

# *Ninepatch*

## *Stitch - by - Stitch*

### *W-e - - C-r- e- a- t-e - - O-u-r - - L-i-v-e -s*

**Editor's Note:** Following is Chapter 12 of my 2007 adventure, BUS RIDE. From last month, "... I heard the bus doors close and looked up. Straight-faced, our red- and -blue clad driver climbed the stairs and without a word, slid under the wheel. I took a deep breath and closed my eyes as the bus rolled out of Cincinnati. *Ah! S-l-e-e-p...*

#### MIDWEST: IMAGES AND MEMORIES

Like a dream, western Ohio flashed by my window. A cattle car passed and through its white cage, patches of brown hides alternated with pink noses pressing out the white grid. High in the Greyhound, I looked down on semi- drivers in rolled-sleeve T-shirts sitting cool in air- conditional cabs. I stared at the side of one trailer whose tall green lettering announced, "Carrol Fulmer." From my bus-high perch, tops of silvery tankers presented their ladders and hatches for my inspection and a white-sided camper labeled, "SCAMPER" let me view its air-conditioning unit sitting high on its painted roof.

Bright highway signs sprouted. Red and yellow "Wendy's," green and white "Perkins," and golden arches of "McDonald's" hollered, "Eat! Eat!" I reached into my carry-all, pulled out a fifty-cent bag of Planters, tore it open and popped a few in my mouth.

Colors and shapes shifted as we rolled into the countryside. White farm houses with matching barns topped in green shingles sat in yards of brownish corn. Cut half-stalk, dry rows stood at soldiery attention

The mid-state Ohio scene triggered an elementary school memory of Sunday afternoon drives to "The Farm." Standing at the screen door, Daddy had teased our rusty cocker spaniel already dancing at our feet, "Wanna' go? Wanna go?"

Glancing back at Mother and me, he had said, "I'll back out the car." Hand on the screen door handle, he looked down at the curly eager animal and shook his head, "Stay, Bootsie, stay."

He had squeezed out the screen to keep the wiggling dog inside with me. I heard, "Vroom!" and watched our garage. The sleek dark green tail of "Diana, the Wonderful Dynaflow" slowly emerged.

By now, Mother was standing behind Bootsie and me, her brown leather purse over her shoulder. When the car stopped Mother said, "OK."

I pushed the door and our pet rocketed toward the car, bouncing by the back door. Pulling the door I ordered the little dog, "Hit the deck!" She leaped ahead of me onto the floor, bounded onto the seat, and jumped into the flat place in front of the rear window -- the deck. Settled, Bootsie smiled showing her long pink tongue.

Climbing in, I sat and leaned out, grabbing the arm rest. I pulled until the door slammed and then clicked down both door locks. Back-seat duties complete, I reported,

*(Continued on the next page.)*

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“OK in the back!”

Looking out her window, Mother chimed in, “OK to the right.”

Daddy took his foot off the brake and backed the Buick into the alley. Gravel crunched under our tires and a small cloud of dust rose. As Daddy moved the column shift’s red circle to “drive,” dust followed us until we turned onto the paved street that ran in front of our house.

Steering right and left, Daddy curved us along a two-lane road soon lined with corn fields. As we rolled toward Benton Mills where Grammy and Grampy still lived on a hundred acres, I rolled my back window down half way. Bootsie jumped to the seat and hung her head out, eating the wind.

Daddy had cranked down his window, too. His hair ruffled as he turned to Mother and sang in his throaty baritone, “Green eyes with their soft lights, those eyes that promise sweet nights...”

Mother smiled, blinked her green eyes at him and they laughed.

Riding through green pastures, Mother clicked on the radio and Daddy told me about the cows. “Those black and white spotted ones are Holstein. They give the most milk... See those brown and white ones over there? Those are Guernsey. Their milk is richer, but they don’t give as much as Holsteins.”

