

# *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 another chapter from BUS RIDE, A Spiritual Journey. From the previous story: ...*Vaguely, I recall the take-off. Next thing I knew, my ears began to plug as we descended into Grand Rapids.*

A bright white-walled waiting area floored in gray carpet met me in Grand Rapids. I trailed silent fellows from the plane and walked with the pack a few minutes to the main terminal and baggage claim. *At least I know this airport.*

Apparently my flight had been the only recent arrival. My luggage dropped onto a stainless steel turn-stile about the time I arrived to collect it. Fifty yards away were the car-rentals. As I rolled the green suitcase toward Alamo, I remembered why I'd first chosen that rental: not only were their Grand Rapids rates a little better than Hertz, but they also had parking directly across the street. Getting the car would be simple: check in, get the key, go out the nearest door, cross the street and step into the car: always new, clean and full of gas.

When the agent appeared from a doorway and stepped to the counter, I smiled. Thanks to the miracle of cell phones and computers I said, "I have a reservation."

She paused over my paper work, "Sorry, we don't have an economy car... we'll substitute a midsize at no extra charge."

I paused at this wrinkle and considered the extra V-6 fuel cost, but tiredly shrugged, "OK." The larger car had a positive side: more space for David. My once frail son who had visited Dr. Levinson a decade earlier now stood six-foot-two and tipped the scales at hundred and ninety.

Car key in hand, moist warm night air greeted me as I walked across the empty roadway in front of the terminal and scanned the parking places for A-28. Half way down the first row, I opened the silvery Pontiac and slung my suitcases in the back seat. Sliding behind the wheel, I put in my key and started it. Just then I thought of Big Voice. In my mind's eye I saw her dozing on one of the benches in the Detroit's brightly lit Greyhound station. She'd been traveling farther north of Grand Rapids and her journey would not end until sometime tomorrow -- if there were no further delays. *Bless her.*

No other vehicles shared the curving outer drive until it met a four-lane boulevard at a traffic light where I followed familiar 44<sup>th</sup> Street into Grand Rapids. Out my windshield, stars speckled the dark sky backlit by city lights. As I buzzed down my windows I thought of White Tuxedo Larry who had done the same with his taxi. I shook my head, remembering how I had been mysteriously led to him in Detroit, scared when he left me at the gas station and then thankful to him when he'd given me a second ride to the airport terminal-- free. *Thank you, God.*

An image of Silk Shirt Joe came to mind, too. Detroit bound, he'd sat in front of me into Atlanta and near me again out of Cincinnati. Waiting for his ride home, he had been

leaning against the brick building, one foot up behind him as he blew smoke and gazed into the night. He'd be home now, lying between his own sheets and probably sleeping. *Bless him.*

Rolling down a nearly car-less four-lane toward David's house, I thought of other passengers who'd shared my ride, *What about Tan Shirt?* He'd warned of coming government identity devices and carried a jug of "special" water. I still had the business card where he had scribbled a website address on the back. I shook my head. *Making pitches on a bus! Bless him. I wish him well.* A procession of green lights eased my way as I drove a few miles west. After stopping for a major traffic light, I drove several blocks, and pulled my turn signal for the side street where David lived.

Blink, b-blink, b-blink. I rolled slowly past mostly dark houses. A street light illuminated David's drive. As I wheeled in, I thought of my Gainesville Greyhound driver, a smiling, mustached Black man, who had steered us to Atlanta safely. His parting words had stunned us and we had applauded. I had scribbled his speech in my notebook. Shifting the Grand Prix into park, I hauled out my spiral-bound and paged back to my notes. He'd said, "This is the end of the line for this bus. If you continue on, you'll pick up another. Whether you are continuing on or ending your trip here in Atlanta, may God bless you!"

I switched off the engine. *It's finally my end of the line!* Key in hand, I sat a moment and thought of seat mate, Kathy, with her black cross tattoo, the blond bus driver who'd faced an unknown problem at the back of the bus barehanded, and even White T- Shirt whose trouble made me miss my Cincinnati and Detroit connections.

