from India, and one that has long appropriated the world's supreme symbol of Goddess and God--the Indic Sri Yantra--as its logo!

To me, this level of ignorance and hypocrisy is unconscionable. It's full-on religious fundamentalism. Unfortunately, the CIIS faculty and administration--so many of whom are Jews, or married to Jews--simply could not bring themselves to stand up to it. It was easier to spinelessly wallow in appeasement, and to let Kalli Rose Halvorson get slimed and take the hit.

What can I say. I bought the lie! Given the school's marketing, I thought I was SAFE from gratuitous attacks by enemies of my tantric faith. (My being is rooted in Buddhist (Dzogchen) emptiness, but also in the union of Goddess and God found in Hindu, Buddhist, indigenous, and shamanic cultures.)

Sure, ever since the 1970s, and in perhaps 40 countries, I had tracked

3,000 to 5,000 years of the Holocaust of the peoples of Goddess and God, so often accomplished by invading empires in the name of the (historically) all-male deity sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims. He will have no other gods before him; there is no god but him...

However, I never dreamed that I, as a scholar and devotee of Goddess and God, would be personally implicated in a similar syndrome of destruction!

On the few occasions when I have subsequently visited the CIIS campus, absolute strangers have glared at me with undisguised contempt and even hatred, so it's clear that some major stuff happened entirely behind my back.

Anyway, according to my (Jewish) lawyer, the defamation has never been retracted, and CIIS still declines to dialogue with my lawyer and me.

This professional character assassination was by far the greatest trauma of my adult life. I believe that it had everything to do with the onset of my cancerdance in the first place.

I look forward to finally holding CIIS publicly accountable through the non-violent methods of legal and media work. JAI DURGA MAA!

And as always, I'm grateful to my Buddhist MahaSiddha guru, Tröma Rinpoche, for encouraging me and supporting me in every way in this important yet challenging effort. AUM AH HUNG!

PS I uploaded a new photograph--a Shiva-Shakti Farewell to the Golden Gate!

Riding a rising tide of pacific light,  
Kalli Rose (Tsering)

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2008 12:57 PM, CDT** *written by Kalli Rose Halvorson* Recovery: VATS/Wedge Resections

It's been three weeks to the day since my VATS/Wedge Resection surgery at UCSF. Three rapidly-growing small tumors, ranging in size from maybe 7 mm to 2.5 cm, were removed from my right lung, along with three wedges of lung tissue.

Several days ago, I met with my avant-garde and personable thoracic surgeon, Dr. Michael Mann, who has removed as many as 27 cancerous nodes from a single lung during one surgery! Delighted with my x-rays, he'll be tracking my lungs for the next few years at least.

I can't thank you enough for sending so much great energy my way from a distance! My psychic spies have reported how much love surrounded the operating room, and so much of it was because of you!

Well, the big surprise of this thoracic surgery was the savage discomfort. My only other surgery, a hysterectomy, was pain-free compared to this recent operation.

So, although Bear prepared me well in terms of surrender to the surgery, and although I was blessed to avoid a massive thoracotomy incision, my blind spot, my Heel of Vulnerability, was most definitely radical pain.

I needed to numb the effects of all those sharp serpentine teeth, all the needles, scalpels, tubes, staples, and stitches. Far more importantly, I needed relief when my chest cavity nerves fired insanely in response to every movement, whether inhalation, swallow, or cough. (Regular deep coughing was necessary to prevent pneumonia after the chest drainage tube was removed two days after surgery).

Yet at best, during my five days in the hospital, it felt as though only the edge was taken off the pain, although, owing to three incisions, I had essentially been shot thrice in the chest. Still, I was so happy to be alive, to have avoided a thoracotomy, and to have my fabulous sister Kristi around, along with all of your beautiful bouquets!

Why was the going tough? For one thing, I suspect that the spinal epidural did not “take” that well; it often doesn’t, according to Dr. Mann. Plus, the Pain Control Team at UCSF prescribed pills that did not contain much, if any, morphine. Finally, after the chest drainage tube and epidural were removed two days after surgery, I didn’t receive any additional painkillers to compensate for the loss of whatever help the epidural may have once provided.

I’m sure the Pain Control Team had excellent reasons for being so cautious with respect to drugs. But at dawn on my birthday—after three days of intense discomfort, and after not sleeping much for three nights—I felt the staff react with practiced aplomb to my new “irrational patient” persona. Pissed aplenty, and making a bunch of noise, I sobbed, begged, and insisted upon AUTOMATIC administration of MORPHINE drugs every FOUR hours. I got what I wanted, and if I ever have another thoracic surgery, I’ll be prepared to advocate firmly along these lines.

Special thanks to Liona Maa, who plucked me from the UCSF hive/labyrinth on Saturday night, and sailed around the San Francisco streets to fill my morphine prescriptions. Morpheus, a deity indeed in times of need! Happily, his pills have cushioned my days for the past 2.5 weeks. At this point, I’ve weaned myself considerably from his gift, taking only one dose every 12 hours. Soon, when I will make the leap and live morphine-free, I won’t be so sleepy, so constipated, so sluggish...

My first massage and acupuncture sessions with Heidi and Amy were hallucinogenic, while profoundly unlocking deep tension, body armoring, and exhaustion.

Also, several days ago, in a water journey hypnotherapy session with Becky, I swam with a big mother dolphin who positioned her body firmly up against my right side. I became a marine creature, breathing with big open gills, and my right lung seemed to relax on a cellular level, to expand more fully, to trigger less pain. It’s a place I go regularly now, into the water with that heavy, substantial dolphin body pressed up against me.