Closer to “The Farm,” the roadside showed crops. Daddy pushed in the cigarette lighter and when it popped, he set its glowing red coil to the end of his Pall Mall. Blowing a blue stream of smoke out the window he nodded, “Those soybeans look good ... corn’s getting high...”

When I saw the peaked black end of a barn painted, “Chew Mail Pouch” in tall yellow letters, we were almost there. Noticing the rest of the barn had no paint I asked, “Why is that barn only painted on one end?”

“Advertisers pay for that paint ...” Daddy explained. We were close enough I could read the words under Mail Pouch, “Treat yourself to the best.”

Bumping over a set of railroad tracks, we turned right at the first corner and slowly passed through two blocks of town before reaching Grampa’s white farm house across from his faded red barn.

Gazing out the bus window, I saw white Ohio barns and returned to the present. The sinking sun’s last rays flashed off passing cars as we entered Michigan and the Interstate widened from two lanes to four. Soon the coach roared into outskirts of Detroit. By the time we wound our way into the old city, the sun had set. Overhead lights illuminated empty streets. All around I gazed on buildings’ dark windows as the bus moved quietly on new blacktop before it slowed near the Greyhound Terminal.

The coach finally parked at a tan brick building. When cabin lights came on, I looked at my watch: 8:30 PM. -- the time I was scheduled to arrive in Grand Rapids which was still four car-hours away. Vaguely I heard the driver announce, “...and to you traveling to Grand Rapids, and Muskegon, your bus will depart at 8:30 AM...”

*What? Tomorrow? That can’t be!* Collecting my suitcase, from beside the bus, I rolled it slowly into the brightly lit terminal, shaking my head. *Surely there’s a bus yet tonight!*

**Frances Fritzie**

***A-R-O-U-N-D - - T-H-E - - F-R-A-M-E-***

**-**

(Letters to the Editor)

Hey Frances,

Sorry it's taken so long to get back to you. Have been switching jobs within the company so things have been off-kilter. Good news is that I get to keep working -- my regular job's being pulled back to the US -- and it looks like this one will be a little less stressful.

I'm still house hunting. Although banks have recently changed rules and the amount I can go for is reduced, I know the perfect duplex will come along any time now.

My two kids are good. My daughter's pregnancy is at seven months now. She's still upset it'll be a girl but I can't wait to meet her :- ).

Luv,  
Lynn

*LynnTROR (July '08) says, "Since I wrote the above letter, I found a house I want, but in the middle of trying to get it bought, I hit some snags with financing and lawyers."*

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Hi there Fritzie,

Well... you will be proud of me! I chaired a weekly discussion meeting and chose the topic, "Change." This was my first turn to lead the sharing and I was very excited. I chose the topic because I have been struggling with all the changes in my life and needed to hear what others had to say about their life experiences.

Your love and guidance and concern for me has been an enlightening experience in my life. You are my angel. I am very happy we crossed paths in this world. I just wish we lived closer again. Thank you.

I am doing good. Life has been so very interesting.

Take care.

Love to you my dear friend,

Jodi

*Jodi (Jan. '08) adds, "Things are looking up and I am careful of any further changes."*

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Hello Frances,

Our family continues to grieve over our loss of my granddaughter Keely and the tragic accident. Cate's court proceedings continue. The prosecuting attorney for Genessee County wants to charge her with second degree murder in her daughter's death. The

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charge is excessive and unjust in our opinion, but our hands are tied. *(Continued next.)*

I attended the Preliminary Examination and witnesses testified. It was so very depressing. As usual with these court experiences, I didn't sleep much for a couple of days.

Our powerlessness seems overwhelming, but we are doing our best to accept each day as it comes. We need prayers for faith, courage, forgiveness, love, and acceptance.

