

# New Year's Eve Surgery



by  
Margaret Dubay Mikus, Ph.D.

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From a Poetic Journal

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(previous version was *Halloween Surgery*)



*Snow Flower*

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12/8/98

## **Risk**

It's a risk  
to wake up every morning

and see  
if you fall short

or stand tall,  
grow an inch or a foot,

see what seeds may land  
and take root,

your heart cracked open  
like a walnut.

It's a risk  
to get up every morning,

leave the land of dreams  
and begin again,

leave the land of dreams and dreaming,  
stride on solid ground,

learn and teach,  
grow and glow...

then throw out all you know  
and begin again.

It's a risk.

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# Acknowledgments

“Risk,” appears in *As Easy as Breathing: Reclaiming Power for Healing and Transformation—Poems, Letters and Inner Listening* by Margaret Dubay Mikus, Ph.D. (iUniverse, 2002, revised in 2005). “Risk” was also read by the author on her CD, *Full Blooming: Selections from a Poetic Journal* (2007).

“Risk” and “Poetry as Healer” were included in an essay by Margaret Dubay Mikus, “Why Poetry Matters—As Easy as Breathing,” *Palabras Press*, online July, 2007

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A huge thank you to all who inspired and encouraged me during this challenging time, particularly my husband, Stephen (after getting through this we can do anything!), our children, Blake and Alex, my sisters, Marie and Dorothy, my sister-in-law, Barbara, who came in from Texas to take care of me, and beautiful heart people who are more than dear friends: Geary, Susi, Barbara, Kip, Brigitte, and Barbara. I was blessed with help from so many others who were there for me when I needed them. I am most grateful for their support on this long and winding road.

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For more about her work visit her website, [www.FullBlooming.com](http://www.FullBlooming.com).

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## **In Common**

For three of four sisters  
cancer as companion, as teacher:  
three breasts, one blood.

Something in the water, the food,  
some genetic flaw,  
suppression of immune defenses,

some unlucky, unlikely exposure  
to radon or poison or medication,  
hormonal imbalance or divine choice?

Whatever the cause and effect  
or none, there it is for  
two of the remaining three sisters.

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7/22/06

## Trusting

The relationship of a woman  
to her chosen surgeon  
is a simple and complex one,  
both more and less intimate than husband.

He (usually he) will enter her body,  
see her in ways no one else will  
and fix what is amiss—  
the specific reason for this relationship.

It is what? Both practical and mystical,  
short-term with long-term consequence.  
Profound trust to ask someone—  
even well-trained and experienced—  
to act thus on her behalf.

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2/1/07

## Poetry as Healer

And you might say,  
how can poetry heal,  
it is not a pill I take  
into my body?

And I would respond thus  
from my heart, the source of poetry:  
poetry is word spoken  
which is vibration  
which is energy  
and the body which is matter  
is energy very slowed down,

so poetry is energy  
into the body which is energy  
so energy heals energy.

Of course the frequency of vibration  
of the words is important. There are  
words that tear down, as you know.

And, as has been graphically shown with  
the crystals of Emoto, there are words  
which health can be built upon.

These words from the heart  
with healing intent,  
these are the words that heal,  
there is no doubt.

Try them out.

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2/27/07

## Thinking of Beate

Sometimes art heals  
by soothing, sometimes  
by lancing the boil, or  
by opening the eyes  
to fresh possibilities.

Sometimes it is closing a door  
to a room filled with stale air,  
sometimes a scream  
from a dark bottomless pit,  
sometimes presenting  
wonder on a silver platter.

Sometimes art compels to look,  
sometimes can barely look;  
the healing can be subtle  
or heart pounding,

one moment resounding  
over the ages.  
All I am telling you is this:  
there is no doubt art heals.

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7/13/07 Fri

## **For Carly (and me) Remembering**

It is normal  
to be numb  
and to want to be numb  
under the current circumstances  
to keep some semblance of function.

I would just gently remind:  
we are healers, you and I,  
and we know a lot of healers,  
and we know a lot about healing,  
and not to get drawn into

darkness and fear  
and fear-based decisions.  
To take the time and space  
to hear the sweet inner voices,  
feel the loving presence,

prepare for miracles...  
as defined here.  
Remember who you are,  
dear sweet one,  
release what is only illusion.

It is normal  
under the current circumstances  
to sob and scream and pray  
and plead and want to be done with "it."  
Remember this is temporary,

the means to an end for us,  
perhaps an upper level initiation/  
trial by fire/rite of passage/vision quest/  
forty days wandering in the desert  
from which we will return cleansed

to our tribe, with the clarity,  
insight, compassion,  
guidance and vision  
essential for survival and growth of all navigating

these rocky transition times of transformation.

I do not know why these hard things happen  
(the above is as good an explanation as any):  
we are here to serve and to heal.

I do know we are not left alone hanging,  
dangling off the cliff, though it may feel that way.

All we need is here—  
inside and out—  
not to seek and search,  
but delivered right to us.  
I trust all is well.

I trust all is well.

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8/31/07

## **Ms. Potato Head** <sup>TM</sup>

Eyes, nose, mouth—  
blue, straight, lipsticked and pursed.