Twelve days after surgery, I held a gathering for the close friends who have done the most to dance this cancer with me since 2006. My sister Karin and brother Carl blew into town; without their help, the event never could have been organized. Around 35 of us feasted at "Kalli Rose's Happy Patient Chinese Banquet." We also celebrated the Red Dragon of western medicine and my 53rd birthday.

A fourth intention for the banquet arose when I asked myself why I was fighting so hard to stay alive in the first place. I've always seemed to move with one leg in this world, and the other anchored in another dimension. For example, my first childhood poem ran as follows:

CAGE LIES COLD, EMPTY  
TAKE HEART! FOR THERE ARE ALWAYS  
OTHER WORLDS TO SING

When our second grade teacher read our haiku homework out loud, I will never forget her horrified glance after reading my submission! Anyway, I knew who I was 46 years ago: my fundamental connection to this planet has always been held at somewhat of a distance, unfortified by marriage, children, or accumulation of resources.

Anyway, my reason for fighting for life turned out to be contemporary human CREATIVITY. In my case, this referred to religious, spiritual, and cosmological creativity within the field of feminist and/or Goddess and God-based traditions. So, since eight of my guests were either authors of feminist/Goddess spirituality books, or founders of Goddess temples, we celebrated their accomplishments as an octave of Sarasvati, singing to Her and to Lord Shiva.

Each honoree received a garland of 54 roses that hung all the way to the floor. Thus adorned, each honoree stood for me as a living murti, or embodiment, of Goddess. (Fifty-four amounts to half a mala, the 108 steps of the body of Goddess around the ecliptic, or apparent path of the Daystar from our perspective on Earth. Also, my body has begun its 54th orbit of Earth around the Daystar, or year.)

Joanna Macy also acknowledged my astrological work, wherein Maa

speaks from stars, constellations, and planets (Buddhist Maa Prajnaparamita's aspect as Deep Space, or Hindu Maa Kali and Lord Shiva's fusion of emptiness, time, and space).

It was a love fest—great for stimulating the immune system! But I admit, I overdid it a bit... just a bit...

Anyway, this week, I'm getting back to work: research for astrology clients, astrology writing, the healing potential of a possible lawsuit, figuring out my supplemental Medicare policies, looking into Section 8 housing, etc.

As far as building my immune system and strength goes, I'll take a restorative journey to the Sekhmet Temple in the Nevada desert next week, to breathe lots of clean, dry desert air and enjoy clear views of the planets and stars. At the end of September, I'll visit my sister in Paris, to walk a lot in neighborhoods, museums, and parks, to enjoy the beauty of life. I'm also looking forward to Tina Turner, Madonna, and the San Francisco Ballet's NUTCRACKER performances in October, November, and December.

The future? I'm not really thinking about it. Cancer means that life cannot be planned in advance.

But since people tend to ask, chances are, I'll have an identical surgery on my left lung at some point, since two pesky nodes are still there, most likely growing to beat the band. My oncologist also wants to put me back on some kind of chemo to attack any lingering microscopic disease.

You see, an intense 10/07 to 4/08 chemotherapy cocktail shrank all five lung tumors by an average of 50%, and rendered them far less active. But as soon as I reached my lifetime maximum on that cocktail, and switched to another chemo called Gemzar this spring, the tumors began to grow again, and to become more active. So, perhaps this last 8-month chemo regimen was a wash; I'll ask my oncologist what she thinks.

I'm hoping that the next year of cancer treatments will be less intense, so that I can experiment more with dietary approaches to healing from cancer. People often don't realize that heavy cancer treatments take such a toll on the body, it's dangerous to make radical dietary changes, such as switching to entirely macrobiotic or vegan fare, or going entirely off animal protein. During treatments, I have really only been capable of stabilizing my body with organic veggies, clean meat, wild fish, grains, nuts and fruits, tons of supplements and water, and mild exercise like walking and restorative yoga.

I'd also like to investigate an alternative cancer hospital in Tijuana named OASIS OF HOPE, where the first priority is rebuilding the immune system.

But for me, life these days is all about what's happening in the moment, in the now, without sliding too much into the future or the past.

And even in the very worst apparent moments, there's always a secret or inner dimension, where something wonderful is happening at exactly the same time. Where the death is, is where the life is... and that's who we call Maa!

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 2008 9:23 AM, PDT** *written by Kalli Rose Halvorson*

Hi all,

Like Liona said in the GUESTBOOK (thanks, Liona!) things went amazingly well in surgery. The VATS incisions and wedge resection procedure were sufficient. As a result, I didn't lose the lower third of my right lung, and only a chunk was taken. Buying time through conserving body parts is a very big part of my life extension program, which my surgeon Dr. Mann thoroughly understands and agrees with, so he was delighted to be able to offer me this procedure. I'm sure that it went so well because of your support, so THANK YOU! Today is all about managing pain and getting my lung drainage tube and epidural taken out. Talk to you soon, Kalli Rose

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 2008 8:32 PM, PDT** *written by Kalli Rose Halvorson*

## SERPENT PRIESTESS

Ever-present in the northern sky, Hanged Woman/Heroine prays, flings Herself forward, and falls precipitously toward the promise of incarnation between the horizons of Earth. She embodies fearlessness in Her plunge toward physical life.

Somersaulting and landing upright to the south, She gives rise to Her twin sister, Serpent Priestess, who naturally possesses a Snake, Heel of Vulnerability, and Tree of Her own. These two female siblings literally reflect one another, and the central teaching of Serpent Priestess is yet another mirror: fearlessness not about physical life, but about physical death.

