



Twelve Months

These pages are from a journal I kept while taking a graduate course in art therapy after the death of my first wife. Looking back, I think I was practicing what Dr. David Steindl-Rast called “openness for surprise,” his way of saying what hope is really about.

James Sedwick



NOV. 1985: My wife died. In that darkness was (is) a new beginning for both of us.



DEC. 1985: I was lonely and cold. I started wearing flannel pajamas to bed!



JAN. 1986: The stir of new directions for me. Jan. 4, two months since her death, narcissus flowers open at my friend's house. My wife bought the flowers for us.



FEB. 1986: A difficult month - cold, lonely, and I got a miserable attack of flu. The depression and anxiety was great.

2008

This Darkness

I have always kept a written journal of one kind or another: a diary when I was a pig-tailed girl, a mother's journey when I was pregnant with my son, a dream journal, a spiritual journal – a record of my life here on earth. But it wasn't until a special friend introduced me to the creative journal that I discovered a place to find and express myself as an artist. The journaling that I do now is more than recording life events, it is a spiritual alchemy: taking those things that have happened, the joy and the suffering, the sorrow and the fear and transforming those things into something else. Something beautiful. Into gold.

Christine Lincoln

SEPTEMBER 14

Tonight I decided to take my walk in utter darkness. I loved it. There is something delicious in being completely surrounded by blackness. One by one I turned off all the lights except the brightest. I waited until I was standing near the middle of the room before switching off the last and brightest lamp, throwing the room into darkness before my eyes had time to adjust. It was so black I could see nothing, not even my own body, and even though I know this house as intimately as I know the lines on the palms of my hands, I was instantly disoriented. In the darkness possibilities grow. Where before, I was surrounded by the familiar, I am thrown into a place where someone could be lurking in the corner of the room waiting to pounce. The floor could have caved in without my knowing it; if I take a step forward I might fall to my death to the basement floor. In the darkness fear fills me. It starts in my belly like tendrils of some living thing, growing, spreading into the tops of my legs. I am rooted to this place where I know I am safe, unmoving in the darkness. And instantly I am taken back to my childhood. Playing hide-and-go-seek in the dark of night on Radnor Ave. The thrill of being caught, or of not being caught if your hiding place was good enough. The thrill and foreboding of being all alone in the middle of the night and perhaps no one will find me. But I was found or either turned myself in. So I move. I slide forward, careful. I move slowly because I cannot see myself. I have disappeared and I am not sure that I am real. And then something happens. The same darkness that at first frightened me now begins to comfort me. It offers me its freedom. It tells me that I am free here in the darkness because I am hidden. I am vulnerable and yet I am concealed. I can tell when I leave the living room because the

carpet drops off beneath my shoes and I am walking on hardwood floor. Still slowly through this river of darkness. My footfalls against the hardwood sound like the beating of a heart. Da-dump, Da-dump, Da-dump. A heart beating in the darkness. The darkness is a womb. This darkness is an amnion. It is a place of unlimited potential, an incubator of ideas. The place of fear, yes, but also imagination and creativity. A place of protection and freedom and life. **This darkness is an amnion.**

