Bourne toWrite...
creative writing workshops

Release

by Karen Glennon

Funny how you can hold tension in your body for many years, and once you start to let it go, even slowly, strange things happen within.

Living in a controlling relationship for twenty-nine years, unaware of the passive aggression until the latter ten, I struggled to break away. Four times I allowed myself to be drawn back in, lust and manipulation clouding my confused menopausal mind. I knew no different. We had met at nineteen, two years after I had lost my wonderful Dad. I was ripe for the picking.

The fifth break was the last, only because another poor fool stepped into the lion's den. Heartbreak and relief coursed through my veins. I felt like an elastic band stretched too far, then snapped. Whirling around blindly through a mist of financial and emotional turmoil, I put one foot in front of the other, often missing a step, and moved forward.

Living in a beloved foreign country came with its own complications, restricting the support I would have had back home.

Then came the day my wages were embargoed for forty-one and a half thousand euros - an unpaid social security debt that my ex-husband had left behind when he moved to the UK. Under Spanish law, I was liable as I had been married to him when he incurred the debt.

“I really can’t take much more!” I cried to my sister over the phone.

That night, my mother passed away unexpectedly back in Ireland.

Reeling from these events, I nevertheless managed to have the embargo lifted.

En route home from Mum’s funeral in Ireland, I diverted to England to spend time with my children and grandchildren. We had all lived in Spain at one time, but their life paths had changed course.

“Please reconsider moving here too,” my son pleaded, knowing my life revolved around my family,

A year later, I packed up my job, gave notice on my apartment, and, having bought a brand new Ford Fiesta months before, booked a ferry to the UK.

My body had different ideas. Exhaustion, like nothing I had ever experienced, overwhelmed me. Packing up and driving to the UK was out of the question.

Plans were changed, I travelled by air, with support - literally moving from one bed to another, in a different country.

My son's doctor announced, "If you were my patient, I'd have you tested for fibromyalgia." My subsequent GP diagnosed 'a virus.'

A month later, my eldest son and I flew back to Spain. He filled every nook and cranny of that little car with my possessions and drove us to the UK. Memories of that fun-filled trip will stay with me forever.

Quickly finding a job, I made friends, and settled well.

However, I was lulled into a false sense of security. Two years after that 'virus,' I contracted shingles three times in nine months. Finally, my body said 'NO!' My devil had been long caged; he came out roaring. A long silent roar that held me down. The fear that had spent years flooding through my body paralysed me with chronic fatigue. Nerve pain screamed from within, and my muscles contorted in random spasms; I could hardly walk from one room to another, bedbound for up to ten days at a time.

A day of reckoning had come. I had to face my demons, confront the trauma. It was the only way to navigate forward.

The diagnosis: Fibromyalgia.

Years of counselling followed. Trial and error with medications, emotional and physical support from wonderful family and friends, learning to pace, regular holistic interventions, and more.

As I slowly released years of trauma, I was eventually ready to trust again. Mum sent me the love of my life and five more beautiful grandchildren.

I am free, I am loved, I am truly blessed!