

„Coffee or anything else Madam? “ a stewardess asks, smiling friendly.

We are on our flight to Billings, Montana from where we continue to “Living Spring” the magical place where Christa lives. Three friends will meet us there and together we will be with Christa, working, praying and celebrating; meditating, and facing up to inner processes.

Lisa has persuaded me with her exceedingly exuberant way of being that is hard to resist. I wouldn't have had the guts to visit Christa in Montana on my own - Christa, who called me back into life with her clairvoyance, love and truthfulness during her workshops in Germany that I attended a number of times.

I remember: *“Of what thickets do you speak, Rita? That too is Life!”* - (The spark of life!)

A thousand thoughts have me busy during the flight: “Rita, that is half of your yearly vacation that you will spend on an arid, comfortless, almost uninhabited piece of land named Montana; the ocean that you so dearly love far away and the Horse Whisperer probably only exists in the movie theater. And who knows what God has in mind for you on that land. He may want to prepare you for a monastic life and Christa is the great seducer. It is good that Lisa is sitting next to me so filled with joyful anticipation. This pessimism I must have inherited from my father, who every morning at breakfast looked in a health dictionary to test his physical condition; who yearly prophesied the apocalypse – and of course, all evil came from the Americans. But if there weren't those many allergies and head aches in my daily life.... And I know quite well that me fighting my symptoms does not really help.

Christa picks us up from the airport in Billings, the largest city of Montana with 110,000 inhabitants. We drive to the little town of Roundup, Christa's city dwelling, about an hour by car. Here we will stay overnight before we drive to the land of Living Spring.

I sit on the passenger side next to Christa, filled with stage fright, veneration and respect, for her who on the other hand joyfully drives her pick-up along the highway as though she had never done anything different in her life. Doubts, fear and mistrust are totally swept away – next to Christa I too feel secure. Gratefully I smile across at Lisa; I am so glad I followed her. Nothing can happen now. God works 200% through Christa and I can rest!

Aside from a wonderful, star-filled sky we do not see much of the Montana landscape. Night is almost there by the time we arrive in Roundup. Tired from the long trip but still filled with joy we greet Christa's friend and travel companion Gabriele, who also lives in Roundup, and Karin, Margret, and Kurt who arrived a few hours earlier from Germany and will be with us for the next two weeks.

Because the guest rooms are already filled, Lisa and I will stay the next few days with a neighbor, Jeanette, who has kindly prepared a guest room for us.

There isn't much more that I can take: putting down my suitcase, a little time in the bathroom, and up to bed. Daylight and in-drifting sunlight drive me out of bed at 7 AM: While still rubbing my eyes I discover three deer in the neighboring yard; not shy at all, carefree. Jeannette who has already made coffee for us tells us later – and that I understood despite her Southern accent – that deer were quite a plague in town. Since they weren't shot they multiplied quickly, weren't shy and ate everything in the gardens: flowers, vegetables, leaves of bushes and trees.

Christa and the others are already waiting for us. We will have breakfast together and then begin with work in the garden. Christa would like to create a beautiful garden next to the guest house in Roundup with flowers and herb beds. The soil has first to be loosened, dug under and weeded: real beds will have to be formed. We will need more soil, i.e. we have to go to the land and get it by truck. A lot of work is waiting. Karin, Margret, Kurt and I try to work the dry soil with shovels and hoes in 30 degrees in the shade. I enjoy physically working until I sweat, but I am also glad when the call comes “lunch is ready” – lunch prepared by Lisa and Gabriele.

Christa says a brief prayer, thanking God for our nourishment. No matter what we will be doing during the coming days with Christa, everything is valued, cared for and done with great awareness and Love. Whoever forgets will certainly be reminded by Christa

In the evening the first questions arise: Christa, when do we go to the land? Do we take our suitcases? And how do we wash our hair? Is there running water where you live? Or do we drive to Roundup for showers and hair washing? Where will we sleep? Are there enough cabins and if yes, who with whom?

Christa answers patiently most questions, but otherwise leaves us to chatter:

We could stay in Roundup and drive daily to the land to work, or? That would be much easier and less complicated. Did Christa really mean that we would stay two weeks with her on the land without running water and electricity? Well, she is quite spontaneous. I think, everyone can do what he/she wishes. But it is a trip of half an hour by car to the land – that would take a lot of gas. But maybe we can split up – some stay in Roundup and the others drive with Christa to the land? I could go and visit those on the land with Gabriele one time. Everything in me is in revolt against letting go of the comfort of modern living that has become so commonplace. I calm myself: Rita, it is only for two weeks. And besides, is this really essential? Trust and give in to the adventure and learn from it

Christa has to leave for the land, daily chores are waiting. The soil is dry, vegetables, herbs, lettuce and plants must be watered etc. We go with her, but leave our suitcases in Roundup, since we can only move to the land a day later.

The next day, when we arrive, Christa’s face shows brewing thunder. And sure enough, a storm breaks loose about the unimportant chatter regarding washing one’s hair etc. and that we should focus on what was essential. . The exact words I don’t remember. But I clearly remember that I went to our RV like a dog with my tail between my legs and close to tears.

