

# Friends of Silence

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April, 2020

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



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Dear Friends~ Spring has arrived in all its glory. As I walk the labyrinth at Still Point, the Friends of Silence retreat home where Nan Merrill’s library lives, I’m reminded time and again that “This is Holy Ground,” both secretly and brazenly transforming itself in all seasons. Winter was mild in West Virginia with crocuses up early by the front step. March brought hints of transformation to come. Shadowed by the dark clouds of Corona Virus spreading through the world, daffodils bloomed in profusion down by the pond and at woods’ edge.

The distinctive feel of the turning of the year to warmth, growth, flowering, and light speaks of rebirth, transformation, renewal. May we all turn inward, look outward, and see our own little resurrections guided by spirit. As Teilhard de Chardin puts it, “All around us, to right and left, in front and behind, above and below we have only to go a little beyond the frontier of sensible appearances in order to see the divine welling up and showing through... By means of all created things, without exception, the divine assails us, penetrates us and moulds us... We imagined it as distant and in accessible, whereas in fact we live steeped in it.”

—Mary Ann



Open my eyes to the moments of resurrection that surround me every day. There is always something rising, opening to new life, budding and blossoming, forgiving and transforming. Teach me to live awake that I may recognize the renaissance being celebrated in my midst at every moment. Make me a disciple of joy. Amen.

~ Macrina Wiederkehr in *THE FLOWING GRACE OF NOW*

Women are spinners and weavers; we are the ones who spin the threads and weave them into meaning and pattern. Like silkworms, we create those threads out of our own substance, pulling the strong, fine fibers out of our own hearts and wombs. It’s time to make some new threads; time to strengthen the frayed wild edges of our own being and then weave ourselves back into the fabric of our culture. Once we knew the patterns for weaving the world; we can piece them together again...we can remake the world. This is what women do. This is our work.

~ Sharon Blackie in *IF WOMEN ROSE ROOTED*

Stump dead with rot, sprouts  
Single moss spore, emerald green  
Resurrection sings.

~ Mary Ann Welter, “Resurrection”

A blessing is a form of grace; it is invisible. Grace is the permanent climate of divine kindness. There are no limits to it...For one who believes in it, a blessing can signal the start of a journey of transformation. It belongs to the same realm as the inner life--its effect becomes only indirectly visible in the changed quality of one’s experience. Where before gravity and deadness had prevailed, there is now a new sense of animation and lightness. Where there was grief, a new sense of presence comes alive. In the wall of blindness a window of vision opens.

~ John O’Donohue, “To Retrieve the Lost Art of Blessing,” in *TO BLESS THE SPACE BETWEEN US*

So, friends, every day do something that won’t compute... Give your approval to all you cannot understand... Ask the questions that have no answers. Put your faith in two inches of humus that will build under the trees every thousand years... Laugh. Be joyful though you have considered all the facts...Practice resurrection.

~ Wendell Berry, excerpt from “Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front”



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May we today be touched by grace, fascinated and moved by your creation, energized by the power of new growth at work in your world.  
 May we move beyond viewing this life only through a frame, but touch it and be touched by it, know it and be known by it, love it and be loved by it.  
 May our bodies, our minds, our spirits, learn a new rhythm paced by the rhythmic pulse of the whole created order.  
 May spring come to us, be in us, and recreate life in us...

~ from the "Chinook Psalter" in *Earth Prayers*, ed. by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon

Rise up in the early morning when the sun shines in the east.  
 Rise up and see the sun as she shines in the earth,  
 She sheds her kindness on the earth in such splendor.  
 ...Rise, bless the morning...  
 Your light shall shine...brighter than the sun...  
 Keep this light shining in your hearts, spirits of earth.

~ by Janet Hurlow, "Rise Up in the Morning"  
 from *PSALMS FROM THE HILLS OF WEST VIRGINIA*  
 with Matthew Fox

A Voice not daunted by "You Can't do that!"  
 A voice lighting fires for children  
 Whose spark of hope  
 Is fast sputtering out  
 A voice that saw the gift in each  
 And opened the door to winds of change  
 That ignited the dormant creative possibilities in each  
 And gave them the vision, power and will to transform  
 The world.

~ Nancy Van Scoyoc, "Fred Taylor"

We carried our grief  
 to the ocean's edge,  
 sat quiet in the sand;  
 the sorrow softened  
 as the waves washed  
 over them and the  
 brilliance of the  
 morning sun upon  
 the shimmering waters  
 filled our hearts  
 with wonder.

~ Rob Soley, "Held"  
 from *MOVING DAY*

*In Memoriam*

*Fred Taylor*

*May 23, 1932-November 23, 2019*

Fred was the President of the Friends of Silence Board and a founding partner of Still Point Mountain Retreat after his retirement as Executive Director of For Love of Children, a nonprofit organization focused on the needs of at risk children in Washington, D.C.

FLOC's Outdoor program has been an active participant and steward on the Rolling Ridge Conservancy property in West Virginia. Friends of Silence is housed at Still Point and Rolling Ridge. All of us who knew and worked with Fred miss his kindness and his warm way of offering critical insight and practical training in the formation and care of organizations seeking to do good work in the world.

Both "For Love of Children" and "Friends of Silence" are accepting donations in memory of Fred.



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