Many thanks for all prayers and concern.  
Sincerely,  
Gail

*Gail (Oct. '08) adds, "My husband and I will have lots of company over the next two weekends due to his birthday. For fun we have been reading books together Last week we read a Louis L'Amour, Dark Canyon. This week we have turned to Janet Evanovich's Hot Six. That's a real change of pace from the seriousness of my daughter's situation."*

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Well Frances,

What my daughter and I have is a long story with a big sigh of relief at the end. (I KNOW how you like stories...) Anyway here is the short version. My younger daughter has been prone to ovarian cysts. She's had three in five years: two pre-cancerous, one small and one baseball-size. Her latest cancer and tumor was larger: 31x19x9 cm. (Egads, eh?) The biopsies returned and it WAS ovarian cancer! Scary!

Docs say no further treatment -- chemo or radiation-- is required as they got it all with the removal and the last 10% of test results showed no spreading. She has had a very close brush with death! (Phew! What a relief!)

God bless and thanx be to God!  
K...later,  
CaT

*CaT (Oct. '08) adds, "She was well enough to attend my other daughter's five year-memorial service with me. You'll recall Melissa was killed by a drunk driver five years ago. Jen had never been to the site where her sister lost her life and while it was traumatic for her it helped her with some serious closure issues-- more than I ever thought it would."*

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Hi Frances,

I'm pregnant! We found out almost four months ago, but I kept it quiet for a fairly long time. Then I gave up and shared our news because even if I did miscarry, why would I want to hide that fact? My mother-in-law says keeping pregnancy secret is an old tradition from the days when women who miscarried were blamed for it. (She should know. She miscarried quite a long time ago -- before my husband was born.) Her words made sense to me.

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So last month I told everyone. Things are going well: we've heard the heartbeat and I'll have an ultrasound soon. *(Continued on the next page.)*

If the baby cooperates we'll find out if it's a boy or a girl. We have names picked out already -- for a boy: Hunter Stuart Antonio and for a girl: Paloma Hazel Pamela. The two middle names are because we couldn't decide, and all the middle names are heritage names or family names.

Best,  
Christa

**Christa Terry** (Aug. '08) adds, *"I've been swamped with work, and now that I don't feel sick anymore, I haven't been thinking much about my pregnancy."*

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Dear Frances,

When I didn't know what to say about my daughter and her husband asking to move the family in with us, I prayed and tried to give myself "time" for a decision. However, "time" did not tip the scales. My husband did. He had said "Sure!" to their initial request and that was it.

He seems to think the kids and I will take care of everything. He can relax, watch TV take naps and do what he wants. (He's still not looking for another job.)

I feel angry but I try to stay positive. It's harder and harder as my personal space gets smaller now that every corner of this house is filled!

On a brighter note, Anita, my older daughter who had been living on the street, got into a mobile home. Molly, my daughter who's moving in with us, had taken her in. When she could not stand Anita anymore, Molly found a mobile home park where the owners had abandoned trailers. All Anita has to do is pay the lot rent.

You'll remember Anita's caseworker had tried all sorts of interventions with her, but when Anita would not cooperate, the caseworker gave up. So, Molly also arranged for Anita's SSI to cover the rent and expenses.

When Molly first asked to move in, you had suggested I might go to an open church to sit, pray and think. I did that when I was first married and found out I was going to have a baby. Harold was very angry -- he did not want children. Back then, there was a church at the end of our street. There's no church near me now.

Thank you for your prayers and suggestion. I still pray and try to take just one day at a time.

Love and prayers,  
LindaSue

**LindaSue** (Oct. '08) says, *"I have my job, chores, laundry, housework and general routine. I just keep myself busy."*

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Francesca ,

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This summer I shared regular phone calls with my older sister, who lives near my mother. Mom has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's but still lives at home with her husband.

