

Letters from Dolores

Florence Rose Shepard

Florence Shepard is retired professor of Educational Studies at the University of Utah and an essayist. She is the author of *Ecotone: Wayfaring on the Margins* (SUNY 1994).

Dolores LaChapelle walked gently on Planet Earth. Slight of figure, light on her feet, she altered the physical earth little. Yet, metaphysically speaking, she was a whirlwind. Fast talker and quick-witted though she was, her articulations rarely kept up with her mind, a mind of a genius that raced along relational matrices that connected disparate pieces of this thing we call life.

We first met in 1979 at a conference in Denver and again the following year at the 1980 Earth Day X Colloquium; she was a keynote speaker. I was taken by her certitude and frankness as well as the ideas she espoused. She impressed me as a person with a deep sense of ethics unclouded by personal needs and desires.

We were the same age and middle-aged at the time, raised Catholics, single mothers who shared a love of this Earth. As we met and talked, I learned that she visited Salt Lake City every February around President's day to ski with old friends at the Alta Ski Resort. These were compatriots from her early years when she and her then husband, Ed LaChapelle lived there, and he served as an avalanche specialist. I owned a roomy, old house in Salt Lake City and I invited Dolores to stay with me each winter when she came for her ski reunion. During most of the 80s, she did so before she joined her friends at Alta.

As a professor in education at the University of Utah I taught, among other things, various classes of the environmental studies genre: seminars dealing with environmental issues, outdoor education workshops, and a field studies course in environmental education each

spring. I called her visits our “Fourth Avenue Seminars” because they were brimming with conversations with her and students interested in her work. After her departure each year, we corresponded regularly.

She read people intuitively with as much vigour as she did the written word. She watched and listened intently. After a meeting or a casual encounter between her and others in my home or at the university, I would await the forthcoming summation of their attributes and liabilities; her predictions and assessments were more often accurate than not.

With a multitude of references and books in her memory, library, and files, she created the Way of the Mountain Learning Center, operated out of her cabin. Dolores was a one-woman *Google* of sorts, a great resource as well as a teacher and insatiable learner. She was primed with knowledge of many current environmental topics, including Deep Ecology, bioregionalism, watershed planning, re-inhabitation, sustainability, alternative technology and renewable energy, and the eco-philosophical and eco-psychological foundations of the environmental movement.

Through the Way of the Mountain Learning Center, she made a living by selling select books, readings, and cards and offering workshops with an emphasis on Deep Ecology and the importance of ritual for individuals and communities. These included equinox celebrations, visions quests, drumming and trance-dance ceremonies, and “Breaking Through” workshops designed to bring participants to greater self-awareness. All were accompanied with Tai Chi instruction, which Dolores practiced religiously.

In those early years, although she was very much in demand for lectures in many parts of the country, she lived an austere life in a rustic cabin in Silverton, Colorado. During winter months, she apologized for her typing because the electric typewriter was cold and sluggish in the mornings. Nonetheless, she seemed absolutely content. Her life was lived, according to the philosophy of Arne Naess and Deep Ecology, “simple in means, but rich in ends,” an entirely “free” life of her own choosing.

I looked forward to her yearly visits when she would be primed with her latest discoveries and passions. My daughter, Kathryn Ann, then in medical school and living with me with her two children, recalls coming home one evening and hearing the sounds of a drum coming from my home. She entered to find Elizabeth Cogburn, a ceremonialist,

drumming in our front room accompanied by Dolores with her rattle and my grandchildren and me, with pill bottles, keeping time.

After arriving at my home each year—in the first years she came in by bus—she spent the first day doing her laundry, bathing in my old claw-footed bath tub, and washing her thick long hair that she wore in one long braid down her back with a scarf tied about her hairline. I planned special evening meals, after the grandchildren were in bed, when we sat for hours at the dining room table in deep conversation.

For each visit I arranged several meetings for her with my graduate and undergraduate students and scheduled readings and workshops for her at the University or bookstores whenever possible. Although I notified her in advance of the emphasis of my courses, I gave her free rein to follow her immediate passions, especially when she was writing a book. She went home with small stipends, a minimal recompense for all she gave.

Towards the end of that first decade of my friendship with Dolores, I met and married Paul Shepard who was teaching at Pitzer College, one of the Claremont Schools in California. Committed to being together, we reduced and arranged our teaching assignments and traveled back and forth between California and Salt Lake City. His extensive research for books also took us around the globe. As a result of our busy schedules, my involvement with students and friends like Dolores was curtailed. It changed further during the next years with Paul's retirement, diagnosis of metastatic cancer, death, and my commitment to editing his unfinished manuscripts and organizing his archives to be held at Yale University. Although Dolores and I "stayed in touch," our correspondence dwindled to a letter or two a year. I regret that during this time, faced with a few health problems myself, I failed to fully understand the serious nature of her maladies.

A repeated vow of hers was that she would never write another book, and yet she always did. In her last years, even with her health severely compromised, she wrote two books that were probably closest to her lived experience, *Deep Powder Snow: Forty Years of Ecstatic Skiing, Avalanches, and Earth Wisdom* (Kivaki Press, 1993) and *Return to the Mountain: Tai Chi—Between Heaven and Earth* (Hazard Press, 2002).

Since her death, as I've sorted through and read and reread the stack of correspondence from her—Xeroxed excerpts, pamphlets, Way of the Mountain Newsletters, poetry by Robinson Jeffers, Robert MacLean, and Gary Snyder, lovely cards she designed, recommended books,

essays, hasty notes typed or scribbled on scraps of paper with penned-in comments or arrows like a road map leading me through her thoughts—she has seemed strangely and powerfully present to me. She wrote her informal notes much the way she talked. I hear her voice distinctly and can feel the energy of her presence. Dolores is not easily forgotten.

