

The Gift of Story

*A retreat for Advent and the Winter Solstice
at Rolling Ridge*

December 5-7, 2014



Traditionally the liturgical season of Advent is a time to reflect inwardly on what gives us hope, while on a planetary level the earth's northern hemisphere awaits the solstice, marking the moment after which the sun's light will lengthen each day, pushing back the darkness. It is a time immersed in story: of stars, angelic visitations, dreams, and journeys, as well as generosity and compassion in less exalted realms: gifts left on doorsteps or in shoes or stockings, feasts for the poor, tales of elves and sugarplums told round the warmth of a burning Yule.

Yet we live in a time when the deeper possibilities of these stories are largely ignored and discredited. We are surrounded instead by a different story, one of separation: between us and nature, spirit and matter, reason and intuition.

We invite you to come away for a weekend of reconnection and restorying. Let go of the story of separation and open to hints and glimpses of the older, deeper story. Wander in the early winter woodlands of Rolling Ridge to listen to the stories that mountain and stream, hawk and moon, and that the ancient rocks and trees tell us, these guardians and guides to the wildness and the imagination of the earth. Explore the world of myth and archetype and nighttime dream. Gather to listen to what we're learning, to share ways of living on this threshold between stories, and to honor our journey with ritual and ceremony, poetry and song.

Through restorying we come home to our belonging to the sacredness of the living Earth. We come home to the wisdom we once knew, but have recently forgotten, which is so clearly echoed in the ancient stories of the season: the wisdom of the lost feminine integrated with the masculine, the wisdom of our bodies and senses, the wisdom of myths and miracle stories, the wisdom of dreams, the wisdom of indigenous peoples who knew that mountain and river and tree and stars have a spiritual energy that is vital to our well-being, individually and as a community. Restorying is about discovering and cultivating anew that old story at the level of human presence on Earth, beginning with the personal—the deepest, most authentic story that is mine to live.

Give yourself the gift of story this season. Come away to Rolling Ridge and let the forest and stars and the luminous poetry of manger and mystery lead you to your own chapter of living into the ancient story that is new again, which even now is re-emerging in our world—a story of compassion, interdependence, and the prodigious power of imagination.

Retreat Leaders:

Lindsay McLaughlin is an educator, writer, grandmother, dancer, and longtime member of the Rolling Ridge Study Retreat Community. Her experience includes leading numerous retreats exploring the gift of story and celebrating the sacred circles of community and connection.

Julie Gabrielli is an architect, teacher, filmmaker, and writer. She explores ways to tell the new stories that are emerging in our culture. Her experience includes designing buildings and places from new/old paradigms; community engagement for sustainability, and cultivating joy, creativity, attention and reverence through the arts.

This retreat will be held at Rolling Ridge Study Retreat House, a six bedroom cabin in a wilderness setting near Harpers Ferry, WV. Rolling Ridge is accessible by car only. The retreat begins with supper at 6 pm on Friday and concludes with lunch on Sunday. Fee for the retreat is \$210 (double occupancy) and \$230 (single) and includes lodging for two nights, six meals and program. To reserve your place, email lindsay@rollingridge.net and request an application to be returned with a \$50 deposit.

Give up all the other worlds except the one to which you belong.

Sweet Darkness, David Whyte