During these conversations filled with all kinds of contingency plans for Mom's future, Ann and I slip into brief discussions (*Continued on the next page.*) about our childhoods and our relationships with our critical and emotionally distant mother. As we carefully release these secret snippets of childhood feelings and experiences, we are quick to remind each other that Mom did the best mothering she was capable of and how she made a good home for our family. (A good home meant the house was clean and we were well fed and clothed.) Ann and I have agreed that we must do everything in our power to contribute to the quality of her life now because, after all, she is our mother. I wonder -- what if we stopped protecting Mom to each other and truly spilled the hurt that has followed us through adulthood? Would that promote healing or would it cause the old wounds to gather power? Are we behaving like martyrs, stoically forgiving the past as we dutifully plan Mom's future care? Is there a middle ground?

Perhaps we have already found it.

Take care.

Elaine

*Elaine (Oct. '08) adds, "I also broke my knee cap this summer and spent six weeks in a full length cast. This happened a month after I adopted a three-month old puppy. It was a trying summer but the cast is off and now I'm engaged in physical therapy."*

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**- - - -F-A-B-R-I-C-S- - - -**

(Our Experiences)

**CREWING ON A SCHOONER**

I had fun this summer. I took a trip on the Schooner Madeline, the boat where I am a volunteer crew member. I was on the boat for a week and traveled with eight others. We carpoled to Detour, on the east end of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan where the eastern up-per part of the state nearly touches Ontario, Canada . There we relieved the previous crew, they taking our cars back home.

Our first day of travel, we motored through the St. Mary's River to Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. (pronounced Soo Saint Marie). The fun of this day's trip was that we were in the same channel as many of the big lake liners hauling iron ore, calcite and such up and down the river. We felt so small.

The next day we took the boat through the "Soo" Locks. That was really exciting. We were being raised from Lake Huron to Lake Superior, the boat rising twenty-eight

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feet in about fifteen minutes. These locks were developed when the iron ore being mined in Upper Michigan's Marquette area needed to be transported via the Great Lakes.

We then headed for White-fish Point (the area where the Edmund Fitzgerald went down). Once around the point it was fog for the next six hours. *(Continued next.)* No wonder they call it the shipwreck coast. The destination that day was Grand Marais, a small town that is known for its abundance of agates.

We arrived just before a big storm front came through bringing much wind and waves which we were happy to miss. We stayed in that harbor for the next two days waiting for the storm to subside. It was cold, but there was much to see. Keep in mind that we were on foot for all our sightseeing. We walked to the Grand Sable Falls, visited the pickle barrel house, walked the beach and checked out all the restaurants.

Munising was our next port of call. Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore is between Grand Marais and Munising. Even though it was a rainy, overcast day, we enjoyed seeing the famous Pictured Rocks. These rock cliffs are layers of sandstone and limestone where the wind and waves have sculpted them into shapes and caves. The minerals, iron, copper and other deposits have seeped onto the rocks adding to the shapes and colors. They go on for almost forty miles broken only by several beaches, and a few rivers and falls emerging from them. Wet and weary, we arrived in Munising, grateful to be at our destination.

Now that we were in port, our mission was to make real the history of schooners on the Great Lakes, for a youth seafarer group. So we set up learning stations on the boat and told stories and some history of the 1850's schooners on the Great Lakes.

The following day the Maritime Festival opened and after a morning of tour guiding (sharing history and showing people the boat), the Madeline again changed crews for their next leg and I headed home.

*Palma (July '08) "I had a fine summer. To see a Utube set of photos from this trip go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nirIJET71hI> It's leg #2."*

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THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE

*A Family Mystery*

Part II

So, who is John Johnson whose birth certificate I had? My dad's name was George, so was this a brother? Did he die at a young age so I did not know him?

I went to other members of my family with my question. My older brother Bob said he also did not know a John Johnson. We talked and could not remember our aunts and uncles ever mentioned the name John Johnson. As we talked however, Bob did state that some time ago a lady who was doing a family history had asked him, "Who is John Johnson?"

At the time, Bob had denied that there was ever a John Johnson in our family. The more we talked, the more I remembered, too. A long time ago when someone had said, "...John Johnson ..." to my dad! I think I must have been four or five years old at the time. The incident didn't mean much then. On the other hand, it's odd I recalled it!

