

## CHAPTER SIX

### PREVAILING

I feel like one of those stodgy, slow, old fashioned fuddy-duddies. Remember? Stiff, puckered with iron stays of morality, moral fibers, kept them erect and firm, joyless, sexless, judgmental, pessimistic, holding the reins with a firm hand, no wonder men came quickly, went elsewhere. I'm kidding. I have great sympathy for the life threatening difficulties women experienced, death in childbirth, malnutrition, filth, disease, no information on birth control available, wretched. Women experienced sex as a harbinger and dispenser of disease more often than as a source of physical pleasure or spiritual enrichment. But I'm getting off track again. It's so good to talk with you, even if it's only in my head and on paper. There you are. You are asleep, in the dark of your time zone, you are free to fly here, be with me in your dreams. Then, when this letter arrives, there will be an inkling, the ghost of an awareness, striking a piano key of memory. Let your heart strings vibrate in sympathy. What I was trying to say, though I am stodgy as stodgy can be, though I move with the grace and speed of a mock turtle, my life swirls, a whirlwind of adventures. Truly, when I think of all the things we've done, where we've been, what we've seen, the things I've felt, done, believed, my God, the beliefs that I've owned, come and gone with the speed of Parisian fashion. Looking back, and forward, I wonder if the opinions I hold now will end up in the church bazaar, or am I getting closer to a central truth. But, even as I write that phrase, I cringe. I see men in black boots, arm bands, white hoods, regalia galore. The horrors of central truths loom large in my mind, a blue granite megalith, a wailing wall, the Vietnam memorial. It could sound like the trite copouts Maggie brought home in the 60's but I think the truth is a whirlwind, or the whirlwind is truth, anyway, they are equivalent. Since infinity exists and probability, being what it is, space and time merging and curving (curly) things are not likely to lead us to a central stasis. Wheels within wheels. Particles disappear into other dimensions, reappear randomly, refuse to be pinned down. Particles act like fickle women. Particles, like little children, live in the realms of free will and instinct. Change is the basis of reality, every table and chair, a whirling masterpiece of choice, the random creative courage to be.

You know how your brother's wife likes to live in the cozy plethora of objects? Thick furniture to sink into, fireplaces blazing, hot cocoa, doiled surfaces. A profusion of human hands. Sometimes I think I see all the hands that made all the objects moving around in the room. All the particles in the objects moving. I couldn't live with so many objects around me, they're too noisy, too distracting, hands and particles moving around. That's probably what's behind the emptiness of modernism, more room for the individual who perceives. It does seem a mite egotistical, to require so much space for the human, to put the needs of the individual foremost. I think my taste in homes is more modern than my taste in life. I like my house spare but my life packed, an old fashioned full life. I used to see my soul as a big, fat, ghostly thug pushing me around. I had to work

with this obese thing haunting me. Then I calmed down, realized that it was malleable and decided to change it to a garden, a huge garden. The qualities of soul that so repulsed me, my obesity I transformed to a fertile acreage, pungent dirt piled into hillocks and burrows, rock and slate pathways pressed into grass peeking through the cracks, scads of herbs and wildflowers. When I walk inside my soul it comforts me. When I miss you tremendously, when I get lost in all my activities, when my thoughts are bouncing around in my head, I can find my peace meandering inside my garden paradise.