

Rooting & Uprooting

Rooting & Uprooting By Colleen Saidman Yee 12/28/2013

When I was eight years old, we moved from Corning, New York—where all of our extended family lived—to Indiana, so that my dad could start a new job. The move was hard on us all, but it was especially hard for my mom: sometimes I would find her looking out the window of our new house with a cup of coffee in one hand and a cigarette in the other, tears sliding down her face. I remember one day asking her why she was sad, and she said, “I miss my trees.” “Trees?” I thought. “After everything we’d lost, you miss trees?”

My mom loved trees, especially old maples. And, though my first thought was sassy, I knew she missed much more than her trees: she had been yanked from everything that she had ever known, and moved to a strange, treeless place where she had no roots, no history. My mother’s trees were a symbol for all that she’d lost.

Many years later, that my mother would grieve the loss of trees seems even more bittersweet: the whole idea of roots and growth and balance and connection—and symbolism—is yoga, which is my love. Yoga gives us deep roots, so that we can blow in the wind and stay grounded, no matter what storm might come along. Yoga gives us a healthy, strong, stable trunk, and leaves that dance in the wind before they fall off, only to grow back more vibrant as winter turns to spring. If only my mom could have put her body in the shape of a tree, and balanced on one foot while steadying her gaze and following her breath: maybe she wouldn’t have felt so disconnected.

In the last few weeks I’ve been asking myself what new seed I should plant in the form of a New Year’s resolution. Should it be the same one I’ve attempted to plant for the last ten years—to stop eating sugar? (Those roots don’t seem to want to deepen!) Maybe the fact is, that I’m fine as I am—a strong, old tree. In any case, to commemorate this new year, I’m going to plant a maple tree in honor of my mom, who had her final uprooting two years ago this month. Whatever seeds you plant, may they take hold and grow strong.. What a beautiful Message from Colleen. Thank you for sharing and showing us all why rooting in our existence is as important to our beings as water and love are.