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The date of birth on the Record of Birth was listed as May 22, 1892. Now, that sounds like it was close to, or the same as my dad's birthday. Brother Bob had a copy of dad's obituary and sure enough, it listed dad's birthday as May 22, 1892!

Brother Bob called the Register of Deeds in Bessemer, Michigan and asked was more than one son born to Christ and Cenia Johnson on May 22, 1892.

The clerk answered, "No, there was not!" *(Continued on the next page.)*

Then Brother asked, "Was there a George Johnson (father) born on or near that date?"

The answer came, "No, there was a George Johnson born a few years later, but to different parents!"

*Le (Oct. '08) adds, "Our younger brothers, Paul and Jimmy, couldn't shed much light on the subject, but Brother Bob and I said we'd keep them informed."*

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### HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

Since my husband and I still work, we have a special approach to opening our holiday greetings. I open the cards with the daily mail and read them. (I also tape the return address in side the cards.) Next, I put the cards at Hubby's place at the dining table. He sits down to read them at his convenience. After reading, he puts them by the "card tree". Later, I put them on the tree -- one of those wire photo holders which is a stand with twelve wires fanned out with pincers at the ends to hold the cards. Then, on Christmas Eve we have a little toddy and sit by the Christmas tree. One by one we go through the cards together and re-read them, each of us taking one and reading it aloud to the other.

We also started another little tradition. When we entertain people for dinner during holidays, we ask them to randomly bring a dozen of their cards. (We don't tell them why).

Then over dinner we take turns reading a card sentiment. We ask each couple to tell a little bit about the person (or family) who wrote the card. For example, the reader might tell how he knows them or a funny story.

We find this is a nice way to discover more about our friends and it also expands the spirit of Christmas love.

*Georgene (Oct. '08) adds, "Traditions are fun to share. People are so very clever and are pleased when I steal their idea so I try to return the favor!"*

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### MY PENCIL TREE

Maybe you have not heard of a "pencil tree." It is a "fake" tree that stands about six feet tall. It is very slim with the biggest section being at the very bottom of the tree about two and a half to three feet around. It is on a lovely stand that I don't cover. It comes apart in three sections for storing. (It is green and 'leafy' and like other fake trees except it is so slim).

I first saw this type tree about four years ago. We were getting ready to go to Florida, and I was out for a bit of shopping when I saw the tree. It was after Christmas and I bought it on sale.



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I am one for themes. I have themes throughout my home with the pictures and furnishings. The theme for my tree is Santa Claus. I have a Santa rag doll that someone made for me several years ago. He stands about twelve inches high and will pose anyway you want him. He sits in the center of the tree on one of the branches.

*(Continued on the next page.)*

I hang my other Santas all over the tree. I like a certain kind of Santas -- all the same size. Every year I go into a store like Wal-Mart or Meijers and check their Santas. If I find what I like, I will purchase three of the same design for the tree.

I also have a few glass bulbs on the tree. There is a bow at the top.

I absolutely love my tree. I discourage anyone from buying me Santas for my tree because I know exactly what I want. If someone sees one they think I will like they will tell me where they saw it so I can check it out.

It takes me about three hours to decorate the tree. I usually put it up the weekend after Thanksgiving so I will have a long time to enjoy it. I take it down New Year's Day.

*Patricia (date) adds, "The first year I put the tree up, I was concerned my cats would bother it -- especially Mr. Gray because he is so curious. But believe it or not, he doesn't bother it at all. In fact none of the cats do."*

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### MY SILENT RETREAT, Visiting The Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine dedicated to Yogi Paramahansa Yogananda

#### Part III

Each day at the Lake Shrine began at 7:30AM with exercises in the temple courtyard. Paramahansa Yogananda, a great master of yoga to whom the entire garden and temple is dedicated, designed the motions we use. Their purpose is to awaken one's inner source of energy.