*May God bless them all!*

*Frances Fritzie says, "The first leg of the journey to my class reunion is done... on to the trip-inspired class reunion!"*

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

***-***

(Letters to the Editor)

Dear Frances -

I am so sad after reading my Oct.'09 *Ninepatch*. The story that stands out is the avalanche story by Lotte, "One Hour of Marital Bliss." I didn't anticipate that ending. I am overwhelmed by sorrow.

You asked for my thoughts on your bus ride journey. I see it as part of the great tradition of voyage stories: Huck Finn, On the Road and The African Queen. Yours is a

journey both physical and metaphysical. There is something about being in transit that enables me to step back and view life from a different perspective.

*(Continued on the next page.)*

OK. I've been writing at my tutoring job because my tutoree stood me up, but I need to go on and attempt to structure my thoughts about media education class once again.

Hugs,  
Liz

*Liz/Moscar (Oct. '09) adds, "I loved your simile about your thoughts being like refrigerated Hershey's syrup. I can relate!"*

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Dear Frances,

Hello! How are you? It was nice chatting with you on the phone the other day.

You asked how my counseling group works. Everyone takes a turn to talk and others listen. Members of the group are allowed to talk to the speaker. They can ask questions. A per-son is in charge of the group. He also asks questions and makes comments. It's OK, but I am looking forward to the time I can return to my one-on-one sessions with the counselor.

So you saw my house. Yes it is cute, but sometimes I hate it. It doesn't feel like mine with the kids living downstairs and my husband home all day. I feel like I am just making the house payments on it!

I did pick out the flooring in the dining room and kitchen. I wanted hardwood floors in the living room, but the carpeting is OK. It looks nice. Having a neat and nice house helps me feel good.

I have been working a lot of hours lately. Today I finally have a day off! Now I can do a few of the things I enjoy -- like writing a letter to you!

Thanks for listening and thanks for your support. God bless you!

Love and prayers,  
LindaSue

*LindaSue (Oct. '09) says, "I am reading books by B.J. Hoff. Right now I am reading The Song Weaver. When I go back to the library, I will look for the Amish books you mentioned by Wanda Brunstetter."*

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Hi Fritzie!

Thinking about you today. It is raining here. Really nice. I love the smell of rain. When it stops, I want to put the patio furniture away.

I am reading a book you might like : Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin. The story tells how the two authors brought schools to Afghanistan and Pakistan. So far I am really enjoying it.

Another book I read and really liked was Tony Dungy's new one, Quiet Strength, The Principles, Practices and Priorities of a Winning Life. He is such a special person. When

we lived in Florida and he was coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, I remember you said he was the only football personality you admired. (*Continued, next page.*)

Hope all is well with you my friend. The cats are doing fine. My “farmer” husband and I are well. The garden is finished. We really enjoyed it again this year. I have the last of my tomatos in the fridge.

Talk to you later.

Patricia

*Patricia (Aug. '09) adds, “For some reason, I haven't been reading as much lately.”*

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Hey Frances,

Sorry it's taken me a while to get back to you. You say you are having a hard time keeping up. I think I understand what you mean -- taking care of others and commitments while still finding time for yourself can be a heck of a challenge. Sometimes I've got to weed out a few activities to make room to breathe. I wish you luck in making those choices and pray you find your equilibrium soon.

As for me, things are busy, as always. I've had to stop with the doctors and acupuncture. It was all getting a bit too much to keep up with. Luckily, my health seems relatively stable now.

My daughter decided to take her baby and move to the next town over. I'm preparing for that, and the necessity of taking a roommate to help pay the bills. However upsetting both events will be, I'm sure both will be beneficial.

I have also been working an unbelievably early shift and am back to ten hour days. Today, I booked time off for the holidays. It's time to face the fact winter's near.

Otherwise, things are good -- cold but good!

