

Friends of Silence

Vol. XXXII, No. 4

++++++

April, 2019

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



In all things of nature
there is something
of the marvelous.

~ Aristotle

Dear Friends ~ Spring, with all its re-greening, heralds stirrings of hope. Whether you see the relationship between humanity and the rest of nature as reciprocal or destructive, whether you feel despair at the impending sixth extinction or confidence that we can restore our connection to one of mutual respect and healing; the earth still waits, still sends forth green shoots, still pulses and burbles and sings. Nature can be our teacher, our portal into wonder, a practice of communion rather than dominion, a path of encounter and reckoning with our true self. Above all spring is a season rife with the promise of renewal, a chance at transformation. Step outside, turn your face to the warming sun, listen for the song of the goldfinch—and begin again.



It sometimes seems to me that holiness, the quintessence of holiness, is as elusive as that strange fragrance in the air which heralds spring. We cannot define precisely where the scent lies, nor analyze exactly the color of the bird, nor yet assign to an invisible musical scale the plaintive bleat of the lamb, nor to a paint box the fleeting blue of the sky: a stirring in the blood, an impulse toward adventure, rough moorland, woodland paths... No, holiness is not to be defined. It is a living, glorious rebirth...an active condition, not a struggle with or against self, but a struggle for self, to bring oneself back, back to that pure and fragrant spring of our creation.

~ from *IKONS* by John Tavener and Mother Thekla

Everyone needs beauty as well as bread,
places to play and pray,
where nature heals and gives strength
to body and soul alike.

~ John Muir



Scott DeGraf © 2018

When before the beauty of a sunset or a mountain, you pause and exclaim, “AH,” you are participating in divinity.

~ ancient Hindu text as quoted in *EVERYDAY GRATITUDE*

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.

~ Rachel Carson



Linda DeGraf © 2019

Throughout my life, by means of my life,
the world has little by little caught fire in my sight,
until, a flame all around me,
it has become almost luminous from within.
Such has been my experience in contact with the Earth.
The diaphany of the divine at the heart of the universe on fire.

~from *THE HEART OF THE MATTER* by Teilhard de Chardin



Linda DeCraf © 2018

The earth is a living, conscious being. In company with cultures of many different times and places we name these things as sacred: air, fire, water, and earth. Whether we see them as the breath, energy, blood, and the body of the Mother, or as the blessed gifts of a Creator, or as symbols of the interconnected systems that sustain life, we know that nothing can live without them... To honor the sacred is to create conditions in which nourishment, sustenance, habitat, knowledge, freedom, and beauty can thrive. To honor the sacred is to make love possible. To this we dedicate our curiosity, our will, our courage, our silences, and our voices. To this we dedicate our lives.

~from *THE FIFTH SACRED THING* by Starhawk

The exceeding beauty of the earth, in her splendor of life, yields a new thought with every petal.

~ Richard Jefferies

Gardening can provide an opportunity to slow down, be still, breathe, and connect with another form of life. For me, it is an experience of communion; I become one with this precious life in my garden and it heightens my experience of love in the world. And that is what spirituality is all about: growing in love.

~ from *GROWING MYSELF* by Judith Handelsman

Every day is a fresh beginning.
Listen my soul to the glad refrain.
And, in spite of old sorrows
And older sinning,
Troubles forecasted
And possible pain,
Take heart with the day and begin again.

~ Susan Coolidge

All around us, life arises and decays in complicated, in-between spaces. The human challenge is to make a similar confident, quiet passage through the paradoxes of life.

~ Rick Bass

All of God's creatures have divine knowledge within, even the tiniest ant, and we're all trying to get in step and march to the Divine Music.

~from *TALES OF THE HASIDIM* by Martin Buber

If the sight of the blue skies fills you with joy, if a blade of grass springing up in the fields has the power to move you, if the simple things of nature have a message that you understand, rejoice, for your soul is alive.

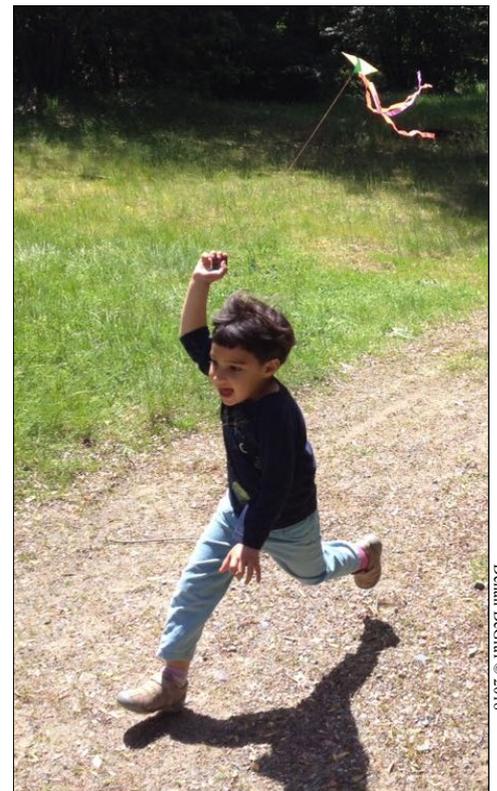
~ Eleanor Duse

Human consciousness, then, should not be what utterly separates us from the rest of "nature." Rather, consciousness is where this dance of energy organizes itself in increasingly unified ways, until it reflects back on itself in self-awareness. Consciousness is and must be where we recognize our kinship with all other beings. The dancing void from which the tiniest energy events of atomic structures flicker in and out of existence and self-aware thoughts are kin along a continuum of organized life-energy...

~from *GAIA AND GOD* by Rosemary Radford Ruether

To be alive in this beautiful, self-organizing universe—to participate in the dance of life with senses to perceive it, lungs that breathe it, organs that draw nourishment from it—is a wonder beyond words.

~ Joanna Macy and Molly Brown in *COMING BACK TO LIFE: THE UPDATED GUIDE TO THE WORK THAT RECONNECTS*



Denali DeCraf © 2018

Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair.

~ Kahlil Gibran