For unlike Her northern sister, who hangs above the horizon at all times, in circumnavigation around the still center of the unmoving north, Serpent Priestess firmly grounds Herself in the Earth plane, and its cyclical realm of biological birth, growth, death, dissolution, and regeneration.

She stands upright on the Earth plane because of Her stance on the baseline known as the ECLIPTIC. The glittering line of the ecliptic marks the apparent path of the Sun, the physical source and central star of our solar system.

Admittedly, the ecliptic is an imaginary line, since the apparent path of the Sun is actually created by Earth spinning around on its axis every day! However, the ecliptic line is a helpful fiction, in terms of human orientation in the ever-shifting mechanics of deep space.

If you open your inner eyes, you'll easily spy the solar track of the ecliptic arching roughly from east to west, like a red ruby headlight illuminating the central lane of a celestial freeway.

The Sun, or Daystar, is not alone on this heavenly road, since our

whole solar system is essentially a flat plane in space. So, the visible light beings we call Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn also appear to move along the ruby solar lane of the ecliptic as they orbit around the Sun. In addition, Moon's orbit around Earth loops up and down, creating solar and lunar eclipses, always encircling the ecliptic.

Drifting above and below the ruby solar ecliptic in their own unique paths, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn radiate light long associated with pearls, emeralds, diamonds, coral, and yellow and blue sapphires. Traveling along, these colorful messengers of stellar intelligence may seem to bunch up together, spread apart from one another, and even move in reverse, but they never move very far from the central solar lane of the ecliptic on our solar system's celestial freeway.

The visible astrological planets therefore trail their rainbow lights around the feet and legs of Serpent Priestess, and around the trunk of Her Tree, as these two stand together upon the ecliptic, neatly planted in the sparkling visible plane of our solar system.

As such, the stars of Serpent Priestess cross our horizons every day, rising in the east and setting in the west, disappearing and resurfacing according to the season and time of day, just like the colored lights of the Sun, Moon and five visible planets, and just like the other 12 constellations of the zodiac ranged along the ecliptic's ruby red lane.

But among all the zodiacal constellations, the specialty of proud Serpent Priestess is unique. She spells absolute triumph whether one faces the mere possibility of death, or the inevitable end of a given lifespan.

Her prowess about the fact of mortality stems from Her Heel of Vulnerability. One of Her feet is terribly close to, and perhaps even bitten by, the piercing zodiacal harbinger of passing from the Earth plane: a death-dealing stinger star just to the south, lodged in the very tip of Scorpio's tail.

However, Serpent Priestess wields a formidable ally in Her arms and

hands, one who leads Her to victory in any and all circumstances:  
Earth Serpent.

At times, reminiscent of the ancient female pythoness oracles of Delphi, Serpent Priestess wears Her Earth Serpent like an old-fashioned mink stole. She cradles its head and tail lovingly in Her two outstretched arms, like the millennia of nomadic women who stamped their heels into the ground, dancing around fires and wheeling across deserts beneath Her stars, or like today's urban belly dancers around the world.

More frequently, however, Serpent Priestess bears two tiny snakes aloft. On one hand, She fearlessly milks the first wiggling asp, harvesting its reptilian poison as an antidote, working in Her capacity as a healer, medicine woman or shaman to stave off physical death. Since the undulating viper in Her other hand writhes with the muscles of inevitable death, She also nourishes a courageous spiritual focus during transition, when one falls off the edge of Earth into sheer emptiness; when one is stripped of all familiar reference points; when one will never again return to Earth in quite the same way. And, as the vital airs of the body slowly settle into silence, She properly sends the deceased further on his or her way.

Her passionate Cretan devotees designed Her ritual dress with seven flouncing tiers, in honor of the seven visible lights trailing around Her feet, legs, and Tree. But over time, Her female body was eclipsed in this part of the world, leaving only male deities like Mercury and Chiron. She survives somewhat in the medical insignia of the caduceus: Her two Serpents are twined in a mating dance around the wooden vertical wand of Her Tree, and crowned with the double wings of the upper shamanic world.

Great Female Bear now seems to be somewhat approving, even satisfied. Although I've barely scratched the surface of what She has to offer, it's as though She feels that I have received everything I need from Her in order to approach surgery, thanks to the medium of the Two Bears, Winged Serpent, Hanged Woman/Heroine, and Serpent Priestess.

It's taken a lot longer than I thought it would, but I now remember the way that Great Female Bear trudges. Her own pace is leisurely, even lazy, and She really does slow me down.

Suddenly, in Her typical uneven, stumbling, and almost drunken gait, Bear makes Her approach. Suddenly nervous at the thought of our impending intimacy, I remember the only time I felt Her touch before. Twelve years ago, She gently encompassed my neck within Her jaws, and silently immobilized my head for hours. It seemed to be Her way of insisting that I receive and transmit a bit of Her story.

This time around, Great Female Bear lumbers to full height and balances Herself, while surveying my full frame from close range. Her front paws quickly slide about my chest, underneath my arms, and all the way back to my spine. Resting the tips of Her extended claws on either side of my backbone, She presses each curved nail into the thin canyons of flesh that separate my ribs. Satisfied with our respective positions, She then begins to scrape softly and playfully along the ribbon-like grooves of my ribcage, moving only from back to front, and never in reverse.

As the repetitive scraping movement of Her claws turns into a kind of subtle percussion instrument, its beat seems to hypnotize Bear. In a low musical voice, She rapidly intones a seven-tone series of teachings, one for each of Her major Womb and Birth stars:

The surgeon and his allies will make definitive incisions, and staunch my blood;

Further incisions will be perfectly designed;

My blood will slow, and its surge of red tides will be perfectly controlled;

Waves of skin, bones, muscles, ligaments, and blood vessels will all be carefully parted;

The section of the right lung holding the cancerous tumor will be cut away, parted for good from its etheric double;

The remainder of the lung will be sealed with expert concentration, as tiny fibers become the new hemlines of lacy lung tissues; and

The original waves of blood vessels, ligaments, muscles, bones, and skin will mostly be stapled or stitched back into place.