I've selected unedited excerpts from her letters that trace almost three decades of our acquaintance. I've inserted bracketed and italicized comments for context or clarification. My hope is that these fragments of correspondence will provide readers a window into the life of this very courageous, mountaineering author from her prime until her final years.

1980

(February) Thanks for your letter. This is a quick note to say that I, too, enjoyed meeting you and I'm sure we will meet again.... I certainly enjoyed meeting so many good people in S. L. Keep up the good work and good luck on your Pribilof Island Trip.

(May), ““Real freedom is no choice at all”” is a quote from Joel Kramer's book The Passionate Mind, a book you must get.

(December) A hasty letter to tell you to be sure to order this as soon as possible. It is super-important for your bio-regionalism: Alcheringa Vol 2, No. 2, “Ethnopoetics.”

[At this time she was especially concerned with the claim of critiques that environmentalists were Fascists. She explained how industrial nations, both capitalist and communist, equated nature/wilderness with the devil and in the present were portraying environmentalists in the same way strictly for political reasons. She was critical of some environmentalists who were overly zealous].

If you are talking about going with nature and then use totalitarian means it's not going to work, no matter how right your philosophy.

1981

(March) I haven't had a chance to read anything you gave me but will soon as I get on top of the mail load. I got back Sunday—after 15 hours

traveling (there's a 5 hour stopover in Grand Junction when one takes the bus). But it was worth it—I got 4 days total of really great powder—best I have had since 1971. So it should keep me another 10 years. It really is as great as I remember and there really is no snow like it anywhere else. Simply amazing.

(April) Just back from lectures for Jung conference at Notre Dame and Univ. of Wis. At Green Bay—Jack Frisch and his Seven Arrows bunch. Fine person.

(August) Thanks so much for the card from Siena [*I had traveled to Italy with my mother to visit relatives and was fortunate to visit Il Palio, a ceremonial horse race in Siena Dolores had previously told me about as an important ritual for adolescent boys.*]—it gave me a whole new perspective on the Piazza seeing the town so crowded around it. I bought the book La Tierra in Piazza and will bring it with me in Oct....Our Heidegger conference came off and was most interesting. George Sessions and Bill Devall and Michael Zimmerman plus more.

(November) I just got back from my travels. The Chinook Island Samhain was a tremendous success. It all works—clan forming, etc.

(December) And so now—oddly enough—it is New Years Eve—so I can't mail this tomorrow but will on Saturday....Saturday: still a blizzard so mail probably won't get out but hopefully on Monday.

1982

(April) A quick note to tell you to be sure to get Paul Shepard's new book Nature and Madness....I really urge you to get this book for your classes....What he is saying oversimplified is that the progressive insanities of agriculture, Christianity, Puritanism, and now mechanistic answers, have created an insane human race. But to solve [*the problem*] is not impossible—all we have to do is allow the child to develop naturally through the stages of childhood (the whole 20 years) in connection with nature because built into our genes is [a] normal human being...[who] can be recovered. He is the professor at Pitzer College I met when I went there in 1977. He is a quite original human being.

(November) Finally I have a chance to answer your letters with a little more leisure. I was gone on various trips—and home only one or two days until Sept....I've had some startling learning experiences this summer. Got to do a lot of climbing—almost finished my 14s [*14,000*]

foot mountains] for the 2nd time. Long ago got all 52 14s in the state. Then they dropped 2 I had and put 2 or 3 new ones in when they surveyed in the '60s. So I got two of those and now have only still to do Holy Cross, which I'll get next summer.

It's late at night—hence the sloppy typing. But one more thing—I finally got a tiny bit of my yard done the way I want. Took me lots of work—in between the traveling. But very gratifying. I've been thinking a lot about Japanese gardens—my idea that they are a mature ecosystem in miniature. I ended up with a high altitude tundra look—and I came about it quite by intuition. One thing led to another with no conscious thought. The main thing was that the idiot highway dept. decided to straighten a curve on the Champion Cliffs above town. Costing them \$145,000—to blast out solid rock etc. etc. No one is in favor of it—really more tourists will fall off the road than usual. But anyway just before they did the big blasting, I went up to see what could be easily moved. And got an excellent bunch of rocks with moss.

I look forward to seeing you again...and skiing some powder. I know they got early snow. We had a real snow in late August clear down in town—never happened before.

1983

(March) Thanks so much for everything. It's really great to be with you and exchange ideas and this time find out more about your real roots—why you are what you are with your father's place in Wyoming like the old country.

I just had a rather wild thought this morning walking to the post office. For some time I have been trying to figure out what universities should be for...If universities are to serve any real purpose at all, it is to educate students to a sense of responsibility for all humans and non-humans in that place. Land-grant colleges in this country were set up with a bit of that idea, that people should learn agriculture fitting for their places, but soon lost that notion when agri-business moved in with the railroads.

The trip to Canada was quite fraught with peril and trouble but well worth it. Stuck in the ice by my house, car trouble, etc. etc. then snowed out from Denver airfield on the way back....I am seriously thinking of getting a new car. *[On a subsequent visit when I picked her up at the bus station in my beat-up, old VW bus, she advised me to buy a new car*

before I killed myself or someone else. I took her suggestion seriously and that year we both bought functional cars.]

