

# Friends of Silence

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



Julie Gabrielli © 2019

Dear Friends~ The willow stump, cracked and gray, has sprouted fresh fronds. They wave brightly above the old tree's broken trunk like a vibrant pennant. Meanwhile, the long-unpruned pear tree is grandly and boldly attired in abundant white blossoms. Brilliant yellow finches and glossy cowbirds adorn the feeder once again. Such heralds of Earth's faithful renewal, of the cycles that are always ending and beginning again, cry out profound and essential news. In this time of climate crisis, cultural turmoil, and now the coronavirus, hope takes on a deeper, more intense hue. I wonder if it is the moment now to dig in soul ground, in the bowels of what we know. Ancient wisdom from every spiritual tradition beckons us to kneel down into the mystery of that dark hummus and dig with open hands. Who knows what we may find? A tap root, an anchor, a wellspring, a seed that one day will grow? ~ *Lindsay*



Our human compassion binds us the one to the other – not in pity or patronizingly, but as human beings who have learnt how to turn our common suffering into hope for the future.

~ *Nelson Mandela in a Message at Healing & Reconciliation Service, December, 2000*

In the practice of conscious love you begin to discover ... a hope that is related not to outcome but to a wellspring... a source of strength that wells up from deep within you independent of all outcomes... It is a hope that can never be taken away from you because it is love itself working in you, conferring the strength to stay present...

~ *Cynthia Bourgeault, in LOVE IS STRONGER THAN DEATH*



So in the end I am left only with hope.

| hope the nights are transformative.  
| hope every dawn brings deeper love,  
for each of us individually and for  
the world as a whole. | hope that  
John of the Cross was right when  
he said the intellect is transformed  
into faith, and the will into love  
and the memory into – hope.

~ *Gerald May* in

THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

Hope locates itself in the premises that we don't know what will happen and that in the spaciousness of uncertainty is room to act... Hope is an embrace of the unknown and the unknowable.

~ *Rebecca Solnit* in HOPE IN THE DARK

... If we can stay in touch with ourselves, if we can find the connection to our deeper selves, we can find this deeper level of hope that truly should be called imagination... in the depths of each person there is a greater self and a core imagination that is truly the source of one's life.

~ *Michael Meade* in LIVING MYTH podcast, Episode 167,  
“The Second Level of Hope”

It is because I reject lies and running away that I am accused of pessimism; but this rejection implies hope—the hope that truth may be of use.

~ *Simone Beauvoir* in ALL SAID AND DONE



It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision... This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, know that they hold future promise... We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities... We are prophets of a future not our own.

~ FR. Ken Untener

Is it possible to see the future as dark and darkening further; to reject false hope and desperate pseudo-optimism without collapsing into despair?...if you don't feel despair, in times like these, you are not fully alive. But there has to be something beyond despair, too; or rather, something that accompanies it, like a companion on the road....I am going to pick up [my scythe] and go and find some grass to mow. I am going to cut great swaths of it...I am going to walk ahead, following the ground... I am going to breathe the still-clean air and listen to the still-singing birds and reflect on the fact that the earth is older and harder than the machine that is eating it—that it is indeed more resilient than fragile—and that change comes quickly when it comes, and that knowledge is not the same as wisdom.

~ Paul Kingsnorth in DARK ECOLOGY, Orion Magazine

Active hope is a practice...It is something we *do* rather than *have*. Since active hope doesn't require our optimism, we can apply it even in areas where we feel hopeless. The guiding impetus is intention; we *choose* what we aim to bring about, act for, or express.

~ Joanna Macy in ACTIVE HOPE

Hope is the hardest love we carry.

~ Jane Hirshfield in  
THE LIVES OF THE HEART, "Hope and Love"



Hide not from Love, O friends,  
sink not into the sea of despair,  
the mire of hatred.  
Awaken, O my heart, that I drown not  
in fear!  
Too long have I sailed where'ere  
the winds have blown!  
Drop anchor!

~ Nan Merrill in PSALMS FOR PRAYING Psalm 137

Hope is a state of mind, not of the world. Either we have hope within or we don't; it is a dimension of the soul not essentially dependent on some particular observation of the world or estimate of the situation. It is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart; it transcends the world that is immediately experienced and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons.

~ Vaclav Havel in SHARE INTERNATIONAL #3, Vol. 25



Hope is what sits by a window and waits for one more dawn,  
despite the fact that there is not one ounce of proof  
in tonight's black, black sky that it can possibly come.

~ Joan Chittister in  
SCARRED BY STRUGGLE,  
TRANSFORMED BY HOPE