

Friends of Silence

Vol. XXXVIII, No. 1

January 2025

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

Dear Friends ~ I wake before dawn. The sky outside the window holds an unrelieved grayness after a long night. January has always seemed to me to be a dark month. The candlelight and fires of Christmas have receded, leaving the dark and the cold. Yes, I know that the nights are shortening, that the light is returning. I know that January holds Epiphany, the feast of the Star, of Wise Ones who recognized God nestled and nursing within the circle of embodied Love and Belonging. I understand that the ancients considered the dark as revelatory as a sunrise. I remember Roethke's words, "in the dark the eye begins to see". I know about gestation, mycelium, hearts beating in the darkness of our chest cavities. Yet in January, maybe particularly this January, I feel the dark I find myself wanting to light a warming fire within the refuge of Silence, to do everything I can to place myself in the glow of it, even to root myself here as the dark lingers through what may be a long, long winter. I sense that I am not alone in this yearning, and so in this Letter I offer tinder and kindling to keep your soulfire alight. ~ Lindsay



**Listen long in the Silence that the Word
may be heard,
that decisions arise from the depths
of your Inner Being where
Wisdom dwells.
For the Spirit of Truth is written upon
gentle and open hearts...
With steadfast love will the Counselor
guide you...**

~ Nan Merrill from "Psalm 78" in *PSALMS FOR PRAYING*

But... winter has an even greater gift to give. It comes when the sky is clear, the sun brilliant, the trees bare, and the first snow yet to come. It is the gift of utter clarity... Winter clears the landscape, however brutally, giving us a chance to see ourselves and each other more clearly, to see the very ground of our being.

~ Parker Palmer in *SEASONS*

**I long to slip into cracks of silence
where breath is connected to spirit and
spirit to wind and a sense of oneness
resonates in my core.**

~ Karyn Dedar

My friends, do not lose heart... For years, we have been learning, practicing, been in training for and just waiting to meet on this exact plain of engagement... One of the most calming and powerful actions you can do to intervene in a stormy world is to stand up and show your soul. The light of the soul throws sparks, can send up flares, builds signal fires... causes proper matters to catch fire.

~ Clarissa Pinkola Estes in *DO NOT LOSE HEART*

Solitude is a state of hospitality, a welcoming of all that needs attention. Solitude offers a ground that is embracing and inclusive. Everything can be made welcome in the broad arms of solitude, even fear. For as long as humans have sought counsel with the sacred, much of it has happened in a space set apart from others. Here, in silence and nourishing aloneness, we can become receptive to the influence of soul...

This is a season of remembering the ancient rhythms of soul. It is a time to become immense... to recall how embedded we are in an animate world—a world that dreams and enchants, a world that excites our imaginations and conjures our affections through its stunning beauty. Everything we need is here...

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

**A field of light, and my need to say
that it exists. Each morning I walk here
almost blinded by water the sun shines on...**

**Limestone and granite give back radiance, and we
Walkers in this field lift our feet and set out,
moving through our once and only mornings,
afternoons... What if light
did not find itself renewable? As my necessity
for these words, mirrors I carry into the sun
of this blazing day, this dance, this carnival
where I am given access to another world,
to the spirits who walk with me
pointing out the properties of light.**

~ Jeanne Lohmann from "Properties of Light"

in *THE LIGHT OF INVISIBLE BODIES*

All throughout these months
as the shadows
have lengthened,
this blessing has been
gathering itself,
making ready,
preparing for
this night.

It has practiced
walking in the dark,
traveling with
its eyes closed,
feeling its way
by memory
by touch
by the pull of the moon
even as it wanes.

So believe me
when I tell you
this blessing will
reach you
even if you
have not light enough
to read it;
it will find you

~ Jan Richardson, "Blessing for the Longest Night"

from *THE CURE FOR SORROW*

I keep imagining how the time of collapse and chaos can also be a radical period of re-imagination and potential renewal... precisely in the midst of chaos each of us may be closer to finding a particular thread that gives our life genuine meaning and also gives us something to contribute to the re-imagining and reweaving of the world.

~ Michael Meade, "Golden Repair of the Cracks in the World" from *MOSAIC VOICES*

You do your absolute best to find and hone and wield your divine gifts against the dark. You do your best to reach out tenderly to touch and elevate as many people as you can reach. You bring your naked love and defiant courage and salty grace to bear as much as you can, with all the attentiveness and humor you can muster. This life is after all a miracle and we ought to pay fierce attention every moment, as much as possible.

~ Brian Doyle in *ONE LONG RIVER OF SONG*

even though you cannot
see it coming...
This blessing
does not mean
to take the night away
but it knows
its hidden roads,
knows the resting spots
along the path,
knows what it means
to travel
in the company
of a friend.

So when
this blessing comes,
take its hand.

Get up.
Set out on the road
you cannot see.

This is the night
when you can trust
that any direction
you go,
you will be walking
toward the dawn.

We don't know what's around the uncharted bend in this wild river of change... Let us learn from our fellow Earth inhabitants, like mycelium networks who know about sharing resources, recycling toxins into nourishment, communicating underground. Let us find meaning in mystery rather than consumption. Let us turn our ears to the music rising out of the ground.

~ Geneen Marie Haugen in "Soulcraft Musings, November 8, 2024"

**Days pass when I forget the mystery.
Problems insoluble and problems offering
their own ignored solutions
jostle for my attention, they crowd its antechamber
along with a host of diversions, my courtiers, wearing
their colored clothes; caps and bells.**

**And then
once more the quiet mystery
is present to me, the throng's clamor
recedes: the mystery
that there is anything, anything at all,
let alone cosmos, joy, memory, everything,
rather than void: and that, O Lord,
Creator, Hallowed one, You still,
hour by hour sustain it.**

~ Denise Levertov, "Primary Wonder" from *SANDS OF THE WELL*



Shutterstock Images

There is something deeper than hope. Between the hours of darkness and dawn, the voices of our ancestors are amplified in the dreamtime—warning us of our awakening wisdom—a blessing to behold and a burden to enact.

~ Terry Tempest Williams in "Unraveling"

EMERGENCE MAGAZINE