(April) Boy I agree it was a very stormy spring. Worse we ever had.... We had only one totally clear day between March 7 and April 15. Every afternoon at least a snowstorm and sometimes what just looked like the usual afternoon turned into a major blizzard. But now finally it is spring all that is almost forgotten because it is so beautiful. I can eat breakfast outside on the east side of my house with Kendall Mt. right above me.

I have recently got very excited about Mancos Shale, of all things. I realized it is the only entity I know that always wins in the battle with man. And wins soon—not in geological time. My sister and I went to Mesa Verde a weekend ago—I wanted to see the spring. The road goes through a stretch of Mancos Shale. It slid about 3 years ago and the road was closed all summer. Now it's going again. And their only recourse is to completely reroute the whole road—The NPS has no money for that after Reagan, of course. But it somehow makes me feel good that it [*the shale*] always wins.

(June) I have done some research on early capitalism, after our conversations with your daughter [*Lisi*], and have found some amazing books—which definitely put its start when the resources of the New World became available. So now that the resources are running out so should/will capitalism.

(September) I have contacted the group in Ozarkia who are sponsoring the First National Bioregional Congress this May. I decided that if I really know this is the only way to go I'd better help out on it—much as I hate to go east. But it is only Missouri.

My wish for both of us is more time—I think of you often with gratitude for all you are doing.

1984

(January) Here we are into 1984—and the cataclysm hasn't happened—not yet, anyway! I'll be in Salt Lake City on Feb. 12 this year. I've been paying a lot of attention to teenage boy's problems here—peer and grown-up pressure, etc. I just read a rather dumb book by a doctor about 'the Male.' He had a chapter on 'hormones and sex' linking testosterone to aggressive violence, which, of course, one could. But that's not the beginning of the problem.... I would like to go into

male rituals with your class—modern and in Siena—the young adolescent male as a sex figure in primitive societies, what teachers should understand about all this. We [*Elizabeth Cogburn, the ceremonialist, and Dolores*] are going to the National Bioregional Congress in Drury, Missouri...and we will have the drum and do some trance dancing. I'm very excited about this because here in one place all the people who are really into 'living in place' will see and feel how the trance dance works as a community-sustaining event.

Looks like you have already done a lot of work getting things set up for me. I appreciate it a lot. Tea Ceremony—Wow! for a lot of people—and me a beginner. Tea ceremony is usually for 4 or 5 people. But it is done for huge crowds too—one I went to in Sapporo and it works. I will bring my tea ceremony things. We will need to rearrange things a bit in your living room. Probably firelight only—and a niche with some natural objects—tree branch/rock—but you and I can figure that out.

(August) Earth Wisdom finally came out—they've delayed since 1982. Looks better than I thought it would. Five people have paid their deposit for the autumn Equinox so I will be doing it ...wish you could come and maybe bring a few graduate students. Otherwise, let's try for next summer—August is best because of the flowers.

1985

(January) Really looking forward to being there—many, many things to share with you. Yes, I'll be in Salt Lake when Shepard is there. I'm going to be driving this year—in my Tercel so I can bring along lots of things like books, etc. [*On February 14, while Dolores was at my home for her annual visit, Paul Shepard, on his way to a speaking engagement, stopped by in Salt Lake City as a guest lecturer in my graduate class. I had never met Paul before, but Dolores had met him in the 70s. The three of us had dinner together that evening and he left the next morning for a speaking engagement and then for India where he spent several months on a Fulbright. Upon returning in early June, he stopped by to see me when my grandson and I were enjoying a break at my sister's cabin in the Hoback Basin in Wyoming. Our relationship grew during that summer and fall.*]

(June) Your letter arrived...will try to answer it later. Go on the Alaska thing—don't worry about getting here. You can always do that. [*I had planned on attending her Autumn Equinox Workshop, but an invitation to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge with Walter Prothero, a former*

student and professional hunter, conflicted with it.] You need to get away to the wild country. The name of my new book [will be] Sacred Land, Sacred Sex: Rapture of the Deep playing on deep ecology and deep inside us and going in-depth on anything. Excuse the haste and disorganization of all this—you should see how behind I am.

(November) Thanks for your letter explaining your winter schedule. *[By this time Paul and I were commuting to spend time together as well as traveling together.]* I guess I thought you were already out of the dept. head job and thus I felt you would be fancy-free winter quarter—but not yet I can see. Carl Hertel *[an artist and colleague of Paul's]* called me—you are really getting to know all the people I met out there. Wanted me to do a thing but I declined. I am very scared of publishing this book myself financially—but I should be brave and just do it. It worked out before. We'll see.

1986

[The winter of '86 was my last as chair of the department, and this was the last winter of our Fourth Avenue Seminars, although Dolores and I saw each other occasionally after this and continued our correspondence.]

(January) I would like to do a program at the Museum *[of Natural History]* about the bear and the gourd. Might as well do this before “newagers” cash in on it. I've got to raise money while writing the book. June and Julien *[friends from Salt Lake City she had met through her workshops]* are setting up one for me at Utah Tech.... So, don't do anything extra—just the usual talk for your class.

(March) I have finished Merleau-Ponty's Visible and Invisible... but won't be able to get it back to you until... I can *[copy my notes]*. The thing I find most exciting is that M-P gives further corroboration to all that Heidegger and Bateson say. M-P comes from a very difficult direction... to show how Descartes and Leibniz and Sartre aren't really 'seeing'.... One of the things M-P is forced to spend pages and pages on is trying to get us out the subject-predicate-object mess, which our Greek culture put us into. The Chinese never had this problem. As Joseph Needham put it so well: “The West tried to find reality in an ultimate substance. In Chinese thought reality is relationship—not the things at all but the relationship between them.”

