

Friends of Silence

Vol. XXVIII, No. 9

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October, 2015

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

Greetings friends, As crisp night air creeps in, leaves begin to blush and pale, and flowers in the garden dry into a brittle brown, it's becoming clear that autumn is seeping into the landscape. I know all living beings die. I know everything that is lost in winter will contribute in some transformed way to the new life that will emerge in spring. And yet...and yet as Edna St. Vincent Millay says, “I am not resigned.” Doesn't stepping forth into the eternal light, melting back into the universal whole mean losing one's individual physical, sensual experience of self and others and the world? Watching someone else die means the achingly endless severing of connection to their presence in the only embodiment we know. But embracing our humanity means also grappling with mortality. How do we face into death with something more than resignation or terror? Is there a way that coaxes us instead to begin to understand the meaning of one's soul? How do we plumb the depths of life with reverence and love in spite of or perhaps because of this inevitable journey toward loss?



If we have been pleased with life, we should not be displeased with death, since it comes from the hand of the same master.

~ Jalal Al-Din Rumi



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I am not resigned to the shutting away of loving hearts
in the hard ground.

So it is, and so it will be, for so it has been, time
out of mind:

Into the darkness they go, the wise and the lovely. Crowned
With lilies and laurel they go; but I am not resigned.

~ excerpts from “Dirge Without Music” by Edna St. Vincent Millay

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I am not going to die.
I'm going home like a shooting star.

~Sojourner Truth



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If I knew for certain that I should die next week, I would still be
able to sit at my desk all week and study with perfect equanimity,
for I know now that life and death make a meaningful whole.

~Etty Hillesum

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You will only arrive at what you are aiming to achieve through the cultivation of two fundamental attitudes of soul. You must nurture a true love for what you represent, and also an insightful love of humanity. Be quite clear that if these two conditions are not met, you may be able to present material ever so logically, you may be able to demonstrate exceptional cleverness, and you will still not achieve anything.

~ Rudolph Steiner



What can we gain by sailing to the moon if we are not able to cross the abyss that separates us from ourselves? This is the most important of all voyages of discovery, and without it all the rest are not only useless but disastrous.

~Thomas Merton

When my friend (Kerri) died, I looked at her face...thinking, "She is not here." Yet she lived in the words of the eulogy written by her husband. He asked, "Did you (ever) know her? She read stories to the children, and every night after they were asleep she went out and knelt in the backyard under the stars." If we wish to know where soul exists, look to where one puts one's energy. Life lived well is a transformative art, and art is what we do for the love of doing it. All living art is about spirit and life making soul.

~ Normandi Ellis in Parabola, Summer, 1996

Every day you have less reason to not give yourself away.

~ Wendell Berry

The soul is highest, noblest, worthiest when it is lowest, humblest, and gentlest.

~ Julian of Norwich

Rebecca's baptism just moments before her death exemplified the existential bridge from private to universal suffering. That water, flesh and blood blessing fell like a stone into a still lake, sending out ripples of grace through Rebecca to everyone, and from everyone to her, from and to the heart of all creation in God...To love in the presence of death is to cultivate humus, the ground that brings new life. And the ground is God, ever new.

~from REBECCA: A FATHER'S JOURNEY by Robert A Jonas

To withdraw gracefully from the public stage and by securing a season of virtuous repose after a life of action – to place a kind of sacred interval between this world and the next, is a piece of practical wisdom which I fear is in few hands.

~ from RURAL PHILOSOPHY by Ely Bates

No moon tonight
| light a candle
and listen to the
dark

~ Alexis Rotella, in Akitsu
Quarterly, Fall, 2014

A door has closed behind me
Another opens wide.
Before me lies a welcome mat,
With faith, I step inside.

~Emma Kolman Staley

Someone who loves us can often see our soul potential more clearly than we can ourselves. When this happens, it has a catalytic effect; it invites and encourages dormant, undeveloped parts of us to come forth and find expression. Indeed, we are often most strongly attracted to those who we sense "will make us live—and die—most intensely... the experience of soul always contains this double yearning: to feel the meaning and beauty of our individual life, and to connect with the larger, universal currents of life flowing through us.

~ from "Fighting for Enlightenment" by John Welwood in NEW AGE, Aug. '96

We give them back to you, dear God,
Who gavest them to us.
Yet as Thou didst not lose them in giving,
So we have not lost them by their return.
For what is thine is ours always, if we are thine.
And life is eternal and love is immortal,
And death is only a horizon,
And a horizon is nothing more
Than the limit of our sight.

~Quaker prayer

To be human is to be born into a dance in which every animate or inanimate, visible or invisible being is also dancing. Every step of this dance is printed in light; its energy is adoration, its rhythm is praise. Pain, desolation, and destruction in this full and unified sacred vision are not separate from the dance, but are instead essential energies of its transformative unfolding. Death itself cannot

shatter the dance, because death is the lifespring of its fertility, the mother of all its changing splendor. If we could bring ourselves to open to this vision, we would undergo a revolution of the heart.

~ from THE RETURN
OF THE MOTHER by
Andrew Harvey



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