I'll chat again soon,

Love,

Lynn TROR

*LynnTROR (Apr. '09) adds, “I have a roommate in mind and we were supposed to get together to talk today but she was a ‘no call/no show.’ Disappointing. I figure she was exhausted from working two jobs. Really hoping we can come to an agreement. I think I'll learn a lot from her.”*

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Hi Frances,

Our canoe trip this year-- like the previous ones-- was a lot of fun. As we four guys were slowly paddling down the river (very slowly) we heard dogs barking. Presently a black bear came crashing out of the woods and proceeded to swim across the river in front of us! There were four hunting dogs chasing him, three of which swam after the bear. The fourth must have been afraid of water as he tried to enter the river, but then backed up, tried a few more times, then gave up.

We also ran into a bunch of fifteen or twenty young gals tubing down the river who joined us at our campsite along the river.

As one young gal we met and partied with said, “It was a blast.”

Much fun!

Le (Continued on the next page.)

*Le (Aug. '09) adds, "Yup! I'll be heading back to Florida in late 2009. Seems like the ride gets longer every year, but the south and warm weather annually beckon."*

**Editor's Note:** You'll read more of Le's canoeing adventures in Jan. 2010!

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Hi there,

I have been busy traveling. I went to New Mexico -- a nice trip for once. However, my visit with my mom to home state, Michigan, was good, too. Now I am back to work and am doing well.

The day after Thanksgiving, I am having a BIG garage sale. I love putting on that annual event! It is also an income boost for the holidays. I hope the weather is good.

I am also working at getting things done around the house -- again -- pretty serious about it, too. Just a few more boxes to clean out and my life should be tidy and organized. I need to feel calm, clear and settled.

Once I pay a few bills, I will purchase a car. I'm looking for-ward to that. It will pretty much signify the end of my chapter on 'the -ex.' Then I can drive past it all.

Maybe that sounds crazy, but it's a kind of mourning process, a healthy one.

I feel good about it all.

Jodi

*Jodi (Sept. '09) adds, "Fritzie told me about receiving an African violet as a gift. Here's a little secret. My plant lost its flowers a while ago and I look every day for new ones. None yet, but winter is coming. I give it special drops I bought. Maybe I should move it, but I hate to. They are so sensitive. Like us ... you know."*

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Hello Francesca,

Since I've had so many issues with Twelve Step work, I sought out a therapist who is familiar with the program. She would like me to work on my co-dependency issues. (I seem to recall that you told me a little about that.) I've been reading up on it. What really grabbed me is that dysfunctional families often look completely normal from the outside.

Authors she recommended are Black, Bradshaw and Subby. My library system is pathetically weak on these writers.

Elaine

*Elaine (Oct. '09) says, "After talking to my therapist, I felt as if I got permission to feel the way I already felt!"*

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***Ideas are only fantasy until fruition.***

*James (Oct. '09) continues, "Then they become reality."*

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*(Continued on the next page.)*

**- - - -F-A-B-R-I-C-S- - - -**  
(Our Experiences)

DAM-PA

“Dam-pa!” I’d shout, and my dying grandfather would twinkle with laughter, opening his mouth just far enough so I could pull my Gerber’s baby spoon out from between his teeth. Lying in his bed, he’d wait for me to spoon another bite of ice cream into his mouth -- and he’d bite that spoon again. “Dam-pa” I’d cry, and his laughter would once more free the spoon. I loved playing the game with him. I was only a few months more than three years old when my grandfather died. His laughter and that spoon game are one of my earliest memories.

My mother gifted me with the spoon many years later and just holding it brought my grandfather close again. Surely his laughter came in part because of the “dam” word bubbling so effortlessly from his toddler grandchild.

Would that I could give you a few more spoons of ice cream, Dam-pa.

**KarenKK** is well-loved and married, and the mother of two grown children, a daughter and a son. She is a caregiver to her mother, and enjoys reading, collecting china, and Sunday afternoon naps. *“If you can read, you can do anything.”-- her father’s sage advice some 50-plus years ago.*

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A SMALL TOWN PASSING

It’s been a bittersweet week. My husband’s mother died last Friday. Her road of suffering is at an end.