So back to the prosaic. I finally found a box so am sending off your pad and a plastic bowl and fork (I took along some of that tabouli). It was very cold at Arches...My problem was that I had remembered stopping over at Arches some years ago on the way back from S.L. I now realize that it was the end of March not the end of Feb. That makes a difference. Thanks very much for the pad—without it, it would have been hopeless.

(June) I'm still working on the book—like mad—it's getting deeper and deeper. Can't believe how things are falling together. Please give me your address when you get to England...I'd like Paul to give me a 2 sentence blurb to go on the back jacket.

I went up to the Earth First! Rendezvous in Idaho in early July. It was in the middle of nowhere. I am very impressed by the whole outfit and especially Dave F. [*Foreman*].

I am working too hard—that's for sure, but it won't be forever. You worked too hard much longer. Good you and Paul are still together. I think it's great for both of you. And I really think it will work out so that you can stay together.... Yes, I had a Breaking Thru already—very powerful—always amazes me, what happens...I can't afford the time off from the book but need the money for the book—that's a double bind!...so have a good trip to England..

(November) Glad I got a hold of you by mail. Thanks very much for the marvelous jacket blurbs, Paul. Wish the book were done.... I'm kind of disappointed that it will be so late that's for sure but I think going slower will probably "save my life" at this stage. You know how it is. Have a wonderful Christmas there in England.

1987

(January) The book's going ok now. I've only 3 more ch. to go and none as hard as what I've been doing. Quite amazing what's turning up. Anxious to see you again and find out about England. I'm going to S.L. in Feb. staying in the little garden house Julien built. I'll miss staying at your house. It was always serene there—even though sometimes complex with the kids [*my grandchildren*] ...the book's going ok now.

(March) I really missed not having you there in S.L. to visit with. I did call Kathryn and talked to her. I like thinking of you and Paul together in his house there in the canyon. It's amazing to find such an area in the

L. A. vicinity, isn't it? Thanks for the offer of visiting with you, but I'll be working on the book right thru to the end of May—hope to get it to the printer then and all summer is full up. Good for you to go with Carl and Paul's class to the desert.

(August) I've been trying to answer your letter for months. I can't believe it's been here since May. I'm still trying to finish the book. As you can guess it's been much, much bigger than I thought. 2/3 of it is being typeset—the rest I'm still putting in final form. It will be months... Summer has gone very fast—lots of good things—Earth First! On the North Rim was very fine. I got something going which turned out outrageously great. We had a big ceremonial drum on the rim with rattles for everyone and chanting as the sun went down and the moon came up. Breaking Thru was amazing again as usual.

I won't be going to Salt Lake in the winter anymore—Alta is getting too frantic so made the decision last Feb. I plan in general on going there in October except this year. I can't because I'll still be finishing the book....

Forgive this hasty rambling letter. Sun's out so I have to go back to work on the computer. Sure would be good to see you again. [*The break from our annual visits at my home, which were always therapeutic, was difficult for both of us.*]

(November) Finally, I had the nerve to measure the set type and figure out how many pages the book will be—over 350 pages. I haven't got the notes and references typeset yet. So it's Big! I feel better because I hope the last major problem was solved yesterday on layout.

Will be wonderful to get together to talk again after all this on both sides—my hermit life on the book and you traveling all over. It will happen but I don't know when. I will be in S. Francisco to give a big talk. I mean the outfit is big—conference. I'm on a panel and then a workshop. And then you will be in S.L., not Calif. We'll see what happens.”

1988

(April) My new book [*Sacred Land, Sacred Sex—Rapture of the Deep*] will be off the press in mid-August. It's in process of actual printing now.

(September) Rushing to get this off to you.... You've been doing far too much traveling for what I would want to do but then you've not been doing any for a while so it's probably good. Last year at this time was the most hectic of my life!!

(October) Flo, I really miss our annual visits. I was over in Alta to ski this year because we have practically no snow. But I do miss our talks. I am not going back again to ski. I wasn't planning to until we got no snow. The new book is selling well--that's why I can afford to remodel. So good things are happening.

(December) Great news—you really did it—took courage I'm sure to marry, but I think it's good. Thanks for the photo—the two of you setting off into the great unknown! I see you are leaving Dec. 20th [*for India*] so this will just get there. Let me know when you are back. It will be good to see you again.

1989

[In the summer of '89, Paul and Dolores participated in a wilderness conference organized by Max Oeschlaeger in Estes Park. Dolores and I had some time to visit and to get away for a walk together. In the fall she sent something that she suggested we both read.]

Flo and Paul, read this, a quote from *The Ontogenesis of Sexual Behavior in Man* by John Hampson and Joan G. Hampson, p. 1457.

“...it is hoped that a central theme will, nonetheless, have been spelled out, a theme first envisioned in the first edition of this book by Frank Lillie who wrote...’There is no such biologic entity as sex. What exists in nature is a dimorphism within species into male and female individuals, which differ with respect to contracting characters, for each of which in any given species we recognize a male form and a female form, whether these characters be classes as of the biologic, or psychologic, or social orders. Sex is not a force that produces these contrasts; it is merely a name for our total impressions of the differences. (p. 1405-6).... Every society deals with the problem of maintaining marriages; very few insist on monogamy for life after a single choice, as has been the custom in Europe for so many centuries. Premarital experimentation and divorce, permitted if there are no children, are both wide spread, and there are many extensions of sexual access; brothers of husband; sisters of wife; members of an age grade.”

