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Notes from editor (not for publication):

Hi, Carolyn — I've edited more than usual, omitting what I'd describe as some well-written aerodynamic drag. I hope you like how it ended up, but you might not. Please let me know, and we can keep working on it if we need to. Thanks so much. —J

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

#####BEGIN HED#####

1 Fall down, wake up

#####END HED#####

#####BEGIN SUBHED#####

2 It's an old story: Things fall apart when they are ready to
3 change. Why should we be surprised?

#####END SUBHED#####

4 TEXT BODY:

#####BEGIN TEXT#####

5 AFTER MY RATHER inexpert attempt to propel a canoe over
6 high swells, I sit waiting for a call from the hospital to schedule
7 an appointment with a surgeon, my body on fire and all my pain
8 receptors on high alert.

9 Ouch.

10 It has turned out that I have managed to tear something
11 internal. The fancy name for the sharp pains in my belly was a
12 paraesophageal hiatus hernia — caused, apparently, by my
13 having helped lift a water-filled canoe onto and off the roof of our
14 car on a lake near the Canadian border during a storm. Even
15 though the signs clearly told us not to.

16 Part of my stomach was lodged in my chest cavity. The
17 pain was impressive, and I was told I'd most likely need surgery.

18 Now, a few years later, I am wondering at the metaphor.

19 It seems we are all going through excruciating pain due
20 to a series of wrong choices and major mistakes we've
21 collectively made over centuries — and we don't know quite
22 what to do about it now that things are falling apart.

23 Who's at fault?

24 Well, who cares? We're all in this together, like it or not.
25 It's up to us to make some essential changes. The question is how.

26 * * *

27 I CONTEMPLATED THAT dilemma for myself after learning
28 that. I was distracted and tripped over the garden hose, landing
29 flat on my face on the grass, hearing my head hit the ground with
30 a resounding *thwack*.

31 I figured this was the end of me! *Not the worst way to go*
32 *out*, I thought, face down in my own garden.

33 I was able to slowly get back on my feet, chastened, and
34 I walked away pretty much unscathed except for some bruising
35 around the eyes and a strange bloody mark on my forehead.

36 In case I had not gotten the message, a few days later,
37 food poisoning hit me like a tsunami.

38 I wonder if this might have been an initiation. It's got all
39 the elements, and the timing seems right.

40 Looking at the mass protests against our so-called
41 president's wrong-minded policies, I doubt that it's just me who is
42 too distracted to pay attention to where I am putting my feet or
43 focussing my brain.

44 I doubt this is my experience alone, as our world goes
45 crazy around us and is frantically sending signals that it is time
46 we shift our minds — and hearts — and reconsider everything we
47 thought we knew.

48 The universe is good at this, hitting us upside the head
49 when we need a wake-up call and making us retch from poisons
50 we had no idea we were consuming.

51 In my case it happened to be literal — no doubt making
52 sure that I got the point!

53 Could it be that we are going through a collective
54 initiation right now, getting hit by one disaster after another,
55 knocking us down onto to our knees in order to wake us up?

56 How else explain a Trump whom we apparently elected
57 into office?

58 It's an old story: Things fall apart when they are ready to
59 change. Why should we be surprised?

60 * * *

61 I REMEMBER, at each of my three childbirths, as our new
62 baby lay squalling on my belly, our doctor — and good friend —
63 held up the afterbirth for my husband and me to touch.

64 "See how it's aging, getting crusty here and worn out
65 there?" he would say, letting us finger the sac our baby had lived
66 in those nine months. "Another week in there and your baby
67 couldn't have survived. Amazing how perfectly timed the process
68 is, see? Timing, dear folks, is everything!"

69 Labor, as any mother will tell you, is not a stroll in the
70 park. For nine months, we go through everything from morning
71 sickness to sciatica, from aching backs to wild emotions. And
72 then, at last, the heart-and-body-tearing labor brings this new
73 person into the world.

74 The ecstasy matches the pain every step of the way of
75 this extraordinary transition, but nobody ever promised women
76 that it would be easy, and we keep doing it anyhow because life
77 demands it of us.

78 So why are we so shocked by the transition we are in the
79 midst of now?

80 * * *

81 WE'RE IN AN ancient pattern of change now, a period of
82 quite essential laboring as the old order crumbles — and good
83 riddance to it — and it is our turn to assist the transition! How
84 lucky is that?

85 Every one of us here now, I'd say, has been born into the
86 world for this very moment — right now. Not a century ago, not
87 in a century to come, but *now*.

88 We're the ones who get to help set the new templates, to
89 bring our own kinds of beauty to the world, to find what and
90 whom we love in this most exciting of eras.

91 Nobody ever said it would be easy, but has that ever
92 stopped us from procreating? Or kept mountain climbers from
93 climbing Mount Everest and then skiing down it at speed?

94 So be prepared, if you can be, and be mindful, and
95 smart.

96 And should you have to lift a heavy canoe rapidly filling
97 with rainwater over your head, make sure there are at least two of
98 you to do so.

#####END TEXT#####

Bio/COATTAIL:

#####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL#####

99 **CAROLYN NORTH** (carolynnorthbooks.com) is a writer
100 of books that address "the interface between matter and spirit."

101 Thanks - Carolyn North (carolyn.north@gmail.com) ps -
102 this misadventure happened a few years ago

#####END BIO/COATTAIL#####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

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103 0

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LINKS:

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104

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VIDEO:

#####BEGIN VIDEO#####

105

#####END VIDEO#####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

#####BEGIN LOGLINE#####

106

#####END LOGLINE#####