Having delivered her clawed blessing and one-octave message, Great Female Bear is obviously famished. She lopes away on the hunt, since I have nothing tasty to offer. In lieu of food, I call out a few of Her Mediterranean epithets: "Hail Artemis! Great Female Bear in Heaven and on Earth; Mistress of the Northern Pole; Ruler of the Stars before Zeus; Protector of all Daughters; Lady of all Animals!"

Pleased by my devotion, She wheels about and quickly hurls a final series of transmissions: "To heal from cancer, live the way I do. Make food your first priority, and eat like me: natural vegetables, wild fish, berries, honey, and herbs. Seek green and white landscapes; seek water. Move like me: walk, stretch, and swim a lot. Move slowly most of the time. Sleep, and don't be afraid to look lazy."

May I remember Bear, and all of Her stellar teachings, when I fall awake in a pale room pulsing with hums and beeps, my speaking voice replaced with a pad and pencil. I'll be indigenous to space, but hanging in surrender; conscious, but streaming with drugs; solitary, but dependent upon machines governing my breath; intact, but painfully bitten by incisions, needles and tubes.

And thanks to my western surgeons, doctors, and nurses—Heroines and Heroes all, wielding their healing Serpents—I'll be liberated from a stubborn and aggressive cancerous tumor, and allowed to trade a chunk of lung for a little more time.

JAI MAA!

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 8, 2008 11:20 AM, PDT** *written by Kalli Rose Halvorson*

## SUPPORT FOR SURGERY ("THE SURGE")

No need for condolences! I really can't wait for surgery. For nine months, I worked unsuccessfully with an awful course of chemotherapy to shrink this tumor, and it's a good time to finally let it go! Moreover, I am incredibly fortunate to have some of the best doctors in the world at my back. Finally, it's either get this surgery or die; which would you choose?

Now, if you are wondering what's going on next week, or would like to make a gesture of support, here are some guidelines:

- \*COMMUNICATION
- \*FOR DISTANT ENERGY-SENDERS
- \*FOR VISITORS TO UCSF HOSPITAL (mass transit, driving, parking, etc.)
- \*BIRTHDAY REQUEST: August 15

Thank you so much in advance!

### \*COMMUNICATION\*

Please use my sister Kristi's cell phone to learn what's up—503 313 0545—from Tuesday, August 12th to Thursday, August 14th.

You may leave messages on my cell phone—510 220 9137—as of Friday, August 15 (my birthday!). I'll get back to you eventually, but I may use email, because it takes so much less physical energy. Thanks for understanding!

Email love notes are also GREAT!

### \*FOR DISTANT ENERGY-SENDERS\*

Profound thanks to those of you who will be sending energy on August 12 with prayer, meditation, visualization, reiki, or whatever works for you! In case you wish to "zoom in" on my immediate environment in

terms of space and time:

**SPACE:**

In the top 10 of US hospitals, the UCSF complex seems immense, crowded, busy, intense, and sharply professional. I envision my temporary abode as half-labyrinth and half-hive.

**TIMING:**

My Tuesday, August 12th surgery will begin at 11:20 am PDT and last for 2-5 hours on the 4th floor of Moffitt. (Duration is unknown, because VATS/wedge resection is fast, and thoracotomy/lobectomy is slow.)

After emerging from anaesthesia, I'll be in the Intensive Care Unit for 1-2 days (10th floor of Moffitt).

Then I'll move to a private room on a ward for folks with chest wall incisions (10th floor of Long).

I will be discharged no earlier than Sunday, August 17th, and will initially recuperate at Nancy Leatzow's home, behind the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley. JAI MAA, NANCY MAA, PRIESTESS OF LAUGHTER!

\*FOR VISITORS TO UCSF HOSPITAL\*

505 Parnassus, San Francisco  
[www.ucsfhealth.org](http://www.ucsfhealth.org)

**EASY MASS TRANSIT:**

Muni streetcar line N-Judah (catch at Market St. BART stations) stops at 2nd Avenue and Irving Street. Muni bus lines 43-Masonic, 6-Parnassus and 66-Quintara stop directly in front of the hospital.

**DRIVING DIRECTIONS:**

1.) From the East Bay and Oakland Airport (I-80):

After crossing the Bay Bridge, stay in the second lane from the right. EXIT to the right on 101 North/Golden Gate Bridge. Get in the left lane and EXIT on OCTAVIA BLVD/FELL STREET. After 4 blocks, turn LEFT on FELL Street. After 2 miles, get in the far right lane and turn LEFT on

STANYAN ST. After 1 mile, turn right on Parnassus Ave.

2.) From Marin County (Highway 101):

From the Golden Gate Bridge, take the "19th Avenue" exit (on right 1/4-mile after toll plaza) onto Park Presidio Drive. You will pass through Golden Gate Park, where Park Presidio Drive becomes 19th Ave. Go 3 blocks past the park, turn right on Kirkham St., right on 20th Ave., and right (east) on Judah St. Judah becomes Parnassus Ave. at 5th Ave.

3.) From the SF Airport or South Bay (Highway 101):

As you approach San Francisco, stay in the left lane and follow the signs for 101 North/Golden Gate Bridge. EXIT to the left on 101 North/Golden Gate Bridge. Get in the left lane and EXIT on OCTAVIA BLVD/FELL STREET. After 4 blocks, turn LEFT on FELL Street. After 2 miles, get in the far right lane and turn LEFT on STANYAN ST. After 1 mile, turn right on Parnassus Ave.

