

Friends of Silence

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“Is there enough Silence for the Word to be heard?”

Autumn greetings, dear friends! The season of harvest and brilliant fall color is here. Soon winter will arrive; growing things will appear to die as they direct their energy below the surface to their root systems to prepare for the long winter. We become a bit more introspective as we, too, settle in for a quieter season after summer’s activity. Perhaps our thoughts more naturally turn to the topic of death at this season as the year winds down to a close. But then, a New Year is born—a new beginning! Out of death, new life. So may our mantra be as we journey through this life toward its inevitable transition to the next. Our natural fear of the unknown experience of death is calmed by the sure knowledge that life continues . . . we die to this world only to be reborn into another. *Out of death, new life.*



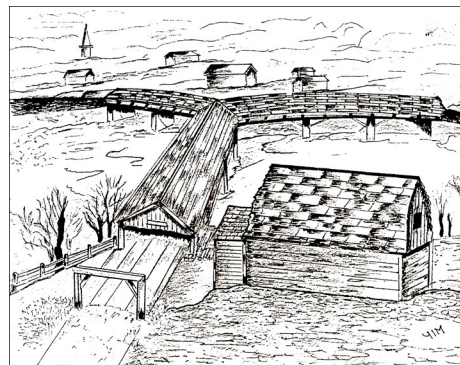
One day as I was about to step on a dry leaf, I saw the leaf in the ultimate dimension. I saw that it was not really dead, but that it was merging with the moist soil in order to appear on the tree the following spring in another form.

I smiled at the leaf and said, “You are pretending.”

Everything is pretending to be born and pretending to die, including that leaf. The Buddha said, “When conditions are sufficient, the body reveals itself, and we say the body exists. When conditions are not sufficient, the body cannot be perceived by us, and we say the body does not exist.”

The day of our “death” is a day of our continuation in many other forms.

~ from LIVING BUDDHA, LIVING CHRIST by Thich Nhat Hanh



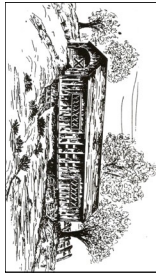
Death has nothing to do with going away.
The sun sets
The moon sets
But they are not gone.

~ Jalal Al-Din Rumi

How very good it is when
we wake up before we die.

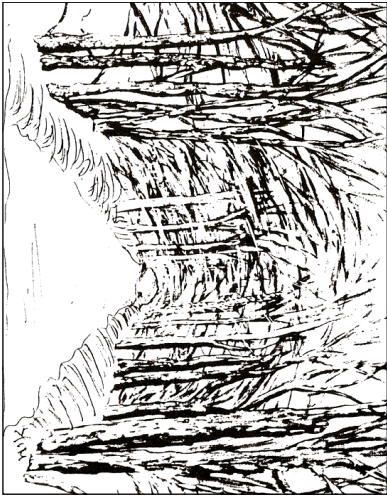
~ Hindu saying

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Death is not extinguishing the light;
it is putting out the lamp because
the dawn has come.

~ Rabindranath Tagore



In describing the many “mini-deaths” we experience on our journey through life, John Rogers wrote, “We are born once into life, but in life we are re-born many times.” We die to old ways of being to be reborn in our powers. We die to old beliefs to be reborn in the truth. We die to habits of need, dependency, and control to be reborn in reliance on Spirit. We die to fear of Spirit to be reborn into the spirit of fearlessness. As long as you are still breathing, death becomes what we commonly call *change*. Without death there can be no change.

~ from UNTIL TODAY by Iyanla Vanzant

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Friends of Silence

I recognize that even in the valley of the shadow of my own tangled thoughts there is something holy and unutterable seeking to restore my soul. . . . I always stop and touch the coarse gray bark of one particular tree with my hand or cheek, which I suppose is a way of blessing it for being so strong and beautiful. Who knows how long it has been standing there wearing its foliage like a crown even though a part of it is dying? Because of that quality of sheer endurance one morning I found myself touching it not to bless it, but to ask its blessing, so that I myself might move toward old age and death with something like its stunning grace and courage.

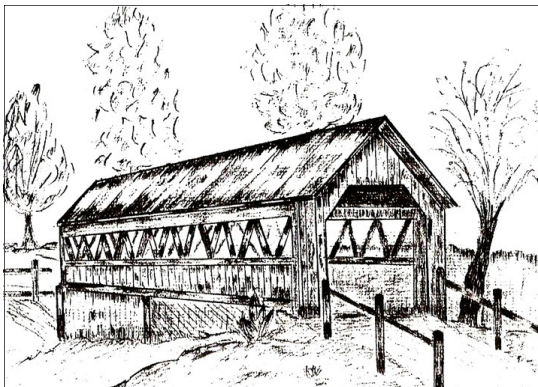
~ from THE LONGING FOR HOME by Frederick Buechner

When people have made peace with death, they live with greater consciousness. Every day, every moment, becomes more complete in itself. According to the Talmud, we are not required to complete our life's task, but neither are we permitted to lay it down. Perhaps through life review we can reframe what our life task truly is. Perhaps through loneliness, vulnerability, fear and grief we can come to acceptance and to wisdom.

from "Reviewing Our Lives" by Elizabeth Sirkin

Risk. The word had a whole new meaning when uttered within the context of these jungles and the people who populated them. For most tribal people, the risk was not so much of dying but of not living properly. It was the quality of your time on earth, not the quantity, that was important. How different that dream from the one I had been taught! Where, I wondered, did we get the idea we must do everything possible to postpone the inevitable? What is it about the words *more* and *longer* that has made them assume such a paramount position in our language?

~ from THE WORLD IS AS YOU DREAM IT by John Perkins



Our life is shorter than flowers.
Then shall we mourn?

No, we shall dance
Plant gardens
Dress in colors
And teach our children
To make the world more beautiful.

Because our life
Is shorter than flowers.

~ from the Toltec Culture

Love and death are strangely kin.
We need love to be able to die serenely.
~ Irene Claremont de Castillejo

At death, the soul witnesses an incredible energy release of that which was only on loan, and an even more wonderful homecoming of all that has been given you by the Creator. That which is commanded by your love is yours to hold forever. All who have shared your love will remain in union with you. That is the ultimate harvest.

~ from LOVE WITHOUT END by Glenda Green

Klee died relatively young and his style changed as the inevitability of death became inescapable. With great seriousness in one of his last paintings, Klee announces that death is a purifier, like fire, and a means to fulfillment. This is the once terrible, seen as the most beautiful. This is the real power of joy, to make us certain that beneath all grief, the most fundamental of realities is joy itself.

~ from MEDITATIONS ON JOY by Wendy Beckett

Out of death, the compost of one life, new life arrives in ever greater richness. Death does not separate us from what is past or is yet to come. Touch, honor, and listen for both, for they are part of what is now. Celebrate endings as well as beginnings in your life and work.

~ from SILENCE, SONG, AND SHADOW by Tom Bender

Your vital energy is returning to the Source
Like a flowing stream returning to ocean.

Heaven is our Father, Earth is our Mother.
All people are our brothers and sisters
And all things are our companions.

In this gentle peaceful journey,
You are forming one body with heaven and earth.

Entrust yourself in the transforming
and nourishing care of the Cosmos.

Listen to the voice of love in silence.
You have heard the Way;
Return Home in Peace.

~ Tu Weiming in GRACEFUL PASSAGES

