

Dystopia- A wretched fearful life. Focus word for the writing seminar.

Versus

Dystonia- Involuntary muscle contractions;

Abnormal posture;

Blurred eyes on the world .

Both words were analogous to her new world. The old Sally was still beneath the surface of bent arms, clenched hands and heavy stiff legs like tree trunks.

Home for a day visit, her chariot was her wheelchair.

Journeying to the back courtyard, the high steps to the kitchen were her drawbridge, a rampart she and Angus could not breach.

Captivated by the lush green canopy before her, trees and shrubs spiralled to the heavens after recent heavy rain.

The previous month had been a journey of chaos not for her alone. Some of the world had paused, united for a fleeting moment at the loss of their spiritual leader.

She herself had wept tears at the parting of her Aunt, so many who held her dear changed forever.

She was yet to nurse their long awaited grandchild, bringing his light and presence to the young couple so full of love for him.

With his new diagnosis creating a different pathway for them all, they would traverse many a mountain together.

So, for a moment in time, she embraced the stillness surrounding her. She gazed upon the fountain in the claw footed bath, now a pond, as it slumbered among the potted cyclamen. Preferring the common name "Persian violet" to the less appealing "sowbread," the plants provided colourful natural shade for green tree frogs and geckos and fat swishing goldfish chasing each other among tall red blooming lilies in the pond.

Her artistry, painted on the sides of the bath, was that of an amateur. But it had allowed her, in the past, to creep into the vortex of oil paint and canvas. She had escaped for a while from a whirlwind of daily chemotherapy and the ensuing rebellion of her physical body.

Her scene was created on wood paneling framing the bath. With just a mindshift of expression, her brush had revelled in the texture and colour of a different medium.

There had been vibrancy and freedom to change direction simply by painting over what was there, a new scene appearing in her shape shifting world.

To the fore had emerged characters from much loved novels, all their psychological trappings and philosophical world views coalescing.

What a grand word 'coalescing' was - "skills granted to people by their weapons, talismans, mythology." Her size 8 paint brush had become her epee. Sitting now in

the silent garden, a flash of red appeared on the periphery. "Une libellule écarlate" her friend "French Jeanne" would call this dancing scarlet dragonfly, hovering above the fountain. Perching like an aerialist on a green lily spear, the creature folded in to her picture.

So, in the moment, Sally joined him. There, in the golden light of the Narnia lamppost, Lucy and Mr Tumnis looked towards the oakwood. Camouflaged by twisted leafy boughs, stood the house of Damerosehay, sanctuary of Elizabeth Goudge's trilogy of the Eliot family.

Opposite, on the river bank, Alice and her reluctant mentor, "The White Rabbit," cheered on Ratty and Mole.

Their red and white checked picnic basket bounced between them as they rowed sturdily along the river.

Up in the sky, in the highest of heights, Jane and Michael flew colourful kites from the park below. Peter and Wendy soared past Big Ben, the hands of the clock striking the hour. Sally laughed, creating a fairy perhaps?

Startled, the dragonfly hovered in a delicate circle, then gently returned to its eyrie. Having recently been told she was "in transit," awaiting a new treatment, Sally and her totem companion shared their moment of peace.

Sally thought of Ley Lines and the magic attributed to them, and the world of music, books and art also connecting people. Like the laughter of children creating new beginnings, life fluttered by, as fragile, ethereal as the dragon fly and nature's pathways.