

Friends of Silence

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

Dear Friends ~ December has always been a darkening month in the Northern Hemisphere, marking the descent into winter; not so long ago it meant increasing hunger as well as fading light. No wonder it is the time when in our

bellies and bones we long for the sun's return. We observe the season of Advent, yearning for the arrival of the Holy Incarnate, the One who fills us. Now, I wonder, has there ever been a December this dark? I look and look, and find no supernovas, only a pinprick of light in an ebony night. Yet in the way of Mystery, that tiny lantern is enough, sufficient to illumine every crumbling corner, each shifting ledge, all broken hearts. As long as it shines defiantly in the dark, there will be beauty, wonder, singing, magic, homecoming, joy. In this time of uncertainty and longing, may you too see haloes and be filled with Light. ~ Lindsay



Doctor, you say there are no haloes
around the streetlights in Paris
and what I see is an aberration
caused by old age, an affliction.
I tell you it has taken me all my life
to arrive at the vision of gas lamps as angels,
to soften and blur and finally banish
the edges you regret I don't see,
to learn that the line I called the horizon
does not exist and sky and water,
so long apart, are the same state of being.
Fifty-four years before I could see
Rouen cathedral is built
of parallel shafts of sun,
and now you want to restore
my youthful errors: fixed
notions of top and bottom,
the illusion of three-dimensional space,
wisteria separate
from the bridge it covers...
I will not return to a universe
of objects that don't know each other,
as if islands were not the lost children
of one great continent....
Doctor,
if only you could see
how heaven pulls earth into its arms
and how infinitely the heart expands
to claim this world, blue vapor without end.

~ Lisel Mueller, "Monet Refuses the Operation" in *SECOND LANGUAGE*

Love is what carries you, for it is always there, even in the dark, or most in the dark, but shining out at times like gold stitches in a piece of embroidery.

~ Wendell Berry in *HANNAH COULTER*

*For the Beloved is as radiant as the sun,
as strong as a steel shield,
and invites each one to come,
to partake of the Banquet.*

~ Nan Merrill from

her interpretation of Psalm 84

in PSALMS FOR PRAYING

The secret of seeing is...the pearl of great price...But although the pearl may be found, it may not be sought...although it comes to those who wait for it, it is always, even to the most practiced and adept, a gift and a total surprise....I cannot cause light; the most I can do is try to put myself in the path of its beam. It is possible, in deep space, to sail on solar wind. Light, be it particle or wave, has force: you rig a giant sail and go. The secret of seeing is to sail on solar wind. Hone and spread your spirit till you yourself are a sail, whetted, translucent....

~ Annie Dillard in *PILGRIM AT TINKER CREEK*



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Now at last the first snow falls
like a blanket upon dim powers.
Keep the fire alive now
and do not disturb the sleep
of roots and seeds.

The shining winter sky
is close enough to touch;
and you too are this sky.
No reason to distinguish.
For all the stars flow through your veins.

~ Jean Gebser from "The Winter Poem"

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In my own worst seasons I've come back from the colorless world of despair by forcing myself to look hard, for a long time, at a single glorious thing: a flame of red geranium outside my bedroom window. And then another: my daughter in a yellow dress. And another: the perfect outline of a full, dark sphere behind the crescent moon. Until I learned to be in love with my life again.

~ Barbara Kingsolver in *HIGH TIDE IN TUCSON*



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**All shadows of clouds the sun cannot hide
like the moon cannot stop oceanic tide;
but a hidden star can still be smiling
at night's black spell on darkness, beguiling**

~ Munia Khan

What is the meaning of life? That was all—a simple question; one that tended to close in on one in years. The great revelation had never come. The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead, there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark.

~ Virginia Woolf in *TO THE LIGHTHOUSE*

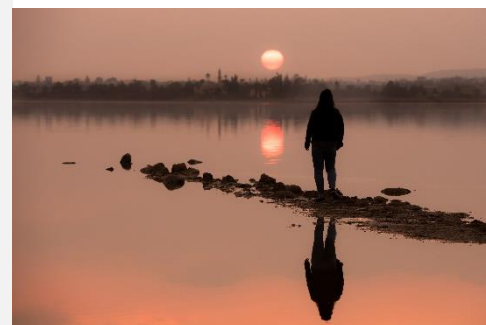
...A world where everything is moored to logic, to power, to syntax and plot and scheme and expectation and meaning, leaves no place for magic, for the inextricability and beauty of a glimpsed sunset.

~ Bayo Akomolafe in *THESE WILDS BEYOND OUR FENCES: LETTERS TO MY DAUGHTER ON HUMANITY'S SEARCH FOR HOME*

**How
Did the rose
Ever open its heart
And give to this world
All its
Beauty?
It felt the encouragement of light
Against its
Being.
Otherwise,
We all remain
Too
Frightened.**

~ Hafiz
Translated by Daniel Ladinsky
in *THE GIFT*

If you wake up early, do not wake up to
maximize productivity
for someone else's agenda,
but wake up early to sit on the border of dark
and light
and listen for the Word,
If you stay up late, do not stay up to fulfill a
list
that will never satisfy
but stay up late because your spirit is caught
in something true.
If you say yes, say yes from a place of your
soul's landing in the world.
If you say no, say no to be free for your own
verses.



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Move in the world—early, late, between, yes,
no—
you made of holy stuff,
like eternity and found Light,
and remembering that.
~ Laura Martin, "Untitled"