

**Finding hope** in a season when there is more darkness than light, when family expectations intensify and the end of the year asks us to look back at all we have walked through... hope can feel a little out of reach..

It's cold. It's dark a lot . It can be overwhelming out there. So go inside. Be warm. Find your coziest blanket. Pour a cup of tea. Take good care of yourself. You need it. It's been a good year, but it's been a hard year. I saw you. It was exceedingly hard, surprisingly hard, unnecessarily hard many times. And yet here you are — more whole now than you were when the year began.. Better today than you have ever been. You've come a long way, baby.

As the year ends, here are some ideas to consider wrapping around your sweet self:

1. **Review the year.** What themes emerged? Where were there synchronicities? See if you can find three.
2. **Remember the twinkle.** Who is someone who has looked at you with an unmistakable spark in their eye? Who is one who helps remind you of your uniqueness, your creativity, your goodness?
3. **Collect your markers.** What small things - a color, an object, a word, a song, a memory - symbolize some hope, some growth, a vision, an idea, some tenderness for you right now? These become anchors for your becoming.

We are meant to be fully awake, fully alive, fully free. Winter holidays across traditions are celebrations of light and life and love in the midst of darkness. By collecting some synchronicities, a twinkle and a marker or two (or three), we are inviting some hope and some magic to find us. And I am right here joining you in that process!

**In the meantime, please consider joining any or all of the following events!**

**This Friday, December 5 from 5-8 pm**, The Art Way is hosting an Art Show Happy Hour benefitting our community.

**Next Friday, December 12 from 10 am - 1 pm**, The Art Way will be happening and a guest artist will be teaching us how to make a "zine" (short for fan magazine) which is a small booklet about your words, your art, your ideas plus our amazing Director Martha will lead us in the Open Studio Process.

**Next January 2026**, we begin a new Sacred Way group exploring our aliveness — especially the kind that integrates spirituality, embodiment, sexuality, and feminine wisdom. We'll be diving into the book *Missionary Position* by Celeste Holbrook and reclaiming what it means to be fully alive in our bodies, our desires, our stories and our spirits.

**And as always, I look forward to seeing you and being with you in it all!! Beth**

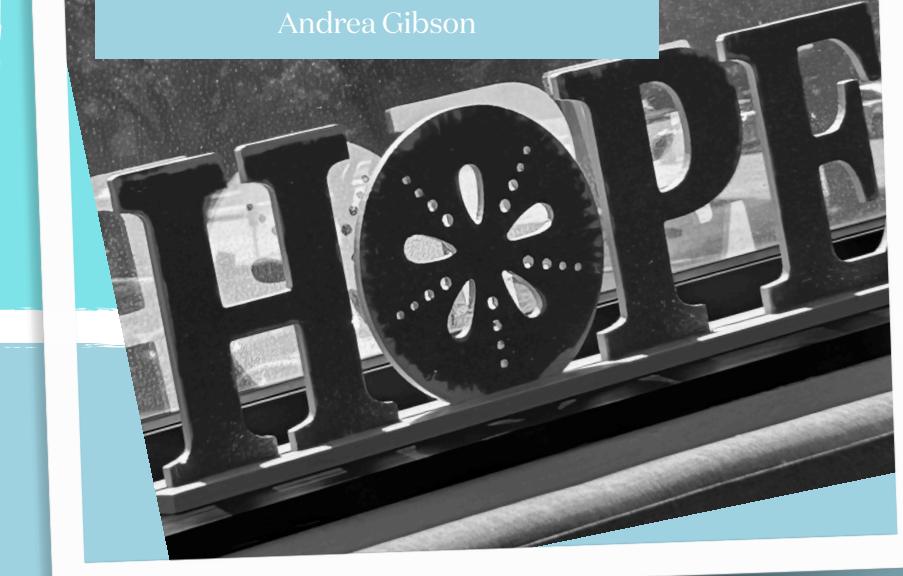
December 2025

### INSTEAD OF DEPRESSION

Try calling it hibernation  
Imagine the darkness is a cave  
in which you will be nurtured  
by doing absolutely nothing.  
Hibernating animals don't even dream.

It's okay if you can't imagine  
spring. Sleep thru the alarm  
of the world. Name your hopelessness  
a quiet, hollow place you go  
to heal, a den you dug,  
Sweetheart, instead of a  
grave.

Andrea Gibson



# Go Inside

Sometimes themes and memories, stories and gospels come to us just when we need them and they shine light just where we need illumination. Thank you Love and Light that has met me every step of the way. I see the themes of running for the spiritual, enjoying creating and yet the doubting. Always the doubting. When I was seven and no one planned to go to church, I would run through the woods to the little church down the street. Something in me was hungry. Something in me knew there was food there. I also spent many hours in my closet those days. I wrote poems and stories and drew pictures all over my walls. I have found nourishment in closets. Sanctuary can look strange to the naked eye. When we don't receive direction to trust tender pursuits, like art or quiet or mystery, we forget how to listen to the sound of our inner voice of Love. Doubt becomes louder than attunement. We lose track of intuition. Though my path led me to church, spiritual awakening and eventually seminary, I had/have a lot of unlearning and softening to do before there could be a wider opening to Love and an awakening to deeper aliveness.

Where did that free, running, drawing, poetry girl go? Mr. Whitehead and his twinkling eye helped. He was my seventh grade Speech & Drama teacher and he taught me what it felt like to be seen. I had just moved and was considered a "Yankee" which was not cool. So on top of being super awkward and super angst, I was also super not cool. But Mr. Whitehead did not let that be my identity. He encouraged me to be myself, to do my best and to be creative. Mr. Whitehead always had a twinkle in his eye when he looked at us. That twinkle seeped into my pores and is still showing up mysteriously as guidance and a reminder that my innocence and creativity are not lost..

When "Blame it on the Rain" was filling the radio and the Berlin Wall was falling, I was in seminary. My spiritual journey had led me there and I was one of a handful of women on a mostly male campus. We were allowed to be there because we had no ambitions to pastor or preach. I was regularly asked what it would be like to be a pastor's wife. Those constraints of being silenced and minimized were so deep in my bones that years later as a hospice chaplain, I asked my Anglican priest for permission to speak at funerals. Even though I don't recognize that seminary girl anymore, echoes of those doubts still threaten to silence, constrict or derail me. And sometimes I fall.

And I did. I fell into an abyss. Circumstances unfolded and it was like I was sliding into the earth. But while I was there in the muck and mire, I realized I had access to something unexpected: the nutrients of the universe. The rich minerals of the deep. And I realized the nutrients were available to me. I realized it could help me feed the people I love.

It felt like milk and honey were moving from the center of the universe into me. Then just as I was sitting with this idea of being nourished from the inside out, a dear friend gifted me a copy of *Milk & Honey*, by Rupi Kaur. Nourishment layered upon nourishment.

Because when I am lost in that kind of terrain, I go wherever and to whatever feels like food — another thread appeared in a Princess Diana documentary. I found myself lost in the soft pink color of her name on the cover. It felt like it held everything I loved about her — her beauty, her power, her tenderness, her global impact. Then suddenly that same pink began appearing everywhere around me — like a synchronistic invitation toward my own feminine power. So I'm incorporating that pink into my life in tangible, quiet, intimate ways. That pink has became a little marker I carry with me, a private signal that leads me back to myself.

These threads — the memories, the mentors, the markers - have reminded me that **hope** is still here ... Love's breadcrumbs leading us back to our sweet selves. May your own markers find you, too. And may this winter season offer you its quiet magic, its deep remembering, and its invitation to become ever more alive. I am forever grateful to join you always!!