Fashion shoes or athletic,  
hands be-ringed or plain,

hats of all silly description,  
some kind of necklace or bow or scarf.

And the breasts in mostly matching sets—  
try on one type then another—

laughing at the ludicrous imitation  
of the very real possibility

of removal  
and reconstruction...

whatever that means.

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9/21/07

## **Breastless**

I am not my breasts  
however scarred yet luscious,  
but to walk around breastless  
in this breast-obsessed culture,  
to be unbowed by misfortune,  
that is true courage.

Long past the age  
of being a looker,  
I remember the sometimes  
welcome glances;  
when walking with my daughter  
I feel them again—for her.

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10/11/07

## Anticipatory Loss

There is only so much  
I can do ahead of time to prepare  
for a loss that is still theoretical—  
not real, not actual  
flat chest, two long scars in the mirror.

Tears have been shed,  
slow leaks or buckets depending,  
but still until that day  
when I choose to look  
or awaken from surgery colder,

I will not know how I feel.  
Some things help: to talk  
into a trained compassionate ear,  
a witness with kind tender advice  
about femininity—lacy soft camisoles perhaps.

Humor sometimes: Mrs. Potato Head™  
with replaceable breasts or scars.  
The playful theatrical idea of having  
multiple breasts sets in varied sizes,  
small things to reclaim, not the physical loss,

but emotional, to heal on all levels,  
to be whole and joyful, no matter.  
Not all at once necessarily,  
but a flower unfolding, a butterfly emerging  
from the cocoon, where what was once

is broken down and what is now  
flies free and fearless.

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10/17/07

## **How you Look at It or Depending on the Frame**

It's a good thing  
I don't walk with my breasts  
or eat or write or blow my nose.

They are just there  
for show, for pleasure,  
visible sign of womanhood.

Their most practical function,  
making milk, feeding babies,  
is done and I am grateful for that.

I am not saying it is not a big loss,  
only that I will still walk and bike and eat  
and breathe and dance and write and talk and sing.

I will watch in awe at beautiful sunsets and  
notice the length of an ant's shadow in the evening,  
how a bumble bee bends a whirling butterfly.

I will still laugh and cry and blow bubbles,  
and plan those water color pictures  
I still intend to paint someday.

I will love and grow and heal  
and still keep on living.  
That is the choice as I see it laid out.

And I am grateful, yet again,  
for the chance to choose.

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10/24/07

## **Instructions to the Body Prior to Surgery**

Yield to the scalpel whether laser or blade,  
limit leaks of precious fluids,  
let nerves that are cut be soothed,  
relax into the induced-sleep state of healing.

Heart beats strong in a steady rhythm,  
blood pressure calm,  
breath relaxed and easy,  
all organ systems functioning smoothly.

From the giant pharmacy of drugs  
for which you have instructions,  
make all those that in your wisdom  
are needed to optimally heal.

Release what is to be taken  
for the highest good.  
Protect what is to remain  
for future days stretching out long before me.

Allow melding with mind, emotion and spirit  
in service of healing.

Be hopeful, be kind to all concerned.  
Know I trust.  
Know I love you.  
Know I am most grateful.

And to the cells that are leaving,  
a blessing for long service,  
both individually and together  
speak well for me.

Be hopeful, be kind to all concerned.  
Know I trust.  
Know I love you.  
Know I am most grateful.

11/2/07

## **Woman Prepares for Necessary Major Surgeries**

...Last Minute Postponement  
Due to Concerns about Her Heart

Legs shaved  
armpits shaved  
chin plucked  
toenails clipped  
fingernails filed  
clothes washed  
bills paid  
house straightened  
plants watered  
food purchased  
remedies replenished  
calendar cleared  
appointments rescheduled  
poems written  
friends notified  
family prepared  
conscious breathing

records collected  
research done  
reassurances received and given  
medical geneticists consulted  
oncologist consulted  
surgeons chosen  
questions answered  
alternatives considered  
decisions made  
date set  
husband takes off work  
sister-in-law flies in from Texas  
prayers and bubbles requested  
help received  
poems chosen  
chapbook assembled  
conscious breathing

blood-work done  
EKG taken  
training finished  
energy balanced  
massage received  
psychotherapist listens  
healing resources mustered  
panic attacks managed  
conscious breathing  
stress reduced  
clear liquid diet  
colon cleanse  
poignant good bye to breasts  
grieving begun  
talk to Mom at last minute  
talk to sisters long into the nights  
talks with husband holding tight  
conscious breathing  
healing instructions to the body read out loud  
mind calmed  
emotions soothed  
prayers prayed  
Divine invoked  
love flying all over the place

all for...what?  
Relieve?  
Reschedule?  
Restore what was lost?  
Let it go...  
What was not to be...  
Not on that day anyway.

Trust the rope to climb out with.  
The word of the day is fearless.

Imagine something much easier.

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12/3/07

## **Breast Size?**

Double Amazons.  
Will be able to shoot  
as well from either side.

Have you heard of  
those warrior women—  
myth or real

who can tell?  
Not martyrs  
that much is known.

Not victims,  
but a choice to  
be powerful and strong.

Did any say  
no thanks, I'd rather not?  
I don't think so.

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*From Inside Looking Out, Winter*  
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