

Unnatural

By [Tim Graves](#)

June 2, 2014

There is a feeling that comes over me when I'm hiking. Even in the extremely short post-operative shuffles that I've been taking as I recover from having surgery several weeks ago.

I feel connected. I feel literally grounded to creation and the creator that flows through each of us—butterfly, blade of grass, snake, and human. Sometimes I pause in my hiking and just sit for a while and take in the sounds, smells, and images around me.

I feel a part of nature. I experience the divine around me and within me. I sense connections between myself and the tiny bug crawling on the flower.

As I hiked through Cottonwood Canyon yesterday, that feeling of connectedness came over me. The warmth of the sun and exercise—no matter that my pace was still slow—resulted in feeling overdressed. I slipped off my hoody, tying it around my waist. I untucked my t-shirt and flapped it so a cool breeze touched my sweat moist skin.

Bam! A pesky feeling consumed me. I felt tainted and unnatural. Looking at my incision site, I felt distant from nature. With the neat scar, with its train track motif above my belly button, and the still-scabby area (the result of infection) below, I felt different than that which surrounded me. I felt unnatural. I *feel* unnatural.

That feeling remains and twists itself into a spiral with feelings of bodily violation. I am still grappling with what it means to have foreign hands within me removing my right colon. I perceive and imagine a cavernous emptiness within my abdominal cavity.

I am still struggling with the feeling of violation upon having things inserted into every opening of my body while I was asleep. In the course of screening and healing me, a camera was inserted into my anus, a tube was slid down my throat, and even my urine function was controlled through a catheter tube.

The violation went beyond natural openings in my body. I have two tiny laparoscopic scars one on the left at my waist line and the other just above my pubic bone. The most noticeable, however, is the 2-and-a-half-inch opening (I measured) that was cut from above my naval to below it. All these things were done to my body while I was asleep, while I had no chance to give or deny permission.

And, though, I owe my very health and life to the doctors and other medical staff who cared for me, there is a sense of trauma that I feel that I am only beginning to sort through. Much of the time I repress the feelings to enable me to cope with recovery and resuming my daily routines. It is in the quiet moments that horror washes over me! My body twinges or tightens up in an effort to protect itself from that which occurred nearly eight weeks prior. Sometimes the tears come slowly and quietly. Other times I sob horrified at what my mind and body remember and imagine.

The medical staff to whom I feel a great gratitude have nearly completed their task of healing my body but it is the Divine manifest in nature, in the routines of life, in friendships, and in those who love me to whom my further healing depends. It is the Holy Spirit that gently holds my hand, wipes my tears, and patiently listens to my laments to whom I turn now.

And, though being among the dragonfly and sage offer a healing salve, I still have a way to go in accepting myself—my very body—as natural anymore. But I feel hope.

My life experiences thus far, nature, and the narratives of healing, deaths, and resurrections of my faith assure me that I will not always feel this way. In my becoming I have many partners. In my becoming what is to be, I journey with the Divine manifest in each creature, spring flower, and snowflake.

Originally posted at [Being, Wandering](#)