

311 words, column #46
Java Talk
(for March 13 to March 19, 2008)

Every Age Is The Best Age

To Get from the Bad Side to the Good Side

Last weekend, while staying overnight at Langford's No. 1 Fire Hall, along with volunteers who'd come together from parts of Vancouver Island, the BC interior, Alberta, and the US, in order to participate in the 27-hour Disaster Child Care Volunteer Training course—sponsored by Langford Emergency Social Services (<http://district.langford.bc.ca/fire/ess.html>), which I am a member, and the Canadian Disaster Child Care Society (www.canadiandisasterchildcare.ca), which I have applied to become a member—we watched the documentary, “War Is Not a Game: Experiences of Refugee Children,” to better understand the traumatic effects of war and violence on refugee children living in Canada. One of these children said she wished she could get from the bad side to the good side of life again. “The Canadian Disaster Child Care Society is an organization that responds to children's needs both post-disaster and on an ongoing basis within the community.”

During one of our sessions, first-hand stories of missing childhoods and about having lives unfold in untraditional ways were also shared. After we settled down in our sleeping bags in our temporary “emergency” group lodging, I was surprised at the perfect relevance of Clarissa Pinkola Estes' book, *The Faithful Gardener: A Wise Tale About That Which Can Never Die*, which I had brought along to read later. Estes was raised as an only child by a foster family with “long traditions of telling stories.” In her book, many “elegantly interlocked tales of loss, survival, and fierce rebirth center around [her] uncle, a war-ravaged Hungarian peasant farmer and refugee, a faithful gardener, and a storehouse of stories” that were told to this “open-hearted child who listened well....”

By the way, this month's Victoria Storytellers' Guild's “Stories at Fern”, where all types of stories are told and listened to, is on Monday, March 17, 2008, from 7:15 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., at 1831 Fern Street. (Adults \$5, Students \$3).

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