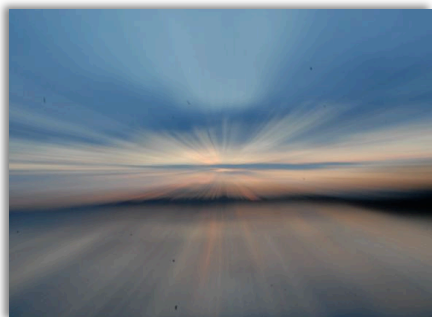
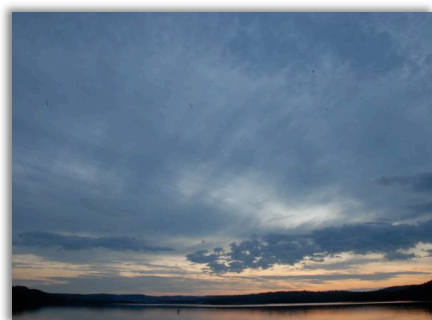
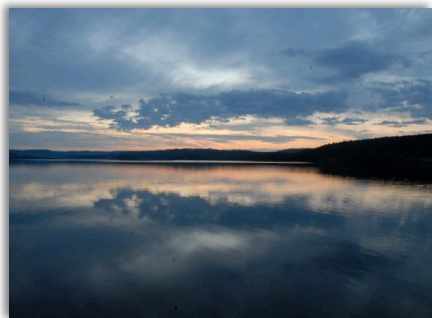




Working with EMDR and the photographs people bring, enables access to feelings which can then be reprocessed, allowing integration in remarkable ways, creating a new 'Innerscape'
EMDR



EMDR AND PHOTOGRAPHY

I dig into the cupboard under the basement stairs where I'd put a box of old photographs a few years ago, when I first bought the house. I'd had no need of them till now - Lee uses them in her therapy work and I'd agreed to bring some to my session. But I'm really wishing I hadn't agreed because the cupboard door is stuck - I can only get it open about a quarter of the way - I've had to shift my tenant's bed, which won't budge another inch, to access the door - and now I'm madly reaching in up to my shoulder, flailing my hand around, hoping I'll be able to get the box out. After Herculean efforts I manage to get my hand under a box lid and onto a pair of silver candlesticks. I suddenly remember I stuck them in with the photos since there was just enough room for them there, and no room for them anywhere else. Hah! so those bloody albums are underneath, I think. I wrestle them out, one at a time, bash the door closed, hoist the bed back into place and dash off to meet Lee.

On the subway I flip through the two books I decided on because they were the lightest. Lots of landscapes from my travels with David; pictures we had taken in the Appalachians, at Walden Pond, at Cape Cod and Big Sur and Mendocino; lots of self-timer shots of us together, too. Amazing, I think. I can look at these now and not feel sad.

In Lee's office we sit on the couch and turn the pages together. She asks me to stop when an image speaks to me. She tells me I have an eye for composition and I say, yeah, but I'm hopeless with lighting, I don't know a damn thing about cameras - I - oh - everything stops

I see David standing beside me, his arm around me, smiling. We're on a cliff, with the Pacific behind us, and the feeling of that time and place lurches into being so fast and so clearly that I can smell the seaweed on the beach below... I can faintly smell that soap David used - he was the cleanest man I ever knew - ... I can hear the surf at low tide, just a shush and a ripple, and there's a slight saltiness in the breeze that lifts my hair away from my face. David's smile is impish, warm; he's indulging me. He thinks people taking photographs of themselves are nuts - they're missing the moment, he says; they're exchanging a moment of living for a piece of paper with their faces on it. But I want the piece of paper with our faces on it!, I clamour. And he laughs and musses my hair and sets up the tripod, and now, five years later, I'm clobbered by grief, sobbing instantly, noisily, stunned at myself for losing control like that, with no warning.

Then, before I know what's happening, up surges the image of a love lost in my twenties, and then one of my beloved grandmother who died when I was eleven. I am awash in a cataclysm of loss ... I am staggered that these three people I loved so dearly, so deeply, could have vanished from my life so irrevocably. It's as though I've been holding on to this huge old hope chest of sorrow over them all these years, all these decades, holding on to it for dear life, letting it weigh me down, letting it keep me from doing things I wanted to do, from opening my heart up wide again, from living a life - a real and reckless, sparkling, impulsive, risk-taking, full-hearted life. I weep inconsolably. It seems to go on forever, this weeping. But as I cry my eyes out and blow my nose and wipe my face and cry some more it's as though I become lighter and lighter ... with every tear I shed I think I must be losing some of the heaviness I thought I'd have to carry forever. Not that I knew I was carrying it ... I had trudged on, putting my sadness away when everybody I knew got sick of hearing about it. But it was still there, still knotting up my guts, making it more and more difficult to open up to love. To life. To my one, precious life.

I hollow myself out with crying until I feel transparent, washed clean, humbled, grounded. I feel real, devoid of hardness, that layer of hardness you grow as you try to protect yourself from getting hurt again. Yet I don't feel unprotected. Just ... softer. Open. Kind of elastic, where I used to be rubber cement. Something blocked inside has dislodged and a river is flowing in there again, I can feel it. It's as though it's under the snow and ice, but it's running. I can hear it.

Which must mean spring is coming.

M.E.M. 2007