

# Diving Deeper, Staying Real & Honoring My Gray Sweater Blues

BY CAROLYN RIKER

Maybe it is the steady *drip, drip, drip* of rain accentuating the rhythm of Earth's heartbeat, and the sound of my tired soul that tells me it's okay to be quieter and more thoughtful than usual.

Nature is truly reassuring and my most reliable companion.

Maybe I'm just super sensitive and plummeting is the way my soul needs to sail. I have placed this imaginary hot-pink sign over my heart -- *Solicitors Are Not Welcomed Here*.

Too often, people take advantage or they give perky advice. Sometimes those hollow words override the messages of what our soul is clearly trying to share.

***I won't label and pigeonhole this mood as melancholy, or as depression, or seasonal affective disorder because labels are often too heavy, clinical, and stigmatizing.***

Instead, I prefer to call this My Gray Sweater Blues. It wraps me whole. Sees me through. Doesn't judge. Sits with me. Gives me warmth into these extra deep, dark, damp explorations where even breathing can be too noisy. Sloths are my totem animal. As well as the unfurled and sleepy tree buds, softly speaking ancestral tongues of accumulated truths.

This isn't a "disorder" but a reordering of what might be retranslating. I can't help but see tiny cells emptying and refilling as need be. Bitter sweetness rubs my shoulders with the elusive notes of dark chocolate's medicinal qualities.

My Gray Sweater Blues has a story to tell that sunlight can't always hear.

Sometimes, living hurts. Demands are real. Bills must be paid. Emergencies happen. The numerous roles we engage in are mountainous. Social injustices are a perpetual outcry; it's not just a headline, but real people suffering from abuse. Elitism crushes. Competitiveness is all around us: to do more, earn more money, and to gain status. Bling. Bam. Boom. Life is often an unfair and a difficult place. Not everyone has a hand to hold, or a place for cries to be shared, or a shoulder to lean on.

***Yet somehow I do know, what fills the soul is a wealth that can't be sold.***

I believe the days of My Gray Sweater Blues are shadows to teach me to feel between the trees, because there's enough space there to go slower. Seasons, sounds, certain colors – all have sensuous and subtle sentiments to assist us in letting go of the rush, rush, rush of everything. Mother Earth greets us with a welcoming embrace, especially when she hears a sad song solo.

There are ways to honor this passage. Practicing healthy detachment is self-caring. Setting limits with toxic people who erode our shoreline, is highly necessary. Allowing extra cushions of tender to find our center's sigh is a personal heart-dance. Finding comfort in ordinary routines, is like stirring the raw honey and hearing the spoon's *ting, ting, ting* brush the sides of our inner shelter.

Staring at the foreground of branches sprayed across an abundant stormy sky, and feeling the sepia tones meld with our bones as our toes ground into the spacious welcome mat of soaked moss. This, to me, is an invitation to dive deeper and stay real.

I must admit, I found myself oddly smiling just writing these words. It makes me hum holy. And I know, this part of me is home when I take the time to honor, My Gray Sweater Blues.

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I believe that life is measured in  
our ability to feel; the deeper and  
the more raw the feelings, the  
more authentically we're living.

Zoe Quiney

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