

# Friends of Silence

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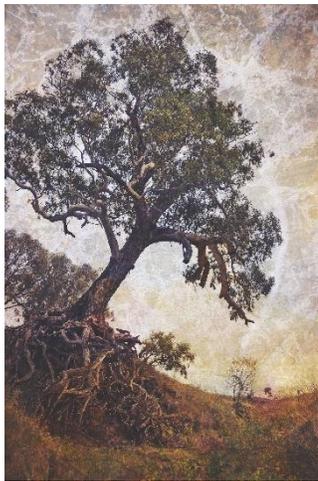
January 2022

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

Dear Friends~ Janus, from whom January takes its name, sits on the threshold of the year looking both ahead and behind. Janus calls us to consider the shape of our days and how we loved in the time before and how we will shape our days and love in the time to come. In the last year I moved from forest to village, and now find myself drawn more deeply into communion with the close-in, human warp and woof within the vast web of all beings. I have a multitude of opportunities for personal encounter, to be intimate with grief and failure as well as joy and triumph. As I ponder, in the dark hours before dawn, the crux of the question for me is whether I allowed my heart to be broken, inviting grace to enter and forgiveness to flow, and whether I will have courage for such resilient vulnerability in the year ahead. Forgiveness is the tensile strength in the fabric of community; without it relationships fray. But if we can have compassion for our own stumbles and inabilities to shine, and if we can know ourselves woven by threads of imperfect humanity to those around us, then we will find ourselves held in the fibers of the divine, and the shape of our days will be love. May it be so. ~ Lindsay



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You are not obliged to be beautiful  
You don't have to shine.  
Blooming will happen when it happens.  
If you can be still for a moment  
you might notice that  
the roots that feed you  
are still reaching silently through the dark.

~ Lynn Ungar in "November" from *THESE DAYS: POEMS FOR THE PANDEMIC AGE*

I wondered if that was how forgiveness budded; not with the fanfare of epiphany, but with pain gathering its things, packing up, and slipping away unannounced in the middle of the night.

~ Khaled Hosseini in *THE KITE RUNNER*

If there is anywhere on earth a lover of God who is always kept safe, I know nothing of it, for it was not shown to me. But this was shown: that in falling and rising again we are always kept in that same precious love.

~ Julian of Norwich

...there are at least two ways to understand what it means to have our hearts broken. One is to imagine the heart broken into shards and scattered about—a feeling most of us know, and a fate we would like to avoid. The other is to imagine the heart broken open into new capacity—a process that is not without pain but one that many of us would welcome. As I stand in the tragic gap between reality and possibility, this small, tight fist of a thing called my heart can break open into greater capacity to hold more of my own and the world's suffering and joy, despair and hope.

~ Parker Palmer in *A HIDDEN WHOLENESS: THE JOURNEY TOWARD AN UNDIVIDED LIFE*

A blessing is not a sentiment or a question; it is a gracious invocation where the human heart pleads with the divine heart. There is nothing more intimate in a life than the secret under-territory where it anchors...there is no heart that is without this inner divine reference.

~ John O'Donohue in *TO BLESS THE SPACE BETWEEN US*



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**Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in**