

a smoke-choking throat, to live on the same land with her horse and her fire-therapy wolf-dog she ultimately had to carve out a place for herself well up in the hills, deep off the grid, living like her pioneer forebears of old.

Breaks. My heart.

All of it. Breaks my heart.

The deadline for this story is coming up very fast now, and though I really would like to/not like to, tell at length my own fire story, as K would command, basically, to me, it is frivolous, and embarrassing

So I'll just here convey the key to it: that I got to live, in the thing itself, what I had always believed, against all evidence, through many scorns: that people, they are basically good.

For not only did everybody save everybody, there in the fire; but, after, thousands of people, strangers, came to the town burned down, from all over the country, even the world, to bring the town back. And, because I was "so stubborn I stayed in a fire," as H would recurrently say to me, I got to witness that.

Everybody then was so kind to everybody. It was like a new world. No money ever exchanged hands. If you had something somebody needed, you gave it to them. And the

A PG&E guy up in the hills clearing brush came across this kitten, tangled in wire, dying. He carefully extracted the kitten, and passed him on to the fire cat rescue people. And so the kitten lived. Dubbed Mugsy.

PHOTO BY KEVIN JEYS



A child's drawing of people trying to get out of the fire.
PHOTO POSTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA BY A CAMP FIRE PARENT

way everybody greeted each other was, "Do you have enough water?" I came to believe, in the six weeks of maroonment up here, it would always be like that. H, she was feeling it too. With kindness she was receiving in Chico. And we'd talk, late into the night. About the kind new world. While my ex, T, she cautioned: "You're setting yourself up for a fall. Eventually people will go back to the way they've always been." And, of course, she was right.

Even, as she was not. For I remember these two PG&E workers from Atwater, who kind of adopted me, would bring me the sack lunches they got, and about three or four weeks in, one of them said, "You know, I'd never even heard of Paradise until this happened. But now I think maybe I'd like to live here." The town still a smoking ruin; the bodycatchers still pulling corpses out o the ruins. He said this amid a bunch of other workers here. And none of them said he was crazy. Because, they all felt it, too. They were. These people. Paradise.

So. I don't care. Because I know. And it has been proven to me. I have seen it. I have been to the mountaintop. And I have looked over. One day, we all be one. It's just a matter. Of waiting. For the time. To catch up.

Meanwhile, the white people, they came to California, and they built their towns. And now those towns, they are burning down. This is just a thing. That is happening.

As the white people, they came to California, and they killed all the grizzly bears. And then they put the grizzly bear on their state seal. As:

The bear. It is running. And it is burning. The bear. It is on fire. And it is running. And it is burning. □

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