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Inside



Healing Garden

Transformation and the butterfly

By Jill Butler
Special to Shore Home

Editor's note: Jill Butler's column this week not only takes readers into her home and garden, which is featured in an upcoming book published by Globe Pequot Press, it takes us into her heart as she explores transformation after the recent death of her brother, York Butler, a local artist who was known for his whimsical water fountains...

When the world is too much with us, home can be our sanctuary, the haven that says, "No, not today." This cottage has been transformed and brought into its next incarnation. This is the place that embraces me as I experience my own personal transformation. Today, it is a healing house where I mourn the passing of my brother, York Butler.

I acquired a butterfly bush with the house and have planted a second. I'd never experienced one before. I'm fascinated to see the butterflies' arrival just as the bushes come to full bloom. They know their season.

Transformation like a butterfly is happening all the time in ways we recognize and in ways we don't – until we do...

This cottage has been transformed and brought into its next incarnation. It is the place that has been transformed and embraces me as I experience my own personal transformation. It is the healing house.

I think of transformation not as a goal but rather as a process. It's probably not a conscious effort but rather a more organic following of one's heart and messages that come to us. It is simply nature and life taking its path. When there is desire to change, to do things in more authentic ways, it becomes an exercise in listening to our inner voice.

Who wants to listen and let the story be told?

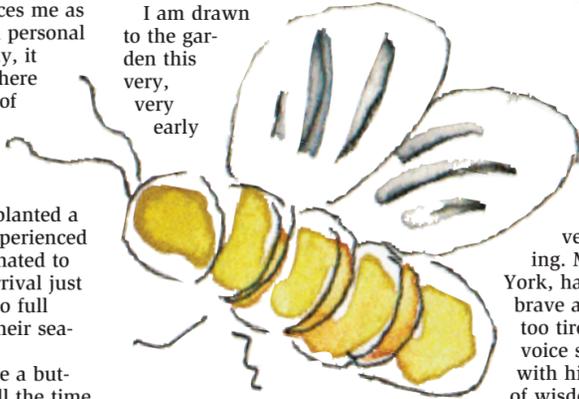
Stepping back for a minute: my brother, who was terminally ill, would stop at my village studio to check in and to talk. I had become his listening post. York was a very wise man. One day in particular, he had a story to tell but I was

distracted. I had forgotten to lean back and just let him talk. He started a story – it doesn't really matter what it was about – the story became about his wanting to tell his story.

He began and already I was jumping to know the ending. I certainly knew the ending, did I not? He stopped, leaned further back into the director's chair, looked at me and said, "You know, nobody wants to hear the story anymore. Nobody wants to listen and let the story be told. It's really a shame. We're losing our ability to listen. We're all in such a rush to get to the end." I apologized and was embarrassed to have been caught. I wanted to be there for him. He said it was okay, "Everybody does it." That made me feel even worse.

"I am the bro"

I am drawn to the garden this very, very early



morning...the weeds are calling. I venture out with coffee in hand in my off-white robe. As the East starts to brighten, I think to reconsider my gardening outfit, such as it is. Bottoms up is bad enough, but bottoms up with nothing on under my robe is risky and potentially embarrassing. I opt for my favorite yoga clothes. These are forgiving as they easily move with me.

It occurs to me, there could be a new type of yoga. If there can be Power Yoga and Hatha Yoga why not Gardening Yoga? The possibilities for lunges, stretches and holding poses are endless. Protecting the back on all counts is of major concern. Bending, coming up, hanging and re-centering are all here.

Stopping the chatter with this new idea, I focus on emptying the mind as I make my way around the garden. I am



After losing her brother to cancer, the author explores the healing properties of her garden. Butterflies are the symbol of transformation and she talks about these colorful, winged guests. Creating your own healing place in your abode is important she says. It's where you tell the world, "not now."