(December) Thanks for the card. A hasty note. Get this book for Christmas for Paul. The Earth Is Enough: growing up in a world of trout and old men. I'm wild about it and I don't even fish.

1990

(January) Thanks for the card Flo so I know where you are....You are having rain—us snow. Most snow since I moved here...all over town roof shoveling. Everyone offering \$8 an hour for anyone to shovel....McKibben's "end of nature." In this case we know it wasn't us; it was nature. She did it before....

This card is from...Earth Festivals...and, Paul that's the book that you and Joe [*Meeker*] read and then invited me out to Ca to meet Arne [*Naess*]. Without that invitation all this I've been into since wouldn't have happened"*[The verse on an 8x12 Leaning Tree card with a lovely alpine scene on it reads:]*

“We give-away our thanks to the earth
which gives us our home.
We give-away our thanks to the rivers and lakes
which give-away their water.
We give-away our thanks to the trees
which give-away fruits and nuts.
We give-away our thanks to the wind
which brings rain to water the plants.
We give-away our thanks to the sun
who gives-away warmth and light.
All beings on earth; the trees, the animals,
the wind, and the rivers give-away
to one another so all is in balance.
We give-away our promise to begin to learn
how to stay in balance with all the earth.

Dolores LaChapelle “

(March) Got your letter and tried to call you but must have had the wrong number.... All I can say is that for months after the book came off the press I would wake up each morning with such relief that I was no longer working on it or worrying about it. It was too much—not only the writing but the financial risk.... Now hopefully something will happen with the Lawrence book, but I'm not counting on it. No, I'm not excited about fixing up the house actually it scares me to death. The problems here in Silverton are insurmountable. To get reliable work I'll have to pay a construction co. from Durango. But it's got to be done. This house is unlivable in the winter and has always been. Ed and I did just enough work to live in it one year before the divorce as we were to build a real house up on the hill. I've been here ever since building up whatever it is I'm doing so no time to think, so I could take it but to stay here the rest of my life I've got to do it.

Let's do keep in touch even if you don't get here this summer. It was wonderful to walk up to the lake with you [*the previous summer*] so we had some chance to talk.

Ed Abby's last book, *Hayduke Lives!* is a fantastic book. He sets up a thing like King Arthur, 'once and future king,' a brilliant thing to do and his humor and sarcasm are great from a dying man.

(August) I've been building a house maybe I told you maybe not. Difficult process and may be able to get into it by next week and then I have access to files. It's been hard to fill orders.

(October) Bear with me it's a new typewriter my other one gave up. Moved in the new house...lots to do to get it ready for winter. Then went to Canada to climb first time in years. It was great—2 weeks then a week vision quest led in Canyonlands and then a thing at Gunnison. Hectic pace. Anyway house is beautiful if you ever get here there's a place to stay.

At...conference in Gunnison I did a thing, which I thought failed totally. A former dean...thought that it is really the way we should go and I agree but no one else knew what we were talking of. Essentially... as Paul says without nature there's no mature human.

Maybe sometime in the year 1991, I'll get over to see you all, but it wont be winter. I'm not up to winter in cities anymore.

(December) Finally I got a moment to read your papers.... I'm still having trouble with this new typewriter and I can't or don't dare use the computer when a storm is going on too many power outages here. I'm still frantically busy unfortunately. Turns out that an energy efficient house without a furnace is a complex matter. No one tries it without the entire passive technology, which I did not want to get into. It's taking a lot of time. Will explain later. Reading about those students brought a lot back. How Jeff [*Soder*] took you and me to see 'The Gods Must Be Crazy.' And I'm sorry to hear about Terry [*Tempest Williams*] having so many relatives ill and dying."

1991

(February) I'm writing quickly to be sure you get back by April 29 so we will connect as I will have to leave May 2nd to meet the group in Moab. In addition to Breaking Through we are doing women's vision quests in Canyonlands....

The house is doing great in all ways now that the crawl space problem is solved. Tell you about it when I see you. Others in town have spent \$400 a mo. on fuel oil. I am spending about \$90 for wood for all winter. I haven't had to bank the stove since mid-Jan. when the sun began coming on the other side of the mt. So it's only small fires early AM and late evening. Temperature outside down as low as -19°F.

No the heart thing is ok now because I left the regular medical rules and did acupuncture and then am not ever writing more books.

(May) Good to see you again—thanks for having me even though you were in the middle of a lot. Good luck on your cabin building...Sierra Club just sent me the new book by Gary Snyder. It's beautifully done and very inspiring. This is the one done on his 60th birthday with contributions by many. Well worth your getting.

(October) Good to hear that you survived the summer's building effort [*our cabin*]. It is amazing how difficult building is—and now you know too. A wonderful idea to turn the meadow into a wetlands. The book Shifting will help. It really tells how things fit together.

(December) Thanks for the card. I gave that talk to 900 people at the National Interpreters workshops—Forest Service, BLM, state parks, etc. I was worried but it all turned out great. They sold every book they had by me and the response was great. There's something going on

which might well explode in the right direction. At the lower levels the people in these agencies are amazing while the upper levels are worse and worse.

1992

[In the summer of 1992 I taught in an environmental education workshop for Native American teachers in Durango, CO and was able to visit Dolores one week-end. We hiked to her special places and had a lovely time reminiscing. She was in good health and good spirits. Her house was beautiful as was the little Japanese garden she had designed. I sat in the rocker in the atrium facing the mountains and enjoyed the afternoon sun. She made no mention of her working on a new book.]