4.) From the Peninsula (I-280):

Take I-280 north. As you approach San Francisco, stay in the left lanes and take the "Golden Gate Bridge" exit onto 19th Ave. (north). Proceed on 19th Ave. for 3 miles. Turn right (east) on Judah St. Judah St. becomes Parnassus Ave. at 5th Ave.

**PARKING:**

Parking lot directly across Parnassus from the UCSF Main Entrance. 1 hour \$2; 2 hours \$6; etc.

**HOW TO FIND ME IN THE HOSPITAL:**

When you get inside the Main Entrance at 505 Parnassus, confirm my location at the Information Desk. You'll need to know EXACTLY where the elevator is in order to get to the Intensive Care Unit at Moffitt, 10th Floor, or my private room at Long, 10th Floor.

**WHAT TO BRING:**

It's TOTALLY OPTIONAL to bring any of the following, but to be honest, hospital water and food are less than what I consider to be the best, so here are two ideas:

Bottled WATER (Gerolsteiner is my favorite, but I also love Fuji, Evian, Panna, San Pellegrino, Apollinaris, Crystal Geyser, etc. Really ANYTHING but the hospital tap!)

Organic SALAD or wholesome SOUP. Tiny portions are fine. Whole Foods is easy, and I'll reimburse you!

HOW TO GET FED YOURSELF:

There's a decent cafeteria on the 2nd floor, but you'll have to return to the Main Entrance to find the correct elevator. There's also a Food Court across Parnassus, including a sandwich bar called PALIO with an outstanding panoramic view.

\*BIRTHDAY REQUEST: August 15\*

You See Flowers (415) 476 2898 offers free delivery to my hospital room, and I... love... flowers!

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 8, 2008 10:40 AM, PDT** *written by Kalli Rose Halvorson* CaringBridge Post 8/08/08

HANGED WOMAN/WINGED SERPENT/HEROINE

I'm surprised that Bear is pointing me towards the lights of Hanged Woman. How could these stars relate to lung surgery?

Yet over the years, I've learned to trust the promptings of Great Female Bear. She knows far more than I do about the intelligence of stars; She relays truths more compelling than those I find in books.

So, beginning to listen to Great Female Bear, and allowing my inner eyes to sweep directly south of Little Female Bear's four Womb stars, I find the jewelled figure of Hanged Woman.

At once, Hanged Woman's Heel of Vulnerability stands forth, the touchstone of Her dynamic message. Her heel is bitten by the fanged head of an all-important energy system, WINGED SERPENT.

Winged Serpent's three spinal curves—small, medium, and large—

undulate throughout the northern circumpolar sky. Its generous curving embrace encompasses the stellar bodies of both Female Bears.

Moreover, its vast serpentine vertebral neurosystem twists most of the way around the anchor point at the tip of Little Female Bear's miniature Birth Canal. This sacred point—the fixed axis of the celestial North Pole—is also known as the World Tree, its motionless trunk and root solidly embedded in the northern hemispheric sky, and indeed, at the edge of the known universe.

Therefore, Hanged Woman's Heel of Vulnerability—and by extension, Her whole body—is neatly infused with the astonishing power of Winged Serpent coiling around the World Tree, as well as the union of the two Bears.

With so very much poured into the fragile framework of Her human form, Hanged Woman must respond! Her answer is the two-beat ballet of prostration, the respectful dance of offering up Her entire being to the universe.

First, She rests upon Her Heel of Vulnerability, and kneels in meditation. Cloaked in a glittering prayer shawl, crouching to concentrate Her forces, Her consciousness fills with original, unfabricated awareness.

Secondly, suspended by the same bitten Heel, She uncurls Her spine, and extends her whole body to hang upside-down. Ejected from the secure precinct of perfect stillness, the sprawling northern garden of the World Tree, She falls headfirst toward Earth in full surrender, willingly offering Her whole being up to the universe.

Hanged Woman is not alone. She has a huge family of brothers—HEROES all—from whom She is essentially indistinguishable. Their heels are bitten, like Heracles and Achilles. They dangle in surrender like Odin and the Hanged Man of the Tarot. They bow in prostration like Jesus, who prayed alone in the garden before hanging in crucifixion.

Hanged Woman's myriad male siblings constellate heroism for us all. Driven by the stinging goad of vulnerability during fleeting lifespans, they still managed to receive and transmit supreme truths and healing forces for the benefit of all beings.

Their heretofore silent sister thus merits a second name: HEROINE. Pitched headlong into the tumult of earthly life, Heroine is perfectly fearless. Her power turns upon the constant meditative discipline of remembering Her original nature, and that of all beings. Heroine, the female noble and free, is a story now written in the stars. For as ancestors of the future, we name the sky in accordance with our own lights.

I'm struck with gratitude for Great Female Bear's generous ability to help me overcome my shyness and to speak from my perch on Her back. Through the medium of Hanged Woman, Winged Serpent, and Heroine, Bear has steered me toward the subtle outlines of an ancient tale of origin. It was replaced in many parts of the world by the biblical story of the Serpent, Tree, Woman, Man, and Fall, the girlhood legend that first inspired me to become a feminist.

Or, perhaps Bear would simply like us to hear Her own story for a change...

I am impatient. This blog section is getting way too long, and I want to get back to the topic of my cancer dance.

However, Bear insists that I go one step further amidst the wild rivers of sky. Before I can proceed to surgery, I am to articulate what happens after Hanged Woman/Heroine circles about in a celestial cartwheel and lands firmly on her feet, solidly ensconced in our solar system.