As I followed the slow, graceful movements, I gazed on a three tiered fountain in the courtyard. Each layer resembles an opened lotus blossom. Continuing my morning ritual after exercise, I dipped my hand into the fountain's water and moistened my face before entering the temple for sitting meditation. Sometimes as I sat, my body jerked as it does in those dreams where I catch myself falling. My body seemed to echo my consciousness on the edge of a deeper layer of being.

After meditation, those assembled silently walked to a quiet vegetarian breakfast of oatmeal and prunes. Yum! Two of my favorite things! Leaving the meal, I walked the innumerable stone steps down to the Lake Shrine to pray and meditate in the beauty of what had become "my" garden.

I strolled the perimeter of the lake pausing whenever I felt called, to be in the stillness. Just as the cupped hands of prayer, so is the bud of the lotus as it rises each morning from the murky water's depth to open its petals and reveal its beautiful shining truth. An echo of Keats' "Grecian Urn" came to me:

*Beauty is truth, truth beauty,— that is all*

*Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.*

Ending prayer, I opened my eyes and across the lake I saw myself wearing a white button

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front sweater. The vision was my child-self who sincerely believed in fairies and sensed the truth of invisible beauty and goodness.

In this vision I received the message: this is why the ripples of my past make me so uncomfortable. My true self cannot comprehend some of my earlier life choices which led to negative repercussions. *(Continued on the next page.)*

*Liz/Moscar (Oct. '08) says, "One of my favorite old- time hymns is the one that begins I come to the garden alone ... I love the swing of the melody; it's like a barrel organ. I see a parallel between my feelings for the lake shrine retreat and the upsweep of joy when I hear/sing this song."*

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***Firsts and lasts  
are  
long remembered.***

*James (Oct. '08) continues, "Can we forget our first day of school or the last on earth of a friend?"*

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***- - I-N-S-T-R-U-C-T-I-O-N-S - -***

**(Reading and Listening)**

**MORE TO THE SECRET**

Though Rhonda Byrne's book, *The Secret*, explains the concept and has many good things to say, author Ed Gungor thinks there is more to "The Secret" He also says by following only Byrne's "Secret," we can easily fall into the trap of material greed and social apathy.

In his book, More to the Secret, Gungor writes about the concept from a religious view-point by giving some interesting examples from The Bible. He tells us that God created the law of attraction. In our relationships with others, Jesus showed us how this law works. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon and you will be pardoned. Give, and it will be given to you. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."  
(Luke 6:36-38)

The author claims we all have creative power because our thoughts manifest into things. An example of this is the first creative event documented in Genesis where God created the universe with his words. (Words are thoughts expressed.) Likewise, God

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created man because he thought of us. We were made in the likeness of God. Our Creator put creative ability in our souls and the whole process happens through thoughts or the law of attraction.

*(Continued on the next page.)*

Gungor states that there is a lot of spiritual warfare in our thought life. God wants us to take on His good thoughts while Satan wants us to take on evil ones. Thoughts of darkness cause anguish and misfortune in people's lives and relationships. We need to take on God's thoughts to achieve eternal life.

Byrne emphasized the use of The Secret for improvement of self and for personal financial gain. Gungor counters with this example from Solomon, "I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure... Everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11) The law of attraction becomes a dark secret when it is only used for selfish desires and not extended to good for others.

The secret works best when connected to God.

*Lynan (Oct. '08) adds, "I was surprised to find a number of books written about the law of attraction. Each book empowers the reader with a different insight into The Secret."*

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**- T-H-R-E-A-D -**  
(Our Knowing and Our Spirituality)

**PHANTOM PAIN**

**Phantom pain  
Is in the brain**

**I know it sounds really dumb  
But that's where it comes from**

**This is what it's gotta' see:  
It thinks the leg's still on me**

**So now I gotta' retrain  
My stubborn brain**

**I gotta' convince it the leg is gone  
So, with my life, I can get back on**

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*Simon Stargazer III (Sept. '08) says, "Pat does still suffer from the attack of the phantom. He (The phantom) has tied tourniquets around her foot and around her leg just above the knee.*