When she had passed, Bill’s sister, who is a nurse and has hospice experience, called us. We went to his parents’ house to be with her and their dad as they were quietly sitting with the body, honoring their loved one.

Bill’s father has been a de-voted caretaker for his wife, particularly during the past couple of years. He refused to have her in a nursing home as he believed that she would receive impersonal care. He felt he owed her this devotion. It was amazing for all who knew the old gentleman to witness.

I had never seen a human newly dead, without the undertaker's makeup and the paleness of embalming. It was a very powerful thing. Bill's sister put potpourri on the stove, I guess to cover the smell of death, but I didn't detect any odor.

My mother-in-law's eyes were open and her mouth hung slack revealing her lower teeth. I had never before seen her grin. By the time I met her, the brain tumor had turned her fairly emotionless. It was a strange.

The minister from Bill's church came about an hour after we arrived. Soon afterward,

*(Continued on the next page.)*

the funeral director also showed up with his assistant to take away her body.

Before they did, we gathered in a circle around her lifeless form and the minister led us in a prayer for the deceased.

It was a tender goodbye -- a holy moment.

*Linda Rosenthal (Oct. '09) adds, "I've heard some make fun of small towns and their curious ways of relating, but as I get to know these people, I realize what a wonderful, precious gift their love for one another is. I won't fantasize them into sainthood, but I liked what I saw. It had an old world feel to it and a timelessness that felt as though we were all together, suspended in that moment."*

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## GOODBYE TO BUTTONS

We had to put our pet of twenty-two years to sleep. Our cat, Buttons, went into kidney failure.

Buttons was originally a farm kitty. I picked her up one day when I was visiting my parents. She was the only kitty we could catch! Her little brothers and sisters escaped into a hole under the porch.

She quickly acquired a nickname. We called her Buttsy. When visitors came, the only thing you could see was Buttsy's butt as she was racing around the corner to hide in our bedroom closet.

For her first six years, Buttsy lived in Wisconsin with us. But we moved to Florida. We put our dog, Charity, in the front seat with my husband, George. Buttsy and I got to ride in the back seat. I had my hands full!

Buttsy dislikes car rides. She kept looking for ways to get out of the car while she persistently MEOWED the whole trip. It was kind of like that movie (or maybe it was TV), episode, "Are we there yet?" In the car's back-seat, the kids chorus, "Are we there yet?" and the driver hollers, "SHUT UP!" We couldn't get to Florida fast enough!

We moved into a little villa on a golf course and we adapted to our new home. But then that sad day came when George took Buttsy into the vet's office and I stayed in the truck. I just couldn't watch the vet inject Buttons.

George and I cried a lot. It's hard to lose a member of your family. Like our other pets that died, we had her cremated. Now we have her ashes in our cabinet, too.

*Lynann (October 09) adds, "At first our house felt empty without our long-time pet, but now I am glad that I don't have to deal with a litter box. Since I never had a proper place to put the litter box, I often wondered if our home smelled like cat litter."*

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### NINEPATCH Birthdays

November

Diana 17

Don 26

December

Doc 31

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

(Reading Listening and Viewing)

### THE HIDDEN

Books, bookstores and libraries have always been magical to me. The realization that a lifetime is not long enough to savor even the content of a modest library has elated and de-pressed me. A treasure trove of knowledge, mystery, pathos, and questioning is hidden between the covers of books and can be discovered by the act of opening and reading.

Recently I found a book, The Art of the Snowflake: A Photographic Album, by Kenneth Libbrecht. His words triggered an intense positive emotional reaction since I share a lifelong love of snowflakes. In awe I looked at photos from his collection of snow crystals.

Nature's creation of tiny white beauty surpasses in form and glory almost every creation of man. I spent a wonderful morning with the book and reflected on the pleasure snowflakes had brought in my own life.

Being spellbound by newly falling snow is one of the great wonders of imagination. As a child, looking upward, watching and feeling the millions of icy bits fall to earth filled me with excitement. I recall the pleasure was more intense if snow fell during the evening and I stood watching under a street lamp. Gazing up into the light, the snowflakes seemed to magically explode from an infinite blackness of the sky.