For here, Hanged Woman/Heroine gives rise to Her constellational twin sister: the towering, triumphant female figure known as SERPENT PRIESTESS, She who enshrines fearlessness in the face of physical death. (to be continued)

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 30, 2008 9:13 PM, PDT** *written by Kalli Rose Halvorson* I just had a peek at the Guestbook entries! They are really adorable; it's great to hear from you! Thank you for all of your love and friendship and support!

Surgery at UCSF is scheduled for Tuesday, August 12 (most likely, at 7:30 am).

Fortunately, I worked with an excellent electional astrologer ([www.leelehman.com](http://www.leelehman.com)) to negotiate the best date possible. It was not easy, given my surgeon's limited availability and the possibilities at the UCSF operating rooms.

My sister Kristi is coming down from Oregon for the occasion, for which I am unspeakably grateful, since I'll probably be in the Intensive Care Unit for around 24 hours afterwards, and unable to report much of anything to anyone!

[NOTE: In a later post, I'll give you all the information you'll need about how to contact or visit me after I've come out of I.C.U. at UC San Francisco.]

Good news: in the preliminary tests, I learned to my amazement that in spite of my inability to do aerobics or weight-bearing exercise for two years, I'm still above average in heart and lung function compared to others my age. Chalk it up to staunch Scandinavian genes, I suppose!

At any rate, the jobs of meeting my surgeon, setting the date, and completing the preliminary heart and lung inspections are finally finished. All systems go!

With a sense of perfect timing, I'm off to the annual Kali Puja in Laguna Canyon this weekend ([www.kalimandir.org](http://www.kalimandir.org)). JAI MAA! I can't wait to pay my respects to Maa and Elizabeth Harding at magical Anneliese's School; hang out with other passionate devotees and LA buddies; enjoy the phenomenal music, dance, and food; buy my annual supply of Kali Mandir books and music; and get back to the

Laguna Beach seashore.

Plus, this weekend I'll return to my notes about the surgical visions from Bear and Hanged Woman. With any luck, I'll post something from them both in just a few days!

**THURSDAY, JULY 17, 2008 11:20 AM, PDT** *written by Kalli Rose Halvorson*

Thoracotomy, the Völva, and Great Female Bear

The Thoracotomy details temporarily freaked me out, but since Great Female Bear made an appearance and stabilized my state of mind, I thought I'd bring Her into this blog.

It all started when I began to imagine my upcoming surgery, in order to mentally rehearse the event and visualize the desired outcome. As soon as I asked myself how I could feel at home in the chilled operating theatre, my mind took off toward arctic territory, like a homing pigeon released from a cage.

While under the knife, I saw that I might sail to the nordic land of my immediate ancestors, and pay formal homage to the Völva, the highly-respected Scandinavian lineage of seeresses. Although these priestesses were persecuted and killed as the God of Abraham encroached upon their spiritual and medical territory, I've often felt that the Völva are still alive, since their presence has always seemed to support my astrological work. Perhaps the Völva would support my surgery as well. At the very least, while on the operating table, I could rest beneath the great maternal starlight that governs the sky of their northern circumpolar home.

These maternal lights twirl discreetly in a mere corner of the sky from my California perspective, but in arctic lands, they reign supreme over the night sky, stretching almost directly overhead, seemingly close enough to touch. This immense ceiling of light is the vast constellation known throughout the northern hemisphere as GREAT FEMALE BEAR, or URSA MAJOR (Lat.).

Great Female Bear silently paces the dark matter surrounding the celestial pole. Four brilliant stars energetically establish Her womb; three other stars stretch out to delineate the curve of birth, so not surprisingly, She does not walk alone. Her daughter is afoot. Every day, She spins in a complete circle around a much smaller, but in many ways identical constellation: LITTLE FEMALE BEAR, or URSA MINOR (Lat.). The daughter's tiny womb is also marked by four major stars, with three others arching out in the trajectory of birth, in perfect resonance with her mother.

Yet Little Female Bear is utterly unique. The tip of her miniature birth canal—the still point around which she constantly whirls—is the only northern star that appears to be motionless. Moreover, this stationary star, the North Star, will precisely align with our planet's North Pole in about 100 years. Therefore, as the next century unfolds, I suspect that our spinning Earth will be guided and anchored ever more powerfully by the daughters.

Yet the mother rules. Every day, with every full circle spin of Her hundreds of visible stars, Great Female Bear expresses Her most tender secret: She loyally nurtures and protects all of Earth's daughters, whether plants or animals. She is the limitless guardian of all birth-giving daughters, in terms of their life cycles, habitats, and constellations.

No wonder northern navigators and farmers organized their lives for millennia around the primary natural compass of time and space: Great Female Bear and Her daughter. And no wonder these two constellations, as they pour, dip, and wheel aloft, are the prime portals of movement, intelligence, and emptiness for northern shamanic flights of mind.

As I reviewed these principles quickly by way of attuning to the Völva, Great Female Bear Herself abruptly sniffed the air of my personal space. To be honest, I've neglected Great Female Bear for years. Yet my embarrassment and regret are pointless. She doesn't keep score, and she has no time for apologies. For Her, it's enough to perceive one instant, and one instance, of human faith in the reality of Her spirit.

After that, with Her customary generosity and perspicacity, Bear is once again willing to teach Human just what to do in order to survive. After all, She has done this for a long time: after moving north out of Africa and making Her acquaintance, we humans gathered and hunted along the lines of Her expert guidance.

