**Transformation by Dawn Nicoli**

The majestic, Torrey Pine tree had stood on the property, next to the house for over 50 years.

It had overseen three families with multiple sets of grandkids, several renovations and even with stood an octagon deck and palapa being built around it.

It grew and grew over the years with its branches reaching high into the sky about 100ft. The circular opening of the deck that encompassed it grew tight around the ever expanding trunk.

It’s almost as though the tree was wearing too tight of a skirt and was pulling away from the house, its creaking a sound of its discomfort.

Eventually the roots, so trying to grow to their potential, burst through the concreate driveway. The tree was stressing. It had been restrained.

The Torrey Pine had always been the nucleus or the heart of the property and to make the decision to cut it down went against my grain.

For 20 years, I always made decisions as a couple and now the burden rest with me, alone. I knew I could not take care of trimming its huge branches that were looming over the granny flat and it was predicted that that winter would have a series of wind storms. The tree was stressing and the possibility of it taking down my house existed.

I couldn’t bear to watch the death of something beautiful so I left for a retreat the week the men came out to cut it down.

And then the idea struck me. I can’t abandon the tree. Looking up at its bare branches I thought, we could build a tree house!

The project began but I was never certain if the tree would withstand this new identity. The frame work and the base structure were complete but then funds ran out, the builder had surgery and an inspector was investigating the property for code violations.

The project went on hold for almost a year. And so did my life….

I was trying to regain my own new identity from a photographer and wife of 20 years to a single woman rebuilding a home into a B&B business and exploring what the second half of life is all about.

Just like the tree, this transition did not happen overnight. I had been restrained and was learning what it felt like to be free.

I took a Reiki course in hopes of healing myself.

I was learning about the five elements of the universe: earth, wind, fire, water and air.

We carry these elements inside of us, within our different organs and they correspond to the outside elements.

I learned to connect with guides: The guides of Nature, Healing, Medicine and Self.

I stretched each morning, overlooking my deck and the sunrise.

We did our root chakra together, envisioning the color red, rooting below us encompassing stability, faith instead of fear and a foundation, throughout the property.

I asked the tree if I had his permission to build a treehouse in him and he told me that it was ok and that we would both prosper.

We discovered together that even though our lives did not pan out the way we thought they would, we had a different purpose, a different meaning and no less valuable, just a different path to follow at this time.

The white owl came again that year and although the Torrey pine could not house it in its branches, the owl made due in another tree.

His hoot was loud and clear. He stood by us and recognized that this land is special and sacred and he would not abandon us.

He brought a friend this year, another sign that we are flourishing. They are waiting for the treehouse to be complete.