Those of us who have lived in the snow belt as children have snow memories. Vividly, I remember stretching out our arms, spinning in circles, raising my head and letting the flakes land on my eye lashes, forehead, and cheeks while my tongue greedily reached out to taste the fairy-like dancing flakes.

Back then, the weightless-ness of a snowflake registered as a tiny spot of frost which rapidly turned to water as the warmth of my tongue or face created one of the miraculous



transformations in nature. Some larger flakes landing on my coat-sleeves or the upturned turned palms of my gloved hands gave a hint of the intricate design nature had created.

As a curious kid, I even tried to savor and prolong the pleasure of falling snow, by gently carrying snowflakes into my home. I hoped to get a closer look at the sparkling object with a magnifying glass or a microscope. However, the warmth of our inside hallway or kitchen rapidly melted the tiny sparkler. Whatever secrets in design or beauty the flakes expressed quickly changed into an insignificant speck of water.

This transformation is one of our earliest experiences of the ephemeral quality of life. Snowflakes are a wondrous example of “the hidden.”

*(Continued on the next page.)*

The richness of the human mind is greatly enhanced by the brain’s capacity to seek out that which cannot easily be seen. A child’s mind understands this drive. One of a child’s earliest expression of this concept is the great pleasure a baby takes from the playing the games of “peek-a-boo” and later, hide-and-seek. The wonder of discovery is experienced both by attempting to hide and being found as well as by seeking and finding what was hidden.

From these early simple games children begin to learn that the world is made up of layers, levels, links and connections -- all of which lead to further levels, links and connections.

The closest I can come to appreciating the infinite is by exploring and attempting to understand ever-emerging levels of connectedness. Snowflakes offer a window into the universe of “the hidden.” These simple crystals offer infinite variability within a finite but ephemeral object.

Kenneth Libbrecht’s book opens a magical space which he shares with all of us.

*Wallace (Mar. '09) adds, “Exploring connectedness is the same concept whether one is developing an understanding of one’s self or a reality we perceive outside of ourselves -- like the snowflake.”*

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### THE UNIVERSE IS CALLING

This book subtitled, “Opening to the Divine Prayer” and penned by Rev. Eric Butterworth who was senior minister of Unity Center of New York from 1961 to 2003.

I’ve been using it in a book study. It discusses prayer as “Affirmative Prayer/ Spiritual Treatment.” There are several steps to this special kind of prayer:

- Step 1 is recognition: Relax. Let Go and Let God
- Step 2 is identification/ unification: Meditation/Experience Oneness in the silence.
- Step 3 is Declaration/ Affirmation: I declare the truth about me. I realize and affirm that the qualities and nature of Spirit are the qualities and nature of me.
- Step 4 is Gratitude/ Acceptance: The Great Amen. I accept this truth as present here and now. I express my gratitude for it.
- Step 5 is Release: I release this idea into the Law of Mind, knowing it creates. I give up the need to control it. I let go and let God work.

Here’s how I use the process. My prayer is:

1. I am aware there is one Power and Presence always in my life.
2. I am one with Spirit seeing me in my perfect place at the perfect time.
3. I am confident in my decision making skills as the qualities of Spirit are the qualities of me
4. I believe this truth and express my gratitude.
5. I release these thoughts into the universe knowing it is done. I give up my need to control

The author also suggests saying this affirmation/prayer as often as possible: “I have faith in God as the source of all my good, and I bless all the many channels through which it may come.”

*(Continued on the next page.)*

**Dottie** (Oct. '08) adds, “I am closing on a house in Ft. Wayne, Indiana on Oct 30. It has features I have dreamed about such as a window with a good view from the kitchen sink, a private back yard with mature trees and an area to plant flowers and vegetables. (I also like a kitchen table by a window and close to family.) My children asked if I want to have Thanksgiving dinner at my house Sounds great to me. Thank you God.”