At any rate, with respect to my surgery, and after nosing about for a while, Great Female Bear snuffles out a suggestion. While on the operating table, I would be well-advised to align myself with a specific circumpolar constellation in Her celestial neighborhood: the lights of HANGED WOMAN. (to be continued)

**SATURDAY, JULY 12, 2008 8:02 PM, PDT** *written by Kalli Rose Halvorson*

VATS/Wedge Resection? Or Thoracotomy/Lung Lobectomy?

Dr. Mann explained that I could have two very different procedures, depending on how things look once my body is surgically opened. Below, I'll briefly describe my limited understanding of the two procedures.

Here's a visual: during both surgeries, I will lay on my left side with my right arm extended above my head. A tube through my trachea with a branch to each lung will allow the right lung to be deflated for examination and surgery. Meanwhile, my left lung will be on a ventilator, so that I can breathe.

Option #1: VATS/Wedge Resection

It may be possible to carve out the tumor, and save the lower lobe of the right lung, using a minimally invasive technique called VATS, or video-assisted thoracic surgery.

After several small incisions are made between the ribs, Dr. Mann would use his fingers, a telescopic video camera, and a fiber optic light to get inside my chest, which will be blown up like a balloon. The tumor would be "cherry-picked" right out of the lung, along with some surrounding healthy tissue, in a procedure called a Wedge Resection.

The right lung would then be sewn back together using permanent titanium staples. Finally, the layers of bone, muscle, ligament, and skin would be resealed.

VATS takes only an hour or so. I'd stay in the hospital for a few days, until the chest tube can be safely removed that drains fluid and blood from the chest, and helps to refill the lung with air.

However, VATS may not be an option. Dr. Mann may find that the tumor is just too close for comfort to the major blood vessels that nourish the lower right lung. If these vessels are compromised in any way, the right lung tissue could become necrotic (dead), which could lead to a fatal infection.

So, if navigation around the major vessels is too risky, I will receive a far more invasive incision, Thoracotomy, as well as a Lung Lobectomy, which would remove the lower lobe of my right lung.

#### Option #2: Thoracotomy/Lung Lobectomy

According to Wikipedia, thoracotomy is "a major surgical maneuver... a major insult to the human body and one which is only ever performed for most serious conditions... post-operative pain is universal and intense."

If I need a thoracotomy, Dr. Mann would make a 5 to 10 inch incision between two ribs, from front to back, involving the chest and back. Many layers of skin, muscle, and ligament would be cut; a rib may be removed. Pieces of rib would definitely be taken out in a "shingling" process, so that the bones would not grate against one another painfully after surgery. Retractors would hold the ribs apart, exposing the lung.

Once the incision is complete, Dr. Mann would perform the lobectomy by removing the lower lobe of the right lung containing the tumor. After the remaining portion of the lung is sealed with titanium staples, the many layers of skin, muscle, and bone would be stitched or stapled together again, with as little muscle loss as possible. This kind of

incision and surgery would take an additional 4 hours or so.

Afterwards, I would be sent to intensive care, and hooked up to a variety of intravenous lines, tubes, catheters, and monitors. For example:

- • a sealed chest tube removes normal leakage of air, blood, or fluid from the lung;
- • a breathing tube hooked up to a ventilator allows me to breathe;
- • a stomach tube down my nose and throat removes secretions, and provides food or medicine;
- • a catheter to my bladder drains urine;
- • an intravenous line delivers medications to counter pain, infection, and nausea;
- • if I flail or become combative, wrist restraints prevent me from pulling tubes out;
- • pressure stockings and pneumatic boots prevent blood clots;
- • regular breathing exercises and coughing, however uncomfortable, will be absolutely necessary to avoid complications; and
- • generous doses of opiates mitigate severe pain.

The hospital stay after a thoracotomy and lung lobectomy ranges from 5 to 10 days, including physical therapy to regain strength and learn how to use my "new" body. Moreover, for at least three weeks afterwards, I will need help with meals, supplies, companionship, and transportation. After 2-3 months, the scar heals, and basic strength returns. Full recovery can take up to a year.

**THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2008 9:00 PM, PDT** *written by Kalli Rose Halvorson*

Mars joins Saturn in the Chest of Lioness

For the past few weeks, as the intelligence of Mars moved through the chest of the constellation Lioness, overtaking her heart star, I've waited patiently to hear from my thoracic oncology surgeon. Today, I finally found his scheduler's message on my cell at 10:14 am EDT, when Mars had moved along the zodiac to almost exactly conjoin Saturn, within a mere 5 minutes of orb. After several hours of delays, my initial appointment with Dr. Mann was finally arranged at 2:10 pm,

as Mars perfectly conjoined Saturn at 0 minutes of orb. Both planets were lodged deeply in the Lower Ribcage of Lioness.

Sweetening this formidable combination, Venus and Moon had just swung into mutual reception, poised tropically and sidereally in one another's signs of Cancer and Libra. I was happy to see this auspicious and fast-moving mutual reception governing my first contact with Dr. Mann, especially because it will obtain tomorrow during our initial 1 pm consultation in San Francisco. Looks like my proposed surgeon may not only be a hard-hitting scientist and technical whiz, but a genuine and sensitive sweetheart. I'll take him—and I'll send a grateful card to the referring physician: my oncologist Dr. Tracy, Whale Mother ever at my back.

At any rate, as I listened to the scheduler's voice, a familiar quickening boiled through my body, the blend of eagerness and fear that means one pounding thing: to stave off death, and to increase the odds on healing, I'm about to lose another set of body parts. Once again, I'll lower my head beneath Kali's bloodstained blade of initiation, and offer up further chunks of flesh. My head will join the blissful string of human heads dangling freely around her neck, and like all her other hanging skulls, I will smile.