1993

[I wrote Dolores occasional cards as Paul and I traveled in Scandinavia and Europe after the 5th World Wilderness Congress in Norway. We spent the summer in our cabin in the Hoback Basin in Wyoming and alternated quarters at Pitzer College and the University of Utah. I did not hear from Dolores and later learned she had been hospitalized with a heart condition. This was the year that Dolores's Deep Powder Snow: Forty-five Years of Ecstatic Skiing, Avalanches, and Earth Wisdom was published.]

1994

(June) So glad you sent me the SUNY announcement and your book. You said you've called. I try to get out and walk every day but am usually here at night but go to bed by 9pm. I got the notice of the celebration for Paul's retirement. Would have been good to have been there but no way... My heart is doing ok. I've been going to a very good acupuncturist down in Durango and she's doing a good job. But I am still taking it easy. The main problem I am working on now caused the extreme stress on the heart last May. I was in Canyonlands for the workshop we give every year, after a major rolfing in Santa Fe. Walking out those 3 miles was unbearable, but I didn't know it would push the heart over.... Now I'm trying to learn to walk again *[As a young woman while skiing at Alta, Dolores was buried by an*

avalanche. She was rescued, but her hip, leg, and pelvis, sustained serious injuries. Afterward, she led a very active life, mountain climbing and skiing, but as she aged, the deteriorated hip joint caused her intense pain.] I am doing easy workshops not involving walking....I am offering you some advice. What I knew intellectually and did not pay attention to is that good stress is just as hard on one as bad stress. And long term stress depletes the adrenal glands and that's when the trouble happens.

There are so many things to talk about but don't know when we will ever get together. I'm spending a lot of time building up the adrenals and working on the leg, but someday, I might get up there to Wyo.

(September) Good to hear from you. I'm writing a quick note to find out about Paul's upcoming book....Let me know the status of it—I am getting together my newsletter. I presume it won't be out this year. I will be carrying your book...Great you saw all those birds on the river. It seems a miracle there's any life left with what's going on in that "other reality"—the Eurocentric mess—and that GATT Treaty.

You asked about the hip. I go down to the rolfer in Santa Fe in mid-Oct. I will ski this year—only lower intermediate, and not with anyone I usually *[ski with]* as I will get carried away.”

(October) *[In October, Paul was diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer and I called Dolores to let her know. She wrote immediately with suggestions for natural foods and herbal remedies.]*

I didn't believe in all this herbal natural stuff some years but now I do. Of course, cancer is much more serious but there is hope as you can see. I hope all this is some use to you. And I hope the Chinese doctor you will see in Calif. will help. We need you, Paul—there's no one else knows what you know.

1995

(January) Thanks for your note. Amazing to hear that 'howling like wolves,' which Dave Foreman began, has now made it to St. John the Divine Cathedral *[with Paul Winter]*.

The heart went out briefly this past week into arrhythmia, but am fine now...

I will be in Salt Lake in early April. There's a Ski Heritage thing I am supposed to be at from my Powder Snow Book. When will you be leaving?

I want to spend some time on the desert walking.

(March) Almost Spring Equinox. I got back up here to Silverton and got your letter in the batch of mail I picked up. Thanks for writing. I didn't want to bother you but did hope to find out how things are going. It was a shock to hear how bad things got in Jan. but I'm glad the chemotherapy did reduce the tumors. Jan. was a hard month for me too. I had been making real progress. Heart ok with acupuncture and walking much better. Then a swelling in my legs occurred and a deeper heart problem, but I'm on a drug and I'll have another "jump start" in late April... What a shock to find so many of us having these deep problems... Yes, I would like some osha. I used to pick my own in the mts., but the last two summers have had heart problems. Please send me about a handful....

I'll be down to Santa Fe in mid April. Please give me Carl's phone number and I'll give him a call to talk about hearts.

I got the "bound page proofs" of Listening to the Land by Derrick Jensen. I really think his interview with you, Paul, is outstanding. Your answer to the question: "What are your views on the crash of which so many environmentalists speak? It is not something that may happen. We have been in the midst of it for the last century." Of course, we have but none of us have recognized it that clearly. Thanks for that great line. That makes so much sense.

Saw the first mountain bluebirds yesterday. They always come so early—too much snow on the ground (still three feet). Don't know why they do it cause they don't necessarily stay and seem to leave and then come back later to mate and nest.

(November) [*Sometime between March and November, Dolores had surgery for a hip replacement*] I've been going to write a real letter for a long time now but so little time what with reorganizing the house for the hip (I can't bend more than 45 degrees) and doing my newsletter and now it is snowing... I'm sending you an article from Ecopsychology. Paul's real work about children should be more known by this group. I was at their big meeting at Esalen in 1993.... Hope things are going as well as can be expected. As for me the hip transplant

was a good thing—no pain now so maybe eventually I can go off the heart drug I hope.

1996

(June) Hope this gets forwarded to you if you are in WY now. They sent the cover just yesterday. [*D.H. Lawrence, Future Primitive*] available at books stores by June 27. I presume they will send you a copy directly. Thanks again for the great things you wrote about the book.

I just talked to Max O. on the phone. He called me. So I found just how bad off Paul is and that he may not live much longer. Of course, that's good in a way because he has gone thru so much and his chances are impossible at this stage. But hard on you...I was so shook to find from Max how imminent it is that I kept him on the line just to talk about Paul.... It's been sometime since I heard from you—so had wondered if things were getting bad and they are. It's hard to believe, isn't it? This may sound all wrong but I thought of it when Max told me. It's the death chant of White Antelope as he road into the battle...at the massacre at Sand Creek. Art Goodtimes, my poet friend (whom you met at Estes Park) learned it when he was a VISTA volunteer at the Crow Indian Reservation some years ago:

NOTHING LIVES LONG.

