

## ONCE AGAIN

I wonder....something is surviving in the dust on the shelves. A little creature, maybe, marking its trail through the miniscule fluff. With a huff and a puff it starts this day, emerging from a night in the books.

I wonder if it's been praying all night, adding words to the page, dropping them between the lines. Is that not what rises, comes flying out when we turn those pages? Like a cloud of dust that we breathe as we read.

Or maybe it's been dreaming, embedded in the print: straight letters as bedposts and rounded ones for pillows. The ink seeping into its dreams, colouring the threads, darkly? The sepia of stories stored on these shelves, imprinted on my little creature's mind.

I wonder if the magic of Winnie the Witch and The Very Hungry Caterpillar made it through the little holes in the wood, along its grain to join the little creature for a midnight's feast. Oh, how I wish I could join them, too! A night in the books: such delicious smells and crackling of paper! To build castles of imagination walled by book covers and manned by cows ringing their bells across green Alpine meadows. Ah, yes!: that way I could travel back to the lands of my childhood.....

Let me drink from the Full Moon Soup so that it turns me into a migratory bird, seek mountain flowers, Blauer Enzian, and then head South for warmer airs in Africa. Isn't that what all my life has been about? From home, the armchair under the reading light, to far-flung corners of the world, and back again.

Yes, that's what it is: this little creature's gnawing, right up there. This is what calls me back home today. I like hearing how it gets its teeth dug in, into the plot, my plot, all in one pot.

Come, Winnie, help me stir the broth, to see the flickers of my life pass by in the whirl of your spoon. Yes: I do wonder if the magic is still there, and I need to see, to feel and to taste it again.

Give me a drop of your magic potion. I am still hungry, you know?! And please, turn me once again into the beautiful butterfly to flutter to my heartbeat's delight. It's slower now, I know. But....

Are you still there, little creature? It's so quiet suddenly. And dark as well...I thought the day began.... Oh now I understand: that's where I am: in the cocoon, of course, this house of mine! And now it's my own teeth that must dig in, to gnaw, and nibble, and then push through. Hard work, I admit, but mustn't tire now.

It works, Winnie!...yes, it did! We did it, the magic, once again!

I see the sun now, clear and bright. And I fly, I'm off again.

Farewell.....until next time.

© 2010 Annette Schwalbe