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#### A MEMOIR

Crazy for the Storm, a Memoir of Survival. by Norman Ollestad is a worthy book. It focuses on two years of the author’s life from the age of eleven to thirteen. During that time in 1979 a small aircraft crashed in the mountains of California. He was the sole survivor.

The tale is an odd combination of mundane, ordinary testimony combined with wonderful passages of insight about human nature being driven to its limits by circumstances and choice. Also, the author pays homage to his grandparents, parents and his son, giving an overview of four generations.

The epilogue is thorough and satisfying, giving more closure as the author revisits his rescuers and the site of the accident twenty-seven years later. There he ponders how to fine-tune raising his son based on what he has learned from his life experience.

Clearly, he has done a lot of self-analysis.

**Carol** (Oct. '09) adds, “There are some great passages about downhill skiing and surfing techniques.”

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

GET TO KNOW ME

Our Question of the Month for this issue was, “**People say I look like...**”

**Georgene** (Sept. '09) writes, (People say I look like) “*Sophia Loren. When I was young I had big eyes, dark hair and full lips. Those comments are nice memories. And I have hopes for myself since I notice Sophia has aged well!*

*However, I feel I should also mention that when I was a kid, I was hairy. My dad bought my mom a bikini (which she would not wear) so I tried it on. My brothers said I looked like Gentle Ben – a far cry from Sophia Loren!*

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(Continued on the next page.)

**June Poucher** (Oct. '09) says, “People say I look like my mother. She was a beautiful woman but I did not want to look like her or to be like her. We were not close.

*One day some months ago, as I sat in the hospital lobby waiting for my lab work, an old high school friend came in. She stopped when she saw me and said, “You look just like your mother.”*

*Apparently she saw from my reaction that I was not pleased. She quickly added, “I meant that as a compliment!”*

*As I get older, when I look in the mirror, I can see that I do look more and more like my mother. After struggling with old memories, I am working on forgiving her and avoiding the flaws I saw in her.*

*I am trying to focus on her good qualities and the valuable things she taught me.*

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The question for our January 2010 issue is, “**The most surprising gift I ever received is...**”

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

**THE SNOWS OF FALL**  
The blowing snows of fall  
Are the most colorful of all.

Large flakes of red and yellow  
Drift through air oh so mellow

Thickly covering the grass so green  
Arriving just in time for Halloween.

**Simon Stargazer III** (Oct. '09) adds, “*I was sitting at the dining room table gazing out the window while trying to get into what I was supposed to be doing... paying bills. But the drifting leaves kept taking my attention away from the pile on the table. It reminded me of a poem I wrote last winter about the large lazy flakes of snow drifting down during a similar bill-*

*paying session when I also had an attention deficit. I liked the idea of mounds of red and yellow flakes in the driveway that I didn't have to shovel!"*

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*(Continued on the next page.)*

**LOONS ON FOREST LAKE**

--For Sandy and Dave

**A wind-weary faded November day  
reflects in the silver mirror  
of the lake,  
invites a flock of loons  
appearing to convene a meeting.  
Their stark black heads,  
bright white necks,  
duck and weave, leave  
trails of jet streams, then  
circle back like water ballet.**

**Shades of gray, not autumn  
or winter,  
water the color of pewter  
and rain-laden clouds  
hold these elegant birds.  
They frolic and play,  
glad the boats are hauled ashore,  
while silver-haired folks like us  
watch with binocs by a crackling fire,  
benignly accepting this season  
of our numbered days.**

*Gail (Oct. '09) says, "I wrote this poem while I was visiting our friends and neighbors a few years ago. Lo and behold, Harry and I got married and now I live in the same area -- but not on the lake! The fall foliage has been spectacular. The woods are a lovely orange... and I don't want to think about December, thank you!"*

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**Fright Flight**

**The sun  
scares the stars at first light  
when they hear it  
rumbling up  
over the earth's edge.**

**They scurry west  
to the other end of the sky  
and cluster there  
pulsing frantic  
until he sweeps them**

away  
with one lordly stroke  
of dawn.

