

Friends of Silence

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

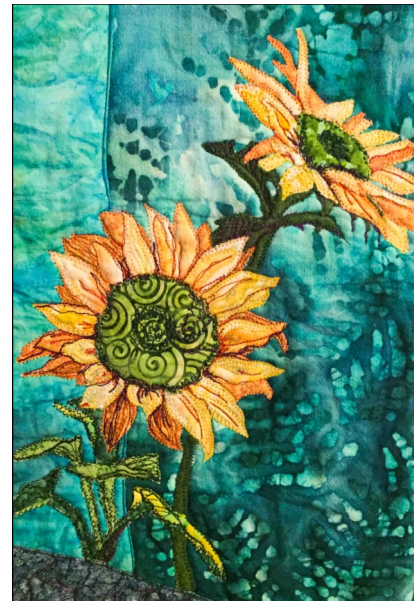
Dear friends ~ On the little patch of earth where I live, frogs are courting in the pond, the fresh yellow-green of new spring leaves sparkles with sunlight, and little shoots and buds unfurl before our eyes to greet warm days. Having come to gardening relatively late in life, I never quite understood the oft quoted adage, “one is nearer to God in the garden than anywhere else on earth.” Not that I agree even now to its ranking highest, yet there is something about tending plants and attending to the fecundity of the earth in spring that infuses the spirit with gratitude and wonder. That life should spring forth from the cold, hard, seemingly parsimonious ground of winter bespeaks of hope and joy and a softening of heart. What better way to contemplate the powerful creative life force at work and play within this hallowed ground? How can we not turn our faces toward the light just as seedlings bend toward the sun? Seek out healing water just as roots push down into soil to drink from refreshing rain? And who is the master gardener that tends our fragile budding souls with the same grace and love as the tiniest blue forget-me-nots?



A garden offers ground for growth, not only for plants that nourish and delight, but for engagement of self and world. Whether in the back forty acres or a small sunlit corner, for man or woman alike, to partake in the specific act of nurturing life brings insight not found in other pursuits. There is a sacramental element in watching a living thing flourish under our care toward its full potential, and what this nurturing opens in us becomes written on the human soul.

~ Anita Lange

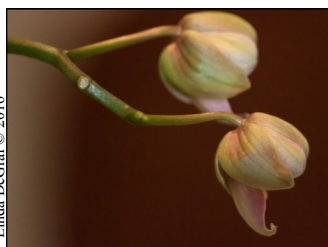
The secret of seeing is, then, the pearl of great price...But although the pearl may be found, it may not be sought...I cannot cause light; the most I can do is try to put myself in the path of its beam. ~ Annie Dillard in *PILGRIM AT TINKER CREEK*



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When we are at home in the garden, tending and nurturing all its plants, animals, and minerals, living with them through all the seasons and days, then healing comes upon us like a gift and makes us whole.

~ Christopher Bamford



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Behold, my friends, the spring is come; the earth has gladly received the embraces of the sun, and we shall soon see the results of their love!

~ Sitting Bull

in time of daffodils (who know
the goal of living is to grow)
forgetting why, remember how...

in time of all sweet things beyond
whatever mind may comprehend,
remember seek (forgetting find)

and in a mystery to be
(when time from time shall set us free)
forgetting me, remember me

~ from "in time of daffodils" by e. e. cummings



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Flowers have incredible power. Their fragile beauty and brief life can teach us to enjoy without attachment, to experience deeply while knowing full well the experience is temporary. It is the same with all life... On the spiritual path it is not the pleasure we want to

renounce, it is the attachment to the pleasure. Life will have its joys and its sorrows; to live fully we must live from the source, without attachment to either pleasure or pain.

~ Diane Mariechild

I think this is what hooks one to gardening: it is the closest one can come to being present at creation.

~ Phyllis Theroux

If you wish to make anything grow, you must understand it, and understand it in a very real sense. 'Green fingers' are a fact and a mystery only to the unpracticed. But green fingers are the extensions of a verdant heart.

~ Russell Page in THE EDUCATION OF A GARDENER

The Bishop's day was full to the brim with good thoughts, good words, and good actions. Still the day was not complete if cold or wet weather prevented him from spending an hour or two in the garden before going to bed...He was alone with himself, collected. Peaceful, adoring, comparing the serenity of his heart with that of the Other, affected in the darkness by the visible splendor of the constellations, and the invisible splendor of God...Without seeking to comprehend the incomprehensible, he gazed at it. He did not study God: he was dazzled (by God).

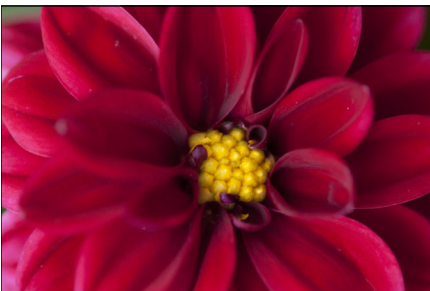
~ from LES MISERABLES by Victor Hugo

Prayer is that divine seed whose roots draw food from earthly existence. Like the lotus flower that does not bloom in arable ground but in marshes, prayer thrusts its roots into human misery as if into mud. But the lotus flower does not show any trace of the muddy water from which it drew life; turned toward the sky, it blooms.

~ from AWAKENING TO PRAYER by Augustine Ichiro Okumura

"It always amazes me to look at the little, wrinkled brown seeds and think of the rainbows in 'em," said Captain Jim. "When I ponder on them seeds I don't find it nowise hard to believe that we've got souls that'll live in other worlds. You couldn't hardly believe there was life in them tiny things, some no bigger than grains of dust, let alone colour and scent, if you hadn't seen the miracle, could you?"

~ L. M. Montgomery in ANNE'S HOUSE OF DREAMS



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To see a World in a Grain of Sand,
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour. ~William Blake