

January 26, 1997

This time of year is usually very grey in the Pacific Northwest, but we have been blessed with some sunny days. Today I was able to see the Olympic mountains across Puget Sound - they are covered with snow and quite stunning.

The sight of those mountains made me remember visiting Mount Saint Helens a few years ago with Alec and Noel and Bill. When we visited, the volcano had erupted years before our trip. The power of the destructive forces that had been unleashed still seemed overwhelming and un-survivable. Whole pieces of St. Helens were gone, as were people, creatures, whole forests... A lodge by the edge of Spirit Lake was buried there in the water that rose from all the trees that jammed and flooded the lake.

The mountain was forever changed; the losses were huge. And yet...and yet there was life returning to the mountain. A new tree pushing up here, a little animal there. We were delighted and awed by the healing that was taking place. Nothing would ever be the same, but something wonderful was growing out of those ashes.

And here I am, thinking of Bill, and of our losses. And seeing that it is SO huge, and that our lives are forever changed. The power of the destructive forces that were unleashed on Bill were overwhelming and un-survivable for him. And now, nothing will ever be the same for us.

And yet, there is healing - and there is something quite amazing happening - out of those ashes. You are all part of it... and knowing you all floods me with hope.

All my love... Gabi

<http://www.gabiclayton.com/MountSaintHelensLetter-GabiClayton-01-27-97.pdf>