

# Friends of Silence

Vol. XXXVII, No. 9

October 2024

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

Dear Friends ~ I wish to speak about joy. In this season there is plenty to be joyful about: crisp mornings, mist rising from the river, trees bright with autumn glory, the faces of children sticky with caramel apples. Yet even as the scent of cinnamon lingers in the air, and grandchildren snuggle in for a fireside story on a gently darkening evening, we know that all is not well in our world. The trouble we are in as an Earth community is severe and seemingly inexorable. This is when joy ripens beyond a heartfelt response of wonder and gratitude and deepens into an act of resistance: a fierce joy rooted in humus, in sorrow, in edges, in life Herself, in the One whom Nan Merrill called the Beloved. This is the joy that enables us to live fearlessly and robustly, to set out boldly to make a road by walking, to laugh immeasurably though we have considered all the facts. To invoke this joy we turn to the soul-criers: the storytellers, sages, and poets who bear witness to the truth that there is always more going on than we can know.



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This, dear friends, is the mission and vocation of the Friends of Silence Letter: to bring you the voices who will sing joy into your soul and make it possible for you and all you love to thrive even in dark times. This is the issue in which we appeal to you to keep the Letter coming into the world. Please use the link on our website to send us a donation. May you ever live in joy. ~ Lindsay



Love is my light and  
my salvation,  
whom shall I fear?...

One thing have I asked of Love,  
that I shall ever seek:  
That I might dwell in the  
Heart of Love

All the days of my life,  
To behold the Beauty of my Beloved...  
Call upon the Beloved,  
be strong and trust  
in the heart's courage.  
Trust in the power of Love;  
the Beloved's unconditional and  
everlasting love for you.

~ Nan Merrill, from her interpretation  
of "Psalm 27" in *PSALMS FOR PRAYING*

This is where I live,  
at the edge of this ploughed field  
where sunlight catches meadow grasses  
and turns them silver-yellow....  
I prefer it here, at the line  
where the forest intersects  
the field, where deer and groundhog  
move back and forth to feed  
and hide. On these juts and outcroppings  
I can look both ways, moving

~ Maggie Anderson, from "Marginal" in *WINDFALL: NEW AND SELECTED POEMS*

As that crow does, all gracelessness  
and sway....  
This life is not easy,  
but wings mix up with leaves there,  
like the moment when surf turns into  
undertow or breaker, and I can  
poise myself and hold  
for a long time, profoundly  
neither one place nor another.



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Is sorrow the true wild?  
And if it is—and if we join them—  
your wild to mine—what's that?  
For joining, too, is a kind of annihilation.  
What if we joined our sorrows, I'm saying.  
I'm saying: What if that is joy?

~ Ross Gay in *THE BOOK OF DELIGHTS*

**Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen.  
Don't be afraid.**

~ Frederick Buechner in *BEYOND WORDS: DAILY READINGS IN THE ABC'S OF FAITH*

**In the universe there are things that are known,  
and things that are unknown, and in between, there are doors.**

~ William Blake in *THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL*

An expression of faith

In life Herself

Is to sow seeds into dark soil

Not knowing what awaits.

Returning to the patience

Reverence

Grace

Humility

Practiced by our ancestors...

Reminding me to wake up amidst the confusion

To do what must be done to feed the children.

To tuck vibrant seeds into fertile soil

And patiently tend the garden, ...

The garden that our ancestors left for us is beautiful.

May we water it well with our tears and our laughter, our  
stories, and our songs.

Today I choose to plant seeds of hope into the winds of an  
unknown future...

It's a New dawn.

The time to be those ancestors our grandchildren are  
waiting for is upon us.

What seeds are you sowing?

~ Rowen White, from "Sowing Seeds"

**How rare and beautiful it is that we exist.  
What if we stun existence one more time?...  
The earth remembers everything,  
our bodies are the color of the earth and we are nobodies.  
Been born from so many apocalypses, what's one more?  
Love is still the only revenge. It grows each time the earth is set on fire.  
But for what it's worth, I'd do this again.  
Gamble on humanity one hundred times over.  
Commit to life unto life, as the trees fall and take us with them.  
I'd follow love into extinction.**

~ Ayisha Siddiqa, from "On Another Panel About Climate,  
They Ask Me to Sell the Future and All I've Got Is a Love Poem"

**In times like these, many things become too late...It will be too late to save this coastline or that ecosystem, this city or that species, this democracy or that economy. But it is not too late to love, and it never will be. Love will count, no matter what. Even on the last day of the world.**

~ Brian McLaren in *LIFE AFTER DOOM: WISDOM  
AND COURAGE FOR A WORLD FALLING APART*

We have entered a time of descent that takes us down into a different geography. In this shadowed terrain, we encounter a landscape familiar to soul—loss, grief, death, vulnerability, and fear... This is not a time of rising and growth. It is not a time of confidence and ease. No. We are hunkered down. Down being the operative word. *From the perspective of soul, down is holy ground...*

How can we meet these unpredictable times with any sense of presence and faith?

To do so, we must become fluent in the manners and ways of soul. We are required to develop another set of skills and ways of seeing as we descend ever further into the collective unknown. We are being asked to hone the faculties of soul that will enable us to navigate through the *Long Dark*....

~ Francis Weller in *IN THE ABSENCE OF THE ORDINARY*

So, friends, every day do something that won't compute... Give your approval to all you cannot understand... Ask the questions that have no answers. Put your faith in two inches of humus that will build under the trees every thousand years. ... Expect the end of the world. Laugh. Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful though you have considered all the facts... Practice resurrection.

~ Wendell Berry, from "Manifesto: The Mad Farmer  
Liberation Front" in *THE COUNTRY OF MARRIAGE*



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**Walker, your footsteps  
are the road, and nothing more.  
Walker, there is no road,  
the road is made by walking.  
Walking you make the road,  
and turning to look behind  
you see the path you never  
again will step upon.  
Walker, there is no road,  
only foam trails on the sea.**

~ Antonio Machado in  
*BORDER OF A DREAM*

I am quite confident that even as the oceans boil, and the hurricanes beat violently against our once safe shores, and the air sweats with the heat of impending doom... that there is a path to take that has nothing to do with victory or defeat: a place we do not yet know the coordinates to; a question we

do not yet know how to ask. The point of the departed arrow is not merely to pierce the bullseye and carry the trophy: the point of the arrow is to sing the wind and remake the world in the brevity of flight. ... May this new decade be remembered as the decade of the strange path, of the third way, ... the kairotic moment... that opened up new places of power.

~ Bayo Akomolafe