

Friends of Silence

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

Dear Friends ~ The kids and I stare out the window, watching birds. The juncos are my favorite, presenting in sooty suits, bowing often in a jaunty jig of seed seeking. My son enjoys the sparrows, who descend in numbers that send our feeders reeling. My daughter likes the showy birds—right red cardinals and silence shattering jays.



Katie Jones Pomeroy

I am mesmerized in a manner that conjures memories of my own childhood, when wonder came in waves of such intensity it could knock the feet out from under my day, leaving me belly down, drawn to the details of a blade of grass or a grasshopper's legs. As I grew in body, mind, and vision, my sights widened to bigger pictures; a perspective that helped me find myself in academics, civics, and spirituality.

Now, solidly in middle age, I find my focus homing in, returning to small wonders. The booming voices are deafening and ever present, but it is the tiny twitters that speak to my soul. The varieties of grass growing in my garden. The patterns of planets, moons, and stars. Any tiny trait about my children. The small things matter. Seeing the small things requires some semblance of sacred silence.

I would not say that my hope in big ideas, worldwide networks, or colossal change is gone. Only that I cannot see these matters mattering without the love of small things; without the noticing of what is most close, and most consistent, and most quiet.

When I look for the fullness of all I hope for in this world, for my children, for myself, it falls short. But when I witness something real and present, however small, I know hope.

In Spring, it is all little things. A slender crocus popping up here. Delicate buds scattered across branches. Bees, sharp-set but small, showing up in numbers undeniable, turning a season. One fruit, one flower, one faithful phenomenon unfurling at a time. ~ Katie



Stuff your eyes with wonder, live as if you'd drop dead in ten seconds. See the world.

It's more fantastic than any dream made or paid for in factories.

~ Ray Bradbury



Katie Jones Pomeroy

Biophilia (noun): A hypothetical human tendency to interact or be closely associated with other forms of life in nature: A desire or tendency to commune with nature

~ Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Everyone talks about how traveling back in time and doing something small, like killing a butterfly, can drastically change the present, but no one talks about how doing something small today, like planting a tree, can drastically change the future.

~ r/showthoughts on reddit

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to help another soul, to assist some portion of this poor suffering world, will help immensely. It is not given to us to know which acts or by whom, will cause the critical mass to tip toward an enduring good.

~ Clarissa Pinkola Estes in DO NOT LOSE HEART

That is the paradox of the epidemic: that in order to create one contagious movement, you often have to create many small movements first.

~ Malcolm Gladwell in THE TIPPING POINT

Recognizing “enoughness” is a radical act in an economy that is always urging us to consume more.

~Robin Wall Kimmerer in THE SERVICEBERRY: ABUNDANCE AND RECIPROCITY IN THE NATURAL WORLD

You have seen so much of the outer world and had so many experiences of people, places, and things—and of course those experiences will keep coming. But now, in the second half of your life, as the outer world seems more unstable and dangerous than ever, we want you to take the same rapacious curiosity that once thrust you all over the planet with a hungry, fascinated appetite, and we want you to turn it inward.

~ Tara Roberts, from Elizabeth Gilbert's *Substack "Letters From Love"*

All words have a history. But some are particularly interesting to explore when it comes to psychology—because they're directly born from it. How many times have you been mesmerized by something, so captured by it that it was like you were in a trance? The word "mesmerize" dates back to an 18th century Austrian physician named Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815). He established a theory of illness that involved internal magnetic forces, which he called animal magnetism. (It would later be known as mesmerism.)

~ Margarita Tartakovsky, MS, from the article "Psychology's History of Being Mesmerized" on psychcentral.com



If I can't dance, it's not my revolution.

~ Quote attributed to Emma Goldman

The cricket doesn't wonder	He sings slower and slower.
if there's a heaven	Then, nothing.
or, if there is, if there's room for him.	This must mean something, I don't know what.
It's fall. Romance is over. Still, he sings.	But certainly it doesn't mean
If he can, he enters a house	he hasn't been an excellent cricket
through the tiniest crack under the door.	all his life.
Then the house grows colder.	

~ Mary Oliver, "Nothing Is Too Small Not to Be Wondered About" in *DEVOTIONS*

**A blue-bell springs upon the ledge,
A lark sits singing in the hedge;
Sweet perfumes scent the balmy air,
And life is brimming everywhere.
What lark and breeze and bluebird sing,
Is Spring, Spring, Spring!**

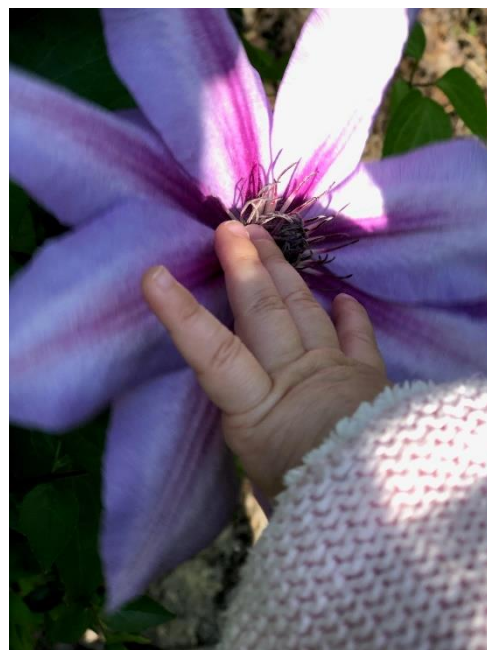
~ Paul Laurence Dunbar from "Spring Song" in
THE COMPLETE POEMS OF PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

**Jubilee, wasn't it a jubilee!
Jubilee, wasn't it a jubilee!
We were singing out together —
shouting revelries.
Jubilee, Lord wasn't it a jubilee!
Jubilee, wasn't it a jubilee!
Jubilee, wasn't it a jubilee!
We were dancing by the river,
dancing by the sea,
Bouncing all the babies,
up and down upon our knees,
Laughing out happy,
crying out free;
Jubilee, wasn't it a jubilee!**

**We were banging on the banjos,
picking on guitars,
Blowing out the bass notes,
on the crockery jars,
Sliding on the washboards,
banging spoons upon our knees;
Jubilee, wasn't it a Jubilee!**

**We came from the valleys,
we came from the towns,
We came to see the paddlewheel
and the show boat clowns,
We came from the farlands,
we came from the sea;
Jubilee, wasn't it a Jubilee!**

~ Bill Staines, lyrics from "Jubilee, Wasn't it a Jubilee!"



Whether a plot in a yard or pots in a window, every politically engaged person should have a garden. By politically engaged, I mean everyone with a vested interest in the direction the people on this planet take in relationship to others. We should all take some time to plant life in the soil. Even when such planting isn't easy.

~ Camille T. Dungy in *SOIL: THE STORY OF A BLACK MOTHER'S GARDEN*