



**Dear Friends,**

**We are so thankful to be with Natalia together in Colorado. Unfortunately, the circumstances that brought us to Colorado earlier than planned are still very concerning. Natalia was exposed to mold either where she was living or in her car (or both). She began to exhibit strong neurologic “tics” or involuntary movements. Her doctor was so concerned he offered her a room in a second home he allows acute patients to use when they are coming from long distances. We came back to the US and joined Natalia there, jumping into shuttle duties to various appointments and treatments.**

**In the midst of our concerns, Rachelle and I are also spinning with culture shock. Not to mention the US has changed a lot as well. Pandemic restrictions seem to change daily and for most of the world there is a shortage of good ol’ familiar nowadays.**

**At the moment we are staying with good friends in Northern Colorado. Recommendation is for Natalia to avoid further mold exposure until we can get her health in a better place.**

Untitled Poem

He built for me a garden, watered with my tears  
He built for me a garden after all these trying years  
He's showered me with goodness, even when I turned my face  
There's a kingdom waiting for me and the streets are lined with grace  
But how do I know this?  
Are you real sure 'cause I can't go on without knowing if I suffer for no good  
He is goodness  
And I am captured by his grace  
His promises remain when I've fallen on my face  
He is good and He is promise  
Maybe there's land  
But His heart is the ground where I've chosen to stand  
For He is love and He is mercy  
I'm wrecked with this thought  
Because He built for me a garden, and I suffered for His love

Natalia Dell

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Before we left Ecuador, our Waorani friends spent a few hours on our last day with them at their Sunday gathering encouraging us about Wedæ/Natalia's situation and reminding us what God has done for us in the past. Pegonga walked out of the jungle hoping to catch us before we left, gave us great big hugs and said, "Remember what Wængongi (God) did for you Kigi (Rachelle)? And here you are walking and talking to me. God will heal your daughter and you will see her either here or in heaven." Pegonga's daughter is living in heaven.

Meñiwa assured us that they are going to keep meeting on Sundays. "We are in God's hands and we will keep coming to learn about God's word when you aren't here. Where two or more are gathered so is God. You go take care of your daughter. That is most important right now. She needs her mother and father."



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They often talk in our meetings about how one little seed can grow into a big tree. Our friend Omi wrote telling us how excited she is because she and Meñiwa and Miipo are meeting with the youth in the town of Shell. They have a vision and passion for reaching those around them. They are very encouraged--we look forward to watching these "trees" grow.

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In October we took a short trip to five different villages located on the oil company roads. The oil company has wells in this area and has built many cement houses for the Waorani. It was jarring to see cement houses with electricity and running water. Despite this, many have built traditional homes also where they spend most of their time. One thatched roofed, dirt floor home had the traditional hammocks slung and fire burning...with a TV in the corner playing a soccer match, a full size refrigerator, stove, and kitchen cupboards on the other side. The contrast made us smile.



We knew we would be seeing a number of old friends, but were not prepared for how emotional it would be. Some people we had not seen in 20 years and others I (Rachelle) had not seen since I was a young girl. One woman grabbed me in a big hug with tears in her eyes and said, "Kigi, I used to carry you around in a sling when you were a baby. I heard you almost died and here you are."

In a couple places I was asked to share a bit of my story and how God answered their prayers for healing. We asked them to pray for our daughter and still get texts on a weekly basis asking how she is doing. They, in turn, shared their stories. Whether we understand them or not....



So many are hurting--the grief about the cultural changes and breakdown of the family unit is profound. More than one woman told me that she spends all her time alone...going to the garden, going to the forest, in her home..."People don't come and talk anymore. I live all alone. My children live far away. I cry for my son who is living badly. He is drinking and taking drugs. Pray for him!" She was in tears. This was in a village where a nearby shaman from a neighboring tribe has also been very influential. We left some Bibles and songbooks and pray for good soil. The battle is real.

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**For each day he carries us in his arms. Ps 68:19**

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**Grateful List:**

- The spiritual growth and leadership of the Waorani
- We feel cared for. By you. By the people we are surrounded by near and far.
- Life.

**For Prayer:**

- Pray we can lower the mold levels in Natalia's room and car and that her body will be able to tolerate it.
- Healing. 3 year old Nicolas is undergoing chemotherapy. His young mom is struggling.
- The battle never ceases.

**Merry Christmas!**