I am the eighth of ten children! When my mother punished us it was always all together, no matter who had done something. What injustice. I had said nothing about washing my hair etc. Thought about it, yes, but did not express. I am very angry at Christa. The next days she will live her Ego under the disguise of God, I think. Great. And besides, all these terrible grass hoppers, and surely snakes or other dangerous animals will come at night into our RV. I want to go home!!

There is a knock on our door. Christa brings cookies for coffee and beams at us full of love. That put me totally out. I had thought she doesn’t like me. Lisa laughs. She hadn’t noticed what was going on with me. I believe I don’t know how to be with criticism. And then my many expectations about how things should be. I ought to be more in the moment and accept what is. – my last thoughts before falling asleep.

The next morning in bright sunshine, we breakfast together outside of Christa's cabin. Buddy, Christa's dog is trying to make friends, smells us, keeping an eye on his mistress. He mostly lies right in front of her door and barks before anything else. So you can't just pass him.

Christa has three cabins that nestle in the landscape with considerable distance between them. There is room enough, tastefully and lovingly furnished. I have no idea how she did it. She has hardly any money, since she lives only from donations and does not charge anything for her work. What trust! Like small apartments with kitchenette, every guest can retreat and take care of herself. Christa had already bought food supplies and now distributes basic items to us. But eventually we pretty much ate every meal together. Christa cooked delicious meals and the fresh produce from the garden was just great. It's beautiful here!

The light hilly landscape with its gentle green reminds me a bit of Tuscany. But the sky is definitely closer here; clouds so close you think you can touch them.

The inner work for everyone happens almost on the side. Naturally, Christa sees everything and enters the process immediately. If I'd live more in love and truthfulness at home, I wouldn't have to go to any workshops. I hope that God will help me to remember when I am back in Germany.

During late morning the next day I see Margret toiling in the garden, kneeling in front of the masses of beans that need to be harvested. „O, Christa, so many beans! Where do I start?“ She calls out. Christa's answer: “Start with thanking God for so many beans.” I think of my job at the lawyers' office in Munich and how often I am disgruntled about too much work and the many interrupting questions of my colleagues, I decide to change my behavior.

Almost by itself everyone find his or her work in the next few days... Lisa loves to work in the house and is busy with doing dishes, cleaning and cooking etc. Naturally the “easy clean” cloths she brought from Germany are being used. Kurt is making repairs on the house and machines. He especially enjoys driving Christa's pickup across the land. Margret is our gardener. Karin and I are also busy outside: We shovel soil into the wheelbarrow to load on the truck and then drive with Christa to Roundup with it. We sweat, laugh, sing and take breaks for food or rest.

Remembering to do everything in kindness and with awareness is our daily companion

Our shower is the water hose that is filled once a day to water the garden, fill the stock tanks and “water” us as well. We fill containers with additional water supply for daily necessities. Washing our hair is easy without running warm water! How little one really needs

We often sit outside after dinner and until deep into the night, we talk or observe silently the gigantic starry sky.

Christa also has a funny game that we often play. She explains patiently over and over the same rules, which we enjoy greatly. Every evening, before we all fall asleep, Christa walks by our RV with Buddy and calls: “Good night, John Boy!” and we answer “Good night, Ma!”

Missing here are common rooms. There is enough land and in Christa's mind is a plan how it should be. Unfortunately there are no funds. She never asked for anything for her workshops other than gifts. People ask her all the time about why she isn't charging for her work and she always answers that God says: NO

Christa sent an invitation for a potluck summer fest. Many neighbors come and everyone brings some food to share. The morning of that day is filled with decorating, cleaning tables and chairs, preparing the grill etc. I am looking forward to all the neighbors that have been invited.

Soon after we have somewhat beautified ourselves the first guests arrive. Because of the potluck we have a lot food: various salads, cakes and desserts, grilling meats. The next days we will have a lot of leftovers to eat. We are a colorfully mixed group of people, quite American I think. Almost like in a movie. My most often spoken sentence that afternoon is: *could you speak more slowly please?*

Then I discover “him” in the mass of people, my Horse Whisperer. Perfect, I think. Here I meet the man of my dreams, destiny of fate. We had a great conversation (language difficulties are suddenly over). He isn’t a horse whisperer, but a teacher, and soon his wife joins us. It was “still” a lovely day. Later Lisa and I lie satisfied in our beds. Shortly before falling asleep I look out of the window into the world of stars and am grateful to God for being here.

That I have trouble to let my children go I have known for quite a while, i.e. my head knew. But deep recognition comes here, thanks to unavailable cell phone reception! My thoughts circle around them - increase during the second week – are they alright, is everything okay at home? Christa lets me use her landline to call home, even though she assures me that they are fine. Unfortunately no one answers the phone at home and I immediately begin to cry. Christa says that now at least there is some release..... and it is time to let go of the children. That hurts at first and the following days feel empty. But a feeling of joy, a sense of freedom, and something like a new beginning follow the days of emptiness without effort. And fill me with happiness.

Our last day together on Living Spring is coming close. How quick the time has passed. How nourishing it is when we truly encounter one another. How little is needed to live in peace and joy. We enjoy the last shared breakfast outside in the sun. Suddenly I notice that I haven’t had one single headache and no allergic reactions to food, grass or plants!

Christa puts it so beautifully: An allergy is not a disease, it is an inner antagonism!

Rita Ohl