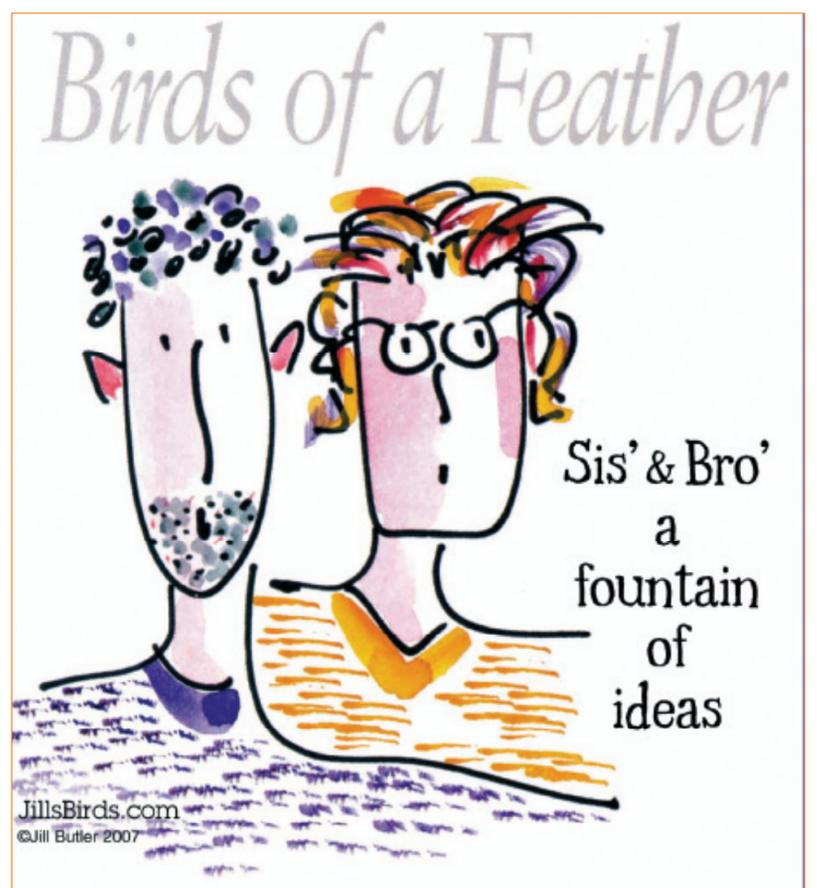
Jill Butler

remembering what brought me here this very early morning. My brother, York, has died. He was brave and in the end too tired to go on. His voice still resonates with his unique words of wisdom and distinctive laugh. His last clear words to me were, "I am the Bro."

From his transformed state, he comes to me in meditation as the Bro Angel. He let it be known he is available to all to be called upon for guidance and kindness – like he was in life. He was that kind of guy. York was well loved and appreciated for his hardy and distinctive laugh and his simple and profound advice. Getting down on my (our) knees I think God has unique ways of getting us to prayer.

See Butterflies, Page 18

Right, one of Jill Butler's signature drawings in her "Birds of a Feather" series, which she began last year as a way to raise money to help her brother and his family pay for mounting medical bills. The series has taken flight in a manner of speaking. All drawings this page, Jill Butler.



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I am on my knees and I believe his church is right here, right now, here in the weeds as I remember York and

smile about his favorite flower, the sunflower. I make a mental note to get some for the house and to plant some in the gar-

den. This certainly is God's way of getting me on my knees. It is humbling.

The weeds are still calling and I'm making my way along the pathway in the front. There's no grass here but this

newly created path still doesn't know that weeds are not welcome. I find myself again on my knees pulling, one at a

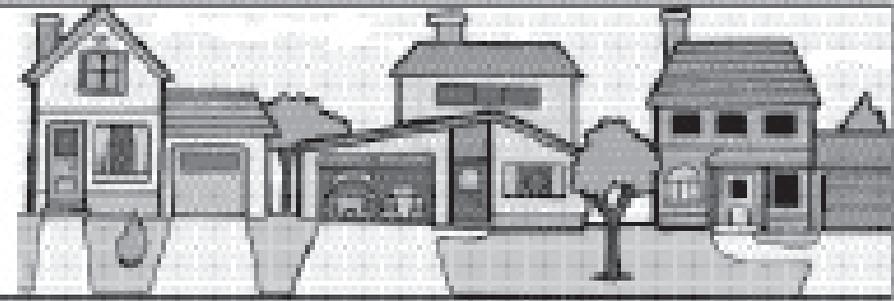
time. Is there another way of pulling weeds?

I am with York and wondering how to best support myself at this moment. Friends are asking, "How can I be there for you?" It comes loud and clear, "Call and invite them to come and give you hugs." I continue on my knees, pulling weeds and offering a prayer for York's journey, and for those of us left behind. This certainly is God's way. It is quietly amazing. It is a moment to let the mind go and allow the heart and feeling center of my being to come forward. I am weeping and watering both with my tears and the hose that's following me around.

Rain is predicted which is precisely why I'm watering. This watering will surely guarantee that rain will follow, as well as more weeds, and more opportunity to get down on my knees.

Editor's note: Jill Butler's new book talks about this transformation process and how to create your own healing space where you live. Her 1924 cottage also needed care as she did, post divorce. The completed cottage is her haven as life and transformation continues. Butler writes: "The butterfly house continues to serve as a place to heal, a place from which to review the past and to begin to imagine a different future. The renovation and transformation became a major focus. It required asking over and over and over again: Who am I?"

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