Moreover, as I listened to the scheduler's voice, and as the inexorable countdown for the knife began, I once again felt Kali shifting my reception of time. On one hand, each instant became more stretchable, elastic, rubbery. All the little moments of time suddenly had much greater space inside of them. They were also spaced much further apart from one another. Yet they also moved more quickly and unstopably, rushing heavily forward in sheets, a plunging waterfall.

I practice approaching the steps of the cancer dance as manifestations of Kali Maa—and also of Shiva, the Lord from whom she is essentially indistinguishable—for one reason. On August 5, 2006, the morning after my hysterectomy, I was shocked to discover that my cancer was a stage 3C uterine carcinosarcoma. Incredulous, I asked my surgeon if this cancer could kill me, and he did not respond. In the ensuing silence, on one hand, I felt like Thelma and Louise sailing off the

proverbial cliff. But to my amazement, I also felt Kali Maa holding me, like a warm, thick comforter stretching along the back of my frozen physical frame. Her presence was unexpected, visceral, and unmistakable. She saturated my battered cells, and really my whole being, with her inconceivable black radiance of love.

After that, I decided to experiment with a homegrown spiritual practice. I would discipline myself to receive all the steps of the cancer dance—nurses, doctors, needles, tubes, drugs, meds, blood tests, scans, machines, pain, scars, fatigue, nausea, and so forth—as aspects of the limitlessness of Kali Maa and Shiva.

Of course, I don't have this practice down. For example, during the past few weeks, I've been gnawing, rat-like, on my fingernails.

Still, this spiritual practice has served me well during the past two years. I recovered from the hysterectomy; had six months of chemotherapy in the hospital; had two months of pelvic, abdominal, and vaginal radiation; quickly found a recurrence of five tumors in my lungs; and had eight more months of brutal chemotherapy to dissolve, or render inactive, four out of five lung tumors. Now, I'll use this practice again with respect to the upcoming thoracic surgery that will remove the final stubborn tumor.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2008 9:56 PM, PDT** *written by Kalli Rose Halvorson*

I'm feeling very perky about major surgery. Once again, Maa Kali will laughingly wield her bloody sword of initiation and sacrifice. Death will stand calmly to the side, an easy friend, an intimate, subtle portal of patient light.

Over time, I'll adjust to the loss of lung power. I'll probably sing more, out of appreciation for the moist bags of delicate, wind-filled tissue that remain.

I'll have another enormous scar. I intend for all of my surgery scars to be tattoos someday. My giant vertical hysterectomy scar is to be a

Tree of Life. I'm not sure what this new one will be. Possibly a Snake with an Apple.

I'm adopting a new regimen in terms of cardio, stretching, and supplements to prepare for the surgical shock to my heavily-compromised immune system. Fortunately, I'm jetting off to Florida in a few days to see precious Julian, Vashti, and James; to walk as far as I possibly can on the Longboat Key beach; to absorb the frequencies of dolphins, manatees, and mangroves; and hopefully, to fall upon mounds of stone crab at the Del Mar.

Lots of felicitous timing these days, especially from the sky. I'm hugely supported at the moment by Goddess Vagala (known in patriarchy as "Mars"). With her formidable and fearless tongue, standing over her sniveling male adversary, she now transmits a portion of the stellar intelligence that surrounded my own birth.

Vagala now approaches the Lioness Heart star (known in patriarchy as "Regulus") in order to transmit female warriorship, especially in terms of bringing new realities through difficult birth canals. She brings abundant courage, non-violent victory, and the shakti, or supreme female power, to cut through to the truth, especially in terms of words. I'm definitely benefiting from this influence while organizing a current legal/journalistic dossier.

Linda Johnsen recently shared her impression that the Lioness Heart star is none other than Goddess in her emanation as Maa Durga. Linda, you are the very soul of Akasha Maa. How did you ever divine this deep space truth?

It's so good to stand corrected. I used to think that Maa Durga's awareness was intrinsic to the stars of the Maiden (known in patriarchy as "Virgo"), riding the Lioness next door. However, upon reflection, this makes no sense, since the vast expanse of the Maiden is far too sexually active for Maa Durga's unique focus.

Aum Hrim Dhum Durgayai Shakti Bhairavyai Svaha! (Ambika, thanks for this gorgeous mantra; I'm using it a lot these days.)

**TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2008 9:14 PM, PDT** *written by Kalli Rose Halvorson* LUNG SURGERY SOON

I was hoping to use targeted (stereotactic) radiation in order to subdue the last stubborn tumor in the lower right lung, but unfortunately, it's too close to a major blood vessel. Therefore, surgery is the only option. Soon, I'll meet with Dr. Mann--an excellent thoracic surgeon at UC San Francisco--to learn what his approach will be, and what to expect as a patient. I'm guessing that my ribcage will be cracked open and that I'll give about 1/3 of my right lung up to the universe. Jai Maa! But we'll see.

I'm reeling at the thought of major surgery in this incredibly compromised physical condition, after almost two straight years of surgery, chemo and radiation. These cancer treatments have saved my life twice over at this point, but they have also brought low platelet, red cell, and white cell counts, as well as a huge lack of physical strength and muscle tone. Still, I'm stronger than a lot of patients, and surgeons do this kind of thing all the time...

Everybody always wants to know what they can do to HELP. Well, in the short term, I'm gearing up for a surgical marathon, so if you want to go on any WALKS, let's schedule! Berkeley Marina is perfect, for example, or anywhere up in the hills without huge altitude gains.

Thanks ETERNALLY for all your love, care, encouragement, good thoughts, and support!



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