

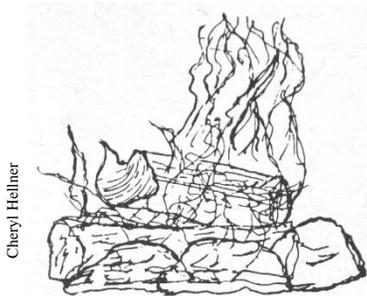
Friends of Silence

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



Dear Friends ~ Fire. It has been lighting my imagination. In bitter January the warmth and glow of fire sings of comfort and hope in the darkness. Yet as wildfires burned through the wilds of Australia and the hills of California this summer, it was fire's power to destroy that captured me. This led me to ancient stories in which fire consumes the world, only to have life return from a tendril in the ashes. Indeed fire appears all over the sacred, mythic universe: it is the possession of gods, the element of miracle, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the oldest thing there is, burning beneath the stew that contains the seeds which sustain life. In this time of upheaval and turmoil, of climate collapse and pandemic, it is fire's mysterious alchemical ability to transform anything and everything that illumines the possibility of regeneration and grace. At our

Thanksgiving, held outdoors under the sky and stars, we burned our paper scraps with pictures and phrases of gratitude and longing in the evening bonfire. "Look!" exclaimed one awed grandchild, "the fire is turning our words into prayers and sending them up to God!" ~ Lindsay



Fire is an intimate force. Whereas light is very heartening, it remains quite superficial. It touches only the surface of things. ...Fire, on the other hand, has the power to penetrate to the very essence of substance. Fire can go to the heart of the matter.

~ John O'Donohue in *FOUR ELEMENTS: REFLECTIONS ON NATURE*



We are the stars which sing,
We sing with your light;
We are the birds of fire,
We fly across the heavens,
Our light is a star which sings.

~ North American Algonquian Song, quoted in
SNOWY EARTH COMES GLIDING by Evelyn Eaton

Remember, remember the great life of the sun
breathing on the earth
it lies upon the earth
to bring out life upon the earth
life covering the earth.

Remember, remember the sacredness of things
running streams and dwellings
the young within the nest
a hearth for sacred fire
the holy flame of fire

~ Pawnee/Osage/Omaha Song in *EARTH PRAYERS*

There may be no way to completely avoid the fires erupting all around us, but the human psyche is ancient and immediate and therefore uniquely resilient... The inner alchemy of the soul intends to turn the heat of all that fumes and burns into the light of illumination.

~ Michael Meade in "A Time of Fire" essay

Winter: quieting time to rest in the warmth of our heart's hearth... we enter another new year, another new beginning to awaken ever more fully to Divine Love at work in and through us. Each one of us is in need of true inspiration ... to have the indwelling fire reignited so that we can live with enthusiasm: a passion for Life, purpose, and joy. FIRE: the Flame of Love that inspires the aspirations of our hearts!

~ Nan Merrill

To the east comes the deep red light,
Triumph rising with the sun,
Full with the miracle of life,
Creative power within the light,
Daily renewal.
Sacred hoop, sacred life, let us greet you,
Heal our wounds, make us new.

~ Wendy Crockett in

SWEETWATER WISDOM



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.

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

I take my guidance from the forests, who teach us something about change. The forces of creation and destruction are so tightly linked that sometimes we can't tell where one begins and the other leaves off. A long-lived overstory can dominate the forest for generations... But... something always happens that is more powerful than that overstory... A whole new ecosystem rises to replace that which no longer works in a changed world...

~ Robin Wall Kimmerer, from her new introduction to the special edition of *BRAIDING SWEETGRASS*



The beauty of the trees,
the softness of the air,
the fragrance of the grass,
speaks to me . . .
The strength of fire,
the freshness of morning,
the taste of salmon,
the trail of the sun,
and the life that never goes away,
they speak to me.
And my heart soars.

~ Chief Dan George

Sometimes with
the bones of the black
sticks left when the fire
has gone out
someone has written
something new
in the ashes of your life.

~ David Whyte in "The Journey" from
THE HOUSE OF BELONGING