*Gil Murray (July '09) says, "I've just moved to FL from the industrial Northeast where the stars are smogged. So it's glorious to gaze at them through crystal skies."*

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*(Watch for the 2009 GAME next!)*

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## **2009 GAME Our Gift to You!**

Dear Readers,

I paged through my Kokology 2 for another game you could easily draw, "play" and share, but found none and bought the *original Kokology, The Game of Self-Discovery* by Tadahiko Nagao and Isamu Saito.

That evening, I sat on the couch with my hubby and made the simple drawing after the 6:00 news. I read directions and drew my picture. Then I asked JK to "play." He set aside his book and I handed him a pencil and paper before reading the words below.

It was interesting to compare our sets of bubbles and discuss how our view of ourselves compared with the authors' suggestions. I hope you'll have fun, too. If you don't have a playmate, come play with *Ninepatch!*

Blessings\*\*\*

### **Frances Fritzie**

ADRIFT ON THE BREEZE

"Can you still remember those long summer days when school was out, you had no responsibilities, and there was nothing but time from when you woke up till the sun finally went down? Time for play and adventure, time to daydream and roam. Hours to spend on childhood diversions...flying kites...watching clouds...blowing bubbles..."

Imagine you are out again on a childhood summer's day. Blowing bubbles in an open field. Which of the following best describes the scene you imagined?

1. The bubbles you blow float high into the sky.
2. You are blowing hundreds of tiny bubbles through your plastic ring.
3. You're concentrating on blowing a single enormous bubble.
4. The bubbles you make are carried behind you on the breeze."

## NOW DRAW YOUR BUBBLE (S)!

Possible explanations:

Hello again!

I still enjoy blowing shiny rainbow-colored bubbles and have a jar of special soap mixture packed in my *beach bag*. At the beach, I again experience a bit of those childhood "nothing but time" days.

I perch on a striped towel spread over the white sands of Holmes Beach on Anna Maria Island, in Florida's beautiful turquoise Gulf. I reach into my bag and pull out the bubble-wand and blow... UP they go, just as I remember from childhood! My picture showed bubbles of all sizes rising on an updraft -- #1 ! ( My dreams may be elusive and unattainable, but I'm trying for them anyway!)

Hope you had fun! Do share your sketches and thoughts with *Ninepatch* -- and me!

Blessings\*\*\*

**Frances Fritzie**

Kokology authors suggest the following: "The shimmering bubbles you blow in your imagination are symbols of your hopes and dreams. The scene you described reveals how you think about dreams you hope someday will come true.

1. The bubbles you blow float away high into the sky. *You see your own dreams as elusive and unattainable, flying away from you like soap bubbles on the wind. Maybe you're wishing for too much, too soon or are caught up in an impossible fantasy. Whatever the case may be, the gap between your dreams and reality is wide. As much as you may like to tell others of your grand schemes and plans for the future, somewhere inside yourself is a voice telling you just how fragile and fleeting those dreams are.*

2. You are blowing hundred of tiny bubbles through your plastic ring. *You've set your sights on the immediate attainables – new clothes, a car, a boyfriend, or girlfriend. Your dreams are sensible and always within your reach. Decide what it is you want most in the world and work for it. If you chase after everything at once, you stand a good chance of ending up empty-handed.*

3. You're concentrating on blowing a single enormous bubble. *You have a single, all purpose dream or ambition that drives your entire life. Hold on to that desire and keep striving toward your goal. Given time, you'll see that it's not so far from your grasp*

4. The bubbles you make are blown behind you on the breeze. *Your disappointing experience with unfulfilled hopes and dreams in the past shapes how you think today. But the experience of chasing after and losing a few dreams along the way was all just training for you as you make new goals for the future. Don't be afraid to keep dreaming – the only people who never fail are those who never try.”*

**NOTE:** This year's selection comes from Kokology, The Game of Self-Discovery by Tadahiko Nagao and Isamu Saito, pages 94-96. \*