*(Continued on the next page.)*

*He keeps it there all the time, and sometimes tightens it. Sometimes her phantom foot itches mercilessly and there is no scratching it. Makes me think of the phrase I read somewhere: I have no mouth and I must scream!"*

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**INSIDE THE ROSE**

**(For Kristy)**

**I gaze into your beauty -  
perfect velvety petals  
enfold each other,  
exuding innocence.**

**I become you**

**As I adore your loveliness.**

**Your purity**

**speaks to my inner Self.**

**Our divinity merges.**

**We transcend our separateness,**

**lost in our ancient memory**

**of Paradise.**

*Gail (Oct. '08) shares these thoughts, "This poem is for my daughter Kristy, one of the sweetest people I've ever known. She has always seemed to possess the purity of a rose."*

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**A**

**Christmas tree  
is made of words  
that slant toward each other.  
there is a gift  
on every branch**

*Liz/Moscar (See FABRICS article) says this verse from her childhood Christmas card was signed, 'from Mum, from Dad, from Brother.'*

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NOVEMEBER '08

**Happy Birthday:**

Joan H., November 16, 2008

Diana, November 17, 2008

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Don, November 26, 2008

DECEMBER '08

Happy Birthday:  
Doc, December 31, 2008

**--M-A-N-A-G-I-N-G-- T-H-E  
--H-O-U-S-E--  
(Ninepatch Business)**

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

**November-December's prompt:**

**"In what field of study would you like to take a two-hour crash course?"**

*June Poucher (Oct. '08) responds, "When I read the above question, it took me back many years to my childhood. My dad was a handyman and, as a youngster, I thought he could do anything. I was always at his heels. During the Great Depression I learned a lot about building by watching him improvise with whatever materials were available. If I had been a man, and had had the opportunity to go to college, I would have studied architecture. My interest in building has persisted. In the 80's I designed a log cabin that my husband and I built in the Georgia mountains. I was very comfortable in that role; the men we hired took orders from me as I worked alongside them. Through the years I have completed many projects with a sense of pride and accomplishment. Now time is catching up with me and I miss those things I can't do anymore."*

**January 2009's prompt: If you could *bottle* some part of nature to share, what part would you choose?**

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## YOUR HOLDIAY GAME IS NEXT!

*(Continued on the next page!)*

Dear Friends,

This year I missed the little game drawings many of you shared with me in years past. For example, in 2004 you sent stars; in 2005 you showed how you cut a paper in half. No sketches came with “Your Name Here” which appeared in 2007 so this year my activity again includes a simple sketch. The game comes from a collection of games for self-discovery offered by Tadahiko Nagao and Isamu Saito in their book, Kokology 2, pages 122-123.