NOTHING LIVES LONG.

NOTHING LIVES LONG, BUT THE EARTH AND THE
MOUNTAINS.

Somehow that chant made me feel better as I was dying (supposedly) with that ventrical beat crisis in the hospital a year ago. The whole emergency staff was watching the monitor and they didn't get that often the person lives. We can always hope for a miracle for Paul. Take care of yourself, Flo.

[July 12. Paul died and I called Dolores to let her know. She was unable to attend the memorial.]

1997

(January) I'm finally getting the newsletter off to you...Lots of delay because Greg C. (who handles the layout, etc. for me) moved and the local printer took 2 weeks. So here it is. Paul is mentioned all the way through it. The work he did about teenagers is becoming crucial. That's the group suffering most from our wrongheadedness in this culture. I am doing my best to let people know of what Paul wrote—long ago now. He was about the first to see how bad it is.

I've gone off the western heart drugs into Chinese Herbs from that big outfit in Santa Fe and it's working! Wonderful!. (2 weeks later) Finally am getting the newsletter off to you. I loved what Carl told you about his visualization of Paul/fishing/dragons. No, I am not down with my sister. I have spent every winter here in Silverton even the winter after the operation. But I spend March down there with her in Cortez because we still have winter and down there I can walk in the Sand Canyon area. But I am using snowshoes this winter a lot. Not as good as skiing but getting out in the backcountry. I could ski but it's whether I should reach over that far in putting on the bindings. Still thinking about it. It's the driving that's the problem.

I really hope to get over to Salt Lake but when I don't know. Are you going up to Wyoming this summer to your cabin or is it still too painful? (*I returned to the cabin a week or so after Paul died.*)

(April) Thanks for Kathryn's address. I've written her. I'm not having any problems at all thanks to a Chinese herbal person. But I needed information on climbers and enlarged hearts. Great to hear that Paul's older books are being printed now, especially Tender Carnivore and Nature and Madness.... Who is the editor there who is doing this? Please let me know about this as soon as you get a chance. We're having the Deep Ecology workshop in July and this would be very useful information to get out there.... While looking thru an old file I found these two letters from Paul. You might like the copies. One is the first letter I ever got from him. I had sent Earth Festivals to him and Joe Meeker. When I self-published I had no idea about all the academic background needed. I just plunged into it blind sort of.

Good you are going to Bondurant. It's really a late spring that's for sure. We also had a late, cold time of it till just this week.”

1998

[I traveled to India for the 6th World Wilderness Congress in September. Upon returning, I decided to stay at the cabin in Wyoming through the winter. At Christmas I wrote Dolores explaining where I was and what had been happening.]

1999

(February) So good to get your letter at Xmas. Yes, it's been a long time.... I am no longer doing my newsletter or selling books through it....I've had some bad luck with the arrhythmic heart. I was doing well for 3 years with a Chinese herbal doctor in Santa Fe. But I don't like driving to Santa Fe so when a reishi mushroom extract began to be well known I got some from Gaia Herbs...and went off the Chinese herbs. It caught up with me, so in the spring I had to go back to the hospital in Durango, and I am on western drugs. So now that the worst is over, I have arranged to go back to Santa Fe and then I'll be OK again. It's worth a once a month trip rather than the ill effects of western drugs. I have friends to stay there with.

I've finished my last book—no more will I ever do. It's a very important one more so than all the rest. But such a new genre no publisher can handle it. Eventually it will get published and then will be a much-copied genre. Publishers wrote back with highly favorable mention of my previous books but just said that they are not doing this type of book now. Of course, no one is as it's never been done before. 80 photos and facing text—a totally new way to approach environment and 'place.'

I wanted to give you more info on the Windigo experience. Remember I made a brief remark about it on the phone and you said you found no mention of the word in Paul's notes. I had no time then to explain. You would not have found that word because it was one we used to try to explain it—those of us who had the experience. So I'll fill you in now.

It began when I was teaching at Aspen long ago—1948. Four of us went on skis up to a high valley above a ghost town of Ashcroft. All that's changed now—it's civilized. But then it was wild. One of the men had been there when he was in the 10th Mountain Troops so he knew where the hut was—called Taggart hut from an old miner. But after we started a tremendous blizzard began. We were miles from the car so thought we'd best continue [to the hut]. When we got to the

location we couldn't find it and it was dusk. We had sleeping bags but no tent. Then John's skis knocked against a metal sound and there was the chimney of the hut just barely sticking out of the deep snow. So we dug down to the door where there was firewood stacked. In passing the wood in and getting everything ready for the night we knew no one could walk through the closed door easily.

So we got the old stove going and into our sleeping bags. It was dark by then, of course. We heard a loud knock on the door. Three knocks and then no sound. We were terrified. One woman in the group said, "Open the door." John said "You open that door and I'll kill you." And the three of us felt that way. Three of us were experienced climbers and not afraid of the wilderness, but we were terrified. Next AM we tried to talk about it and could not explain it. There were no footprints—nothing.

The next summer a group of us was climbing Rio Grande Pyramid. We were trying to cross the Rio Grande without being swept away. On the other side there was a gigantic land-slip. The whole side of the mountain had slid ripping out and piling trees in grotesque ways. One of the men said "makes you feel like the Windigo was here." He *[explained]* that he and friends were skiing in the mountains above Boulder. Five of them had been going in on skis after dark to a far hut. They got in very late and got the fire going in the stove. And were in their sleeping bags when they heard a sort of scratching along the wall high up outside one wall. They suddenly were all terrified and felt that if it turned the corner on the side where the door, they could not bear it. Then suddenly no more scratching and no other sound and the terror was gone. They had used the word Windigo cause one was studying anthropology and the Ojibwa Indians had this cannibal monster named Windigo.

