

Friends of Silence

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



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Dear Friends ~ Recently I came across a few lines I'd written years ago in a journal: “They say that trees and plants encased in ice incur more damage by attempts to free them. The slow work of the sun gently melting them heals by warmth. We too, should learn, as Barry Lopez says, to ‘lean into the light.’” In winter it is all too easy to succumb to gloom, lamenting the long nights of darkness. World events echo this seemingly endless chill, encasing hearts in unyielding ice. What more urgent time than now, in the words of Teilhard de Chardin, to “trust in the slow work of God.”



How can I stay completely present to this world—the light and the dark—while still keeping an open loving heart: Who ever promised me the world would be perfect...I need to set a different course by reminding myself that humankind has always been flawed...and Love and light continue to exist anyway. The news should simply inspire me to be extra loving and tender...Today I resolve to balance every dose of darkness I receive with an equal, if not greater, dose of light...I resolve to check the balance daily and provide myself with the silence and solitude I need to maintain it. I truly believe it does matter what energy we put out into the world. ~ Ann O'Shaughnessy, former co-editor of “Heron Dance,” founder of soulflares.org

The further I wake into this life, the more I realize that God is everywhere and the extraordinary is waiting quietly beneath the skin of all that is ordinary.

Light is in both the broken bottle and the diamond...
~ Mark Nepo

Darkness cannot be dissipated with more darkness. More darkness will only make darkness thicker. Only light can dissipate darkness. Those of us who carry the light are called to shine the light, to share it so that the world will not sink into total darkness.

~ Thich Nhat Hanh

Every creature is a glistening, glittering mirror of divinity.

~ Hildegard of Bingen

The glory of the earth and the bright

sun are sometimes a reproach to our dull and listless spirits. In the times when we labor under doubt and dullness of spirit, may we live in trust that we shall pass through the shadows and know once again the inner fire and light within. As our faith in life has sustained us and been fulfilled in us in the past, so that faith will carry us again from dark to light.

~ from *CYCLES OF RENEWAL* by Robert E. Senghas

The sun doesn't stop shining because people are blind.



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~ Mark Nepo in *THE BOOK OF AWAKENING*



I want the light
locked inside to awaken:
crystalline flower,
wake as I do:
eyelids raise the curtain
of endless earthen time
until deeply buried eyes
flash clear enough again
to see their own clarity.

~Pablo Neruda "Skystones" 1970

Crying was my most constant companion. One day, walking on the beach after a sleepless night, I saw the reflection of the sun on the water. Inexplicably, I felt a sense of a Presence larger than life itself after seeing a patch of light differently than ever before. The light image kept me alive... I was suffused with love... It felt comforting, life-changing and dramatic, but peaceful. Although I couldn't rationally explain it, I lost the desire to die.

~from *A MANTLE OF ROSES* by Virginia Swain

True spirituality is about self-surrender, about bringing our wills into alignment with the will of God. Not about the cessation of pain. Throughout history there have been many cases of people finding God while under lock and key. My own experience in jail confirms for me that something does happen when our souls hit rock bottom, when we are trapped in prisons that are sometimes of our own making and not always constructed of iron and steel. Life can sometimes feel like a cage from which there is no escape... Yet, beyond the crucible of spiritual darkness is the light of inner redemption. If we believe that a descent into the abyss can ultimately make us stronger, we will outlive the nightmare. The challenge is to brave our dark nights and wait for the dawn.

~from *GOD AT THE EDGE* by Niles Elliot Goldstein

Sometimes our light goes out, but is blown again into instant flame by an encounter with another human being. Each of us owes the deepest thanks to those who have rekindled this inner light.

~ Albert Schweitzer

There are insects always within sight, there are lights and shadows at play this very moment, but in our distraction we miss the drama that could accompany our quiet attention and give us the pieces of light we crave.

~from *ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE* by Marv and Nancy Hiles

How is one to live a moral and compassionate existence when one is fully aware of the blood, the horror inherent in life, when one finds darkness not only in one's culture but within oneself? If there is a stage at which an individual life becomes truly adult, it must be when one grasps the irony in its unfolding and accepts responsibility for a life lived in the midst of such paradox. One must live in the middle of contradiction, because if all contradiction were eliminated at once life would collapse. There are simply no answers to some of the great pressing questions. You continue to live them out, making your life a worthy expression of leaning into the light.

~ Barry López

If we cannot see the multitudinous splendor of light in every form when it is right before our eyes, then we have to be awakened, jolted out of complacency, cast down from the ivory tower, and buried under the black earth of all our materialistic fantasies. It's quite a shock and painful. Fearing loss, fear will bind us to forms that have already collapsed and are dissolving. But light is there even in the darkness. At the point where one dies, at the point where one stops trying to assert the ego, at the point one gives up in despair, at the point where one says, "I yield. I give in," then one finds the Divine within.

~ Normandi Ellis

From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all.

~Ralph Waldo Emerson



It is the universal statement of a star,
the message Orion
has carried
in winter through the ages:

It is the dark
which illuminates. ~Lyn Dalebout