

Family

By Holly Lisle

It becomes too easy, caught in dread and pressure, tied up with the unending battering of work and more work that all should be done yesterday and if not then surely today, to forget to breathe. To spend the minutes from waking up in the morning to going to sleep at night tossed into the maelstrom of words, trying to give them order by force, when force in a maelstrom is as useless as a raised sail on a ship in the heart of a gale. And so caught up, so panicked, so driven, to forget that the people who love us need to see us, speak with us, laugh with us, and that if we cannot do these things, then where is the freedom that we claim lies in working for ourselves? We are as much slaves, then, as any salaried corporate flunkie, and to hell with us.

I walked away from the work yesterday, knowing how hard things are and how tight, and tasting the fear, and said “enough, anyway”, and didn’t think about it again until this morning. This morning I’ll walk, or maybe run just a bit, and I’ll build a Lincoln-log house with my little kid, and talk to the bigger ones about their writing, their games, their plans. And the work will be there after I’ve remembered to breathe, and to live, and I’ll be better and maybe a bit saner, in the face of fear and madness, with some renewed strength. Maybe. And if not, I still will not look back when I am old and ask myself, “What the hell were you thinking?”

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