

## Maraton 2013

A few impressions of a particularly surprising or indelible nature:

Taking a big bite of horseradish and sitting in the circle worrying that I might actually throw up, only to have the blueberries and then tea come around to save me on the other side.

Waking on the side of the wall to find everyone dancing around the drum circle in the flickering candlelight - feeling like I'd awakened in a cave after a big hunt several thousand years ago.

Feeling awed that humans so recently met could appear so transformed - like animals, ones I could never hope to observe so intimately, out of captivity.

Realizing with relief that I had not missed this portion of the activities all together, and feeling that although I was likely one of the oldest participants, I was also one of the youngest for joining in after others had been going around for who knows how many hours, that it was all right to be the one whose cheeks weren't smeared with mud. That it was okay to be the baby, having others show me the way.

Falling backward when I was preparing to dive forward, and immediately being guided back into position. I wish I could say my immediate concern was for the person on whose back I landed, but I have to admit, it wasn't. Maybe if it had been the kind of situation where etiquette requires the faller to scream, "Oh my god, are you okay????". I don't even know which of my comrades bore the brunt of that unintentional back flop. A very belated thanks to them for saving my ayuss.

Gazing up at the windows of surrounding apartments, curious if anyone there was peering in, wondering what was happening. Enjoying the sensation that we were suspended in a strange cocoon in the midst of what passes for a normal urban 24 hours.

Remembering how much Milo, my son, loved each of you who performed in the Fool's Mass, and being warmed by the echoes of those fools.

Making the decision to leave without a big goodbye to everyone, without opening my mouth more than needed to respond briefly to those who chose to speak to me. Being glad to preserve that.

A strange coincidence: My husband and I had that chapter of Moby Dick read aloud at our wedding in 1995. It was a surprise to hear those words coming back when least expected at the end of Maraton. It felt really good to hear them aloud in a setting where so little English had been spoken (or sung) - to know that they had been chosen deliberately, in hope that others would find them meaningful and worthy.

Again, I loved working with you, I thank you, and I hope we meet again soon. It's a great thing to cede control when trust is established so quickly, without the familiar snake oil of words, a substance, which I manipulate, consume, and deploy with relish and regularity... It was a kick and a gift to put them out of reach for awhile.

- Ayun Halliday

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