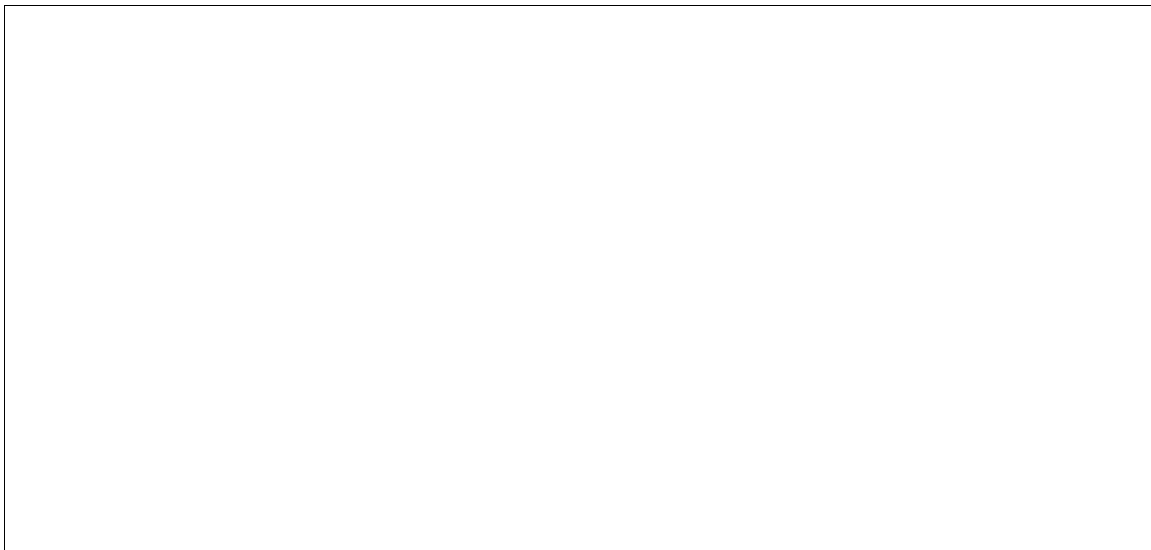
### At Water’s Edge

“The winding river is both a source and a symbol of life. Rivers provide fresh water, transportation, and places to bathe, swim, fish, and relax outdoors, and as a result people have chosen to build their homes near rivers from time immemorial. Of course, there is always the danger of flooding, and the shallows serve as breeding grounds for parasites and hiding places for predators. But humans seem to have found that the benefits associated with natural waterways outweigh the risks, and few riversides today remain unsettled by our kind.

Imagine living in a home located near a river or stream. Which of the following best describes the property?

1. A home on a small island in the middle of a river.
2. A wide stream flowing past the home with a narrow footbridge across it.
3. A babbling brook running through one corner of the property.
4. A home whose property is crisscrossed by a maze of winding streams.”

YOUR DRAWING HERE:





Possible explanations on the next page. WAIT. Sketch first!

Dear Friends,

What I “think” I am going to do and what I actually do are not always the same. My “thinker” and my “do-er” may be twins, but that doesn’t mean they are alike in every way. Perhaps merging the thinker and do-er happens during the process of maturing. On the other hand, once the twin zygote split, perhaps it was never intended to again unite. I can’t read My Maker’s mind.

However, in choosing my water/house image, I “saw” both the island, surrounded by water and the house beside the river -- one that has a footbridge across the river to the other side. I think the two images represents the two sides of myself-- one who wants to be solitary and the other who needs to be in contact with people, albeit selectively.

In my second picture, note that I live by the water but my footbridge leads onto THE ISLAND rather than the other side of the river.

These games are thoughtful! Do share your sketches and thoughts with *Ninepatch!*

Blessings\*\*\*

**Frances Fritzie**

Kokology 2 authors suggest the following: “... The relationship you saw between your home and the water nearby reflects your desire for social distance and personal space.

1. A home on a small island in the middle of a river. *You don’t ask for infinite room to roam, just a quiet place to call your own -- a place where you can be alone with your thoughts and escape from the pressures of society. If the home is a castle, you’d prefer yours to come with a moat.*

2. A wide stream flowing past the home with a narrow footbridge across it. *You keep an intimate circle of personal relations, while holding the rest of the world at arm’s length. That may make you a little harder to get close to than others, but it also means that when you call someone your friend, you always mean it.*

3. A babbling brook running through one corner of the property. *You don’t make a clear distinction between your social and private lives. You maintain an open door policy to the world and think of strangers as friends you just haven’t met yet. That openness and spirit of hospitality ensures that come what may in life, you will never have to face it*

*alone.*

4. A home whose property is crisscrossed by a maze of winding streams. *You live in the midst of a labyrinthine social network, and you’re occupied with the complex relationships between yourself and the people in your life. At times you may feel the*

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*outside world is always on the verge of flooding its banks, but that same maze of meandering channels also protects you from having any of those myriad streams rush straight through your front door.” Page 123.*