

Friends of Silence

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



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Dear Friends ~ Spring! the season of budding, sprouting, birth. The time when we see, smell, and touch the miraculous: the astounding gift of nature's regeneration. In the frisson of happiness at the sight of snowdrops and forsythia, in our leaping spirits and rising hope, we know our love for this Earth. Why else would we feel such joy? Or grief at the ongoing loss of so much? But perhaps that joy and grief arise from a deeper knowing. What if we recognized that our separation from nature was a tragic, lonely illusion? That our true nature was to be one with All Beings? What if some intuitive part of ourselves understood that we were walking on, breathing in, gazing upon, and living within the Soul of the World? Then nature is more than

beauty to behold, more even than a vibrant creation. Suddenly we are speaking of Belonging and of Mystery and of what Nan Merrill called, simply, "Love".

The wise ones, the poets and bards, sing out of this knowing, and the melody returns to us in luminous cadence and poetry. May these refresh your spirit in a springtime shower of encouragement. ~ Lindsay



Dear ones,

We have reached that waypoint when, as Earth's wild inhabitants awaken and emerge, we (the small staff of Friends of Silence) ask again for your help in nurturing the Letter to continued budding and bloom. As you are encouraged, may you reach out to encourage others through the ongoing offering of our modest, but oh-so-powerful, Letter. Please use the enclosed envelope to send what you can. Keep the Letter coming to you and to all you hold dear.

Bob, Joy, Kate, Lindsay, Mary Ann, and Todd

*In the desert flowers come forth,
the pastures flourish with
fruit and grain;
Creation's diversity is glorious!
May all people honor these gifts
with joyful song
while walking the path of Love.*

~ Nan Merrill from her interpretation of
"Psalm 65" in *PSALMS FOR PRAISING*

And suddenly, there it is, a loud whirring crashing into the silence: a field cricket singing in the fading light. We all stop to listen. From a distance, we must look like a strange bunch, leaning towards a bramble bush. For us, though, the moment is holy. A tiny, solitary creature has the power to lift our spirits.

~ Dara McAnulty in *DIARY OF A YOUNG NATURALIST*

And you — what of your rushed and useful life? Imagine setting it all down — papers, plans, appointments, everything, leaving only a note: "Gone to the fields to be lovely. Be back when I'm through with blooming".

~ Lynn Ungar, "Camas Lilies" in *BREAD AND OTHER MIRACLES*

What a wild family! Fox and giraffe and wart hog, of course. But these also: bodies like tiny strings, bodies like blades and blossoms! Cord grass, Christmas fern, soldier moss! And here comes grasshopper, all toes and knees and eyes, over the little mountains of dust.

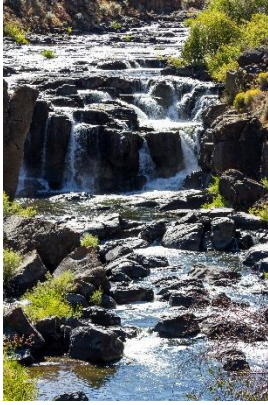
When I see the black cricket in the woodpile, in autumn, I don't frighten her. And when I see the moss grazing upon the rock, I touch her tenderly,

sweet cousin.

~ Mary Oliver, "Moss" in *NEW AND SELECTED POEMS, VOLUME TWO*

One night, a full moon watched over me like a mother. In the blue light of the Basin, I saw a petroglyph on a large boulder. It was a spiral. I placed the tip of my finger on the center and began tracing the coil around and around. It spun off the rock. My finger kept circling the land, the lake, the sky. The spiral became larger and larger until it became a halo of stars in the night sky above Stansbury Island. A meteor flashed and as quickly disappeared. The waves continued to hiss and retreat, hiss and retreat. In the West Desert of the Great Basin, I was not alone.

~ Terry Tempest Williams in *REFUGE*



I like to live in the sound of water, in the feel of mountain air. A sharp reminder hits me: this world is still alive, it stretches out there shivering toward its own creation. And I'm part of it. Even my breathing enters into this elaborate give-and-take, this bowing to sun and moon. day or night. winter, summer, storm, still—this tranquil chaos that seems to be going somewhere. This wilderness with a great peacefulness in it. This motionless turmoil, this everything dance.

~ William Stafford, "Time for Serenity, Anyone" in *EVEN IN QUIET PLACES*

Ultimately, I think gardening speaks to a deep-seated desire to experience the real, the essential, the astonishingly possible. To garden is gradually to give up control, to fall literally to one's knees and come into closer and closer contact with the tremendous and often bewildering beauty of the world. Nothing, you find, is at all what you thought it was. Dirt is not dirt, but a teeming mass of microorganisms that turns death back into life.

~ Joyce McGreevy in *GARDENING BY HEART*

The song of a river ordinarily means the tune that waters play on rock, root, and rapid....This song of the waters is audible to every ear, but there is other music in these hills, by no means audible to all. To hear even a few notes of it you must first live here for a long time, and you must know the speech of hills and rivers. Then on a still night, when the campfire is low and the Pleiades have climbed over the rimrocks, sit quietly and listen for a wolf to howl, and think of everything you have seen and tried to understand. Then you may hear it--a vast pulsing harmony--its score inscribed on a thousand hills, its notes the lives and deaths of plants and animals, its rhythms spanning the seconds and the centuries.

~Aldo Leopold, "Song of the Gavilan" in *A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC*

*If you find yourself half naked
and barefoot in the frosty grass, hearing,
again, the earth's great, sonorous moan that says
you are the air of the now and gone, that says
all you love will turn to dust,
and will meet you there, do not
raise your fist. Do not raise
your small voice against it. And do not
take cover. Instead, curl your toes
into the grass, watch the cloud
ascending from your lips. Walk
through the garden's dormant splendor.
Say only, thank you.
Thank you.*

~ Ross Gay, "Thank You" from *AGAINST WHICH*

**The earth beneath my feet is the great womb
out of which the life upon which my body depends
comes in utter abundance.
There is at work in the soil a mystery
by which the death of one seed
is reborn a thousandfold in newness of life.**

~ Howard Thurman in *MEDITATIONS OF THE HEART*

Above all, tell them to practice an intimate presence to the beauty and wonder of the natural world through their intuitive awareness that recognizes the oneness of all life; tell them to stop and enlarge moments throughout their days to become aware of the mysteries and miracles of creation all around them – the movement of a squirrel, the sound of a bird, the pattern of a leaf, changing patterns of light, the sun, the rain, the stars, dawn and sunset. Tell them we are not ourselves without everything and everyone else.

~ Thomas Berry

Listening to the rain, time disappears....This forest is textured with different kinds of time, as the surface of the pool is dimpled with different kinds of rain. Fir needles fall with the high-frequency hiss of rain, branches fall with the blink of big drops, and trees fall with a rare but thunderous thud. Rare, unless you measure time like a river...

...Paying attention acknowledges that we have something to learn from intelligences other than our own. Listening, standing witness, creates an openness to the world in which the boundaries between us can dissolve in a raindrop. The drop swells on the tip of a cedar and I catch it on my tongue like a blessing.

~Robin Wall Kimmerer in *BRAIDING SWEETGRASS*

