

Friends of Silence

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September 2023

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

Dear Friends ~ It always seems to me that September invites us to things new. My grandchildren have been back at school since mid-august, but when I was their age the month of September always announced the “New Year”: new books, new teachers, and new ideas leading to greater clarity about the world around us. I’m still drawn to that search for clarity — not in math or science — but in life amidst this cosmos.



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After all, even the angle of the September sun speaks of clarity. Quakers call the discernment process “Seeking Clearness.” In a context of transparency, bringing the Light to shine on an issue or decision can bring clarity. With September’s sun translucent at my window, I invite you, dear readers, to consider this realm of clarity with me in the hope we may all, if we are lucky, see waiting wonders in snippets and voices, illuminating our homes, our hearts, and our needy world. Take heart, as true clarity may prove itself a life work as fleeting as September’s butterflies, ready to gracefully swoop in again and again calling us to see things in a different light. ~ Mary Ann



Happily we bask in this September sun which illuminates all creatures.

~ Henry David Thoreau in *AUTUMN: FROM THE JOURNAL OF HENRY D. THOREAU*

Another fall, another turned page: was something of jubilee in that autumnal beginning as if last year’s mistakes had been wiped clean by summer?

~ Wallace Stegner in *ANGLE OF REPOSE*



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Lift up your eyes upon
This day breaking for you.
Give birth again
To the dream.

~ Maya Angelou from “On The Pulse of Morning”

in *ON THE PULSE OF MORNING*

Clearness doesn't always mean that things will be easy or comfortable. Sometimes we're given clearness to do hard or painful or scary things. But underneath the discovery of clearness on difficult questions is always the promise of Christ: I will be with you always.

~ from “What is Clearness”

on the *West Richmond Friends Meeting* webpage

When the clerk calls for silence, I allow myself to get centered. I take a breath. Then I’m able to focus. What’s the real issue? What’s the real conflict? Am I upset about something? Is there a defect in reasoning somewhere? ... It allows me to wait, maybe even for someone else who may feel a little more clear to speak which is often the most shocking and interesting to me... It’s like Wow, we’re making progress. It’s an exercise in togetherness.

~ Rob Lippencott, quoted in *GOLDEN:*

THE POWER OF SILENCE IN A WORLD OF NOISE

I will love the light for it shows me the way, yet I will endure the darkness because it shows me the stars.

~ Og Mandino in *THE GREATEST SALESMAN IN THE WORLD*

Every moment of light and dark is a miracle.

~ Walt Whitman in *LEAVES OF GRASS*

Out here in the woods I can think of nothing except God. It is not so much that I think of [God] as I am aware of [God] as I am of the sun and the clouds and the blue sky and the thin cedar trees...engulfed in the simple and lucid actuality of the afternoon — I mean God's afternoon — this sacramental moment of time when the shadows will get longer and longer and one small bird sings quietly in the cedars, one car goes by in the remote distance, and the oak leaves move in the wind.

High up in the summer sky I watch the silent flight of a vulture, and the day goes by in prayer. This solitude confirms my call to solitude. The more I'm in it, the more I love it.

~ Thomas Merton in *DIALOGUES WITH SILENCE*



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On the day when	When the canvas frays
the weight deadens	in the currach of thought
on your shoulders	and a stain of ocean
and you stumble,	blackens beneath you,
may the clay dance	may there come across the waters
to balance you.	a path of yellow moonlight
And when your eyes	to bring you safely home.
freeze behind	May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
the grey window	may the clarity of light be yours,
and the ghost of loss	may the fluency of the ocean be yours,
gets into you,	may the protection of the ancestors be yours.
may a flock of colours,	And so may a slow
indigo, red, green	wind work these words
and azure blue,	of love around you,
come to awaken in you	an invisible cloak
a meadow of delight.	to mind your life.

~ John O'Donohue, "Beannacht: For Josie" in *TO BLESS THE SPACE BETWEEN US*

**I, the Rock, I the River,
I the Tree
I am yours—
your passages have been paid.
Lift up your faces,
you have a piercing need
For this bright morning
dawning for you.**

~ Maya Angelou from
"On the Pulse of Morning" in
ON THE PULSE OF MORNING



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with action;
And may all judgments and denials
Be released
That our souls are freed to
Serve the Light with joy!
Thus will we recognize oneness with
The Divine Spark dwelling
Within our hearts,
Fanning it to illuminate the way.
~ Nan Merrill from her interpretation
of Psalm 144 in *PSALMS FOR PRAYING*

People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in their true beauty is revealed only if there is light from within.

~ Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in *ON DEATH AND DYING*

How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world.

~ William Shakespeare in *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*



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When the day comes,
we step out of the shade,
aflame and unafraid.
The new dawn blooms as we free it.
For there is always light,
If only we're brave enough to see it.

~ Amanda Gorman from
"The Hill We Climb" in *THE HILL WE CLIMB*