

Friends of Silence

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"Is there enough Silence for the Word to be heard?"

Dear Friends ~ In the words of Michael Meade, sometimes I dream that we at Friends of Silence are *"a small band of servants and fools who wend their way into moments and places with a carpetbag of stories, songs, poems, dances, melodies, snippets of wisdom, and spools of connective thread. With these, we seek to weave containers in which genius sparks can ignite the lantern of soul in every person there."* May your winter soul lanterns be ignited by these snippets of wisdom. ~ Bob



To see we must forget the name
of the thing we are looking at.

~ Claude Monet

Powerlessness is our greatest treasure. Don't try to get rid of it. Everything in us wants to get rid of it. Grace is sufficient for you, but not something you can understand. To be in too big a hurry to get over our difficulties is a mistake because you don't know how valuable they are from God's perspective, for without them you might never be transformed as deeply and as thoroughly.

~ Thomas Keating in *Contemplative Outreach News*, Vol. 30, Number 2, June 2014

We do not have within us a principle of stable existence. What we find in ourselves, on the contrary, is a principle of renewal, of return, of being lost and found again. This principle we can only understand if we experience it in ourselves; and we know its taste as the taste of rebirth: whenever we come back from a state of oblivion, of forgetfulness. This happens over and over again, to such an extent that we become accustomed to it and cease to see how important it is – and really how wonderful it is – that we should be able to come back again after having been lost.

~ J. G. Bennett's "Death and Resurrection" in *SUNDAY TALKS AT COOMBE SPRINGS*



Do not try to save the whole world
or do anything grandiose.
Instead, create a clearing
in the dense forest of your life
and wait there, patiently
until the song that is your life
falls into your own cupped hands
and you recognize and greet it.
Only then will you know how
to give yourself to this world
so worthy of rescue.

~ Martha Postlethwaite in
ADDICTION AND RECOVERY

You are in this time of the interim
where everything seems withheld.
The path you took to get here has washed out.
The way forward is still concealed from you.
The old is not old enough to have died away.
The new is still too young to be born.

~ John O'Donohue from "For the Interim Time" in
TO BLESS THE SPACE BETWEEN US

Forever is composed of nows.

~ Emily Dickinson

I am dead because I lack desire;
I lack desire because I think I possess;
I think I possess because I do not try to give.
In trying to give, you see that you have nothing;
Seeing you have nothing, you try to give of yourself;
Trying to give of yourself, you see that you are
nothing;
Seeing you are nothing, you desire to become;
In desiring to become, you begin to live.

~ René Daumal in *MOUNT ANALOGUE*

Things to Do in the Belly of the Whale

Measure the walls. Count the ribs. Notch the long days. Look up for blue sky through the spout. Make small fires with the broken hulls of fishing boats. Practice smoke signals. Call old friends, and listen for echoes of distant voices. Organize your calendar. Dream of the beach. Look each way for the dim glow of light. Work on your reports. Review each of your life's ten million choices. Endure moments of self-loathing. Find the evidence of those before you. Destroy it. Try to be very quiet, and listen for the sound of gears and moving water. Listen for the sound of your heart. Be thankful that you are here, swallowed with all hope, where you can rest and wait. Be nostalgic. Think of all the things you did and could have done. Remember treading water in the center of the still night sea, your toes pointing again and again down, down into the black depths.

~ Dan Albergotti, "Things to Do in the Belly of the Whale" in *THE BOATLOADS*



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This place where the two seas meet is the locus of the mystical journey, "where the dead fish becomes alive," where spiritual teachings become a living substance that nourishes the wayfarer. When we meet the path, this happens: something becomes alive within our heart and soul. We become nourished not by spiritual texts or teaching, but by direct transmission. The spiritual journey is a way to live with this spiritual substance, to be burned by its fire, to be consumed by its love.

~ Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee from the essay
"Where the Two Seas Meet"
in *FRAGMENTS OF A LOVE STORY*



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Once you can accept the universe as matter
expanding into
nothing that is something,
wearing stripes with plaid comes easy.

~ Einstein

It is a necessary part of this Work that everyone must eventually pass, to see in ourselves by sincere observation, how we cling to our negative emotions with one hand and try to free ourselves with the other. The Work inevitably leads everyone to the same places and the same experiences. We must reach the point of discerning our own helplessness, of realizing our own mechanicalness. And this, if it is not a negative experience, will bring us into a state of self-remembering. Through seeing our helplessness we attract help. For realizing our own helplessness puts us into the Third State of Consciousness where help can reach us.

~ Maurice Nicoll in

*PSYCHOLOGICAL COMMENTARIES
ON THE TEACHING OF GURDJIEFF
AND OUSPENSKY, VOL. 1*

Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that a spring was breaking
out in my heart.
I said: Along which secret aqueduct,
Oh water, are you coming to me,
water of a new life
that I have never drunk?

Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that I had a beehive
here inside my heart.
And the golden bees
were making white combs

~ Antonio Machado in

TIMES ALONE: SELECTED POEMS OF ANTONIO MACHADO

(translated by Robert Bly)

and sweet honey
from my old failures.
Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that a fiery sun was giving
light inside my heart.
It was fiery because I felt
warmth as from a hearth,
and sun because it gave light
and brought tears to my eyes.
Last night as I slept,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that it was God I had
here inside my heart.