Again all *[were]* experienced climbers used to pack rats scratching among their packs for food, etc. So the scratching was normal, but the fear was not.

I'm not skiing any more. I got that hip replaced and it's doing very well. Your daughter *[Kathryn Ann]* helped me decide when she sent her ideas on the Xrays. I've got snowshoes so still am getting out. I'm not skiing because people are getting hit too much by snowboarders and killed. And also hip implants can be broken when hit. Don't know that I'll ever get up to Bondurant but do let's keep in touch.

Glad you can devote some time to the Murie Center. I've read about that couple [*Conservationists, Olaus and Mardy Murie*] and all they did.

My *Deep Powder Snow* has been translated into Italian...my *Sacred Land*... has been translated into German and published there so the books are still relevant.

2002

(January). As you know I don't send Xmas cards, but I did want to get this to you. [*The solstice card quoted an Inuit song:*

I think over again my small adventures,
My fears,
Those small ones that seemed so big,
For all the vital things
I had to get
And to reach,
And yet,
There is only one great thing-
the Only thing-
To live,
To see the great day that dawns
And the light that fills the world.

Are you working on a biography of Paul? I've seen him referred to more and more.

At the end of the Moon Dance piece, Ann O. says, "in celebration of the Great Mystery." Remember when we were all at Estes Park for the conference where we met Max Oelschlaeger? That's when I got the real translation of Wakan Tanka, the Sioux word, which is wrongly translated as the Great Spirit. The Sioux who gave a paper was a wonderful guy so I asked him and he told me "It's the Great Mystery." So more are finding that out.

I'm not writing any more books, but when someone asks for an article I do it. While working on an article for the new *Call to Earth: Journal of the International Association for Environmental Philosophy*, which they published in the September issue, I looked into a book Paul recommended when I met him in 1977. Anyway he told me to read *One Cosmic Instant, a natural history of human arrogance* by John Livingston. So I looked up something for my article to do with population—and on the 2nd to the last page saw this. In writing about the “glory and grandeur of the constant recombination of the basic building materials of life,” he says: “Though I do not expect that I shall be reborn directly as a crocus, I know that one day my atoms will inhabit a bacterium here, a diatom there... I will be here, in myriad forms of life on Earth. I have always been here and with a certain effort of the will, *I can sometime remember.*” I trust this will resonate with you when remembering Paul.

2003

(September) I misfiled your letter hence this late reply. Thank you for *Where We Belong*. I know Paul talked a lot about the “cross-valley syndrome,” and I learned a lot from it. But I read it in a library in a magazine so it's good to have my own copy.

Hope you are recovering from the spinal fusion. You said by the end of August you can do more. I'm now 77 and can't believe it. Even climbed a small mountain last year. We had lots of monsoon rain in August and September so no drought now. But big fires last year.

Good to hear from you. The only thing I'm doing this fall is in the brochure. It will be good to meet Childs. His water book was amazing....Let's keep in touch.

2006

(September) Good to hear from you. Summer is a busy time for me hence this late reply. Your question about how I met with Paul and Arne Naess in California.

You will remember that Earthday X Colloquium at Denver University. I met Joe Meeker there. He is the one who told me about New Natural

Philosophy, a new kind of college and I should look into teaching for them. I had a friend to visit in California, so I went.

I stayed with Joe Meeker. That night he went to the airport to pick up Arne Naess who just flew in from Copenhagen. They had awarded him the Copenhagen Prize, more important than the Nobel Prize.

He talked to Paul Shepard's class next day. Then he asked me to drive him up the highway onto the Mt. so he could see the desert, which I did and we all walked up to a viewpoint.

Next day Joe took me to the New Natural Philosophy meeting—they published my *Earth Wisdom* late the next year.

Then Joe took me to Pitzer to meet Paul Shepard. We talked for hours putting things together.

Later I stayed at Paul's home for a party he put together for me. Later he had me fly out to talk to his classes. So that is how we all met. Arne Naess wanted me to fly to Norway and ski north of the Arctic Circle, but I didn't do it.

Please see that I get a copy of the *Trumpeter* about Paul. Call me sometime."

≈≈≈≈

This was Dolores' last letter. I was about to call when I learned she had died on January 22, 2007. Along with our stamina and energy, our correspondence had dwindled during the last years. Although she made no mention of it in her letter, I've since learned that she was failing rapidly in her last months. I always thought that she, with all her knowledge of herbal medicine, would out-live me. But, as fate would have it, I am still here to pay tribute to this unique and talented visionary.

During her lifetime, Dolores developed her endowments to the fullest. With a lithe and graceful and strong body, she became a world-class skier. She practiced Tai Chi laced with deep, earthy spiritualism. A nature mystic of sorts, she loved this Good Earth unconditionally. Extraordinarily intelligent, impeccably ethical and honest, she was

fascinated with the written word and had been a voracious reader since childhood. But she was also deeply intuitive. She became a dedicated author who shared her special vision and expansive thinking with others. Her writing always dealt with relationships, not with the things themselves.

Dolores once told me that if she were given a grant for Xeroxing appropriate literature to select people, she could change the world. The small part of her life she shared with me may not have changed the world, but it profoundly altered the way I inhabit this, our dwelling place. I remember with great appreciation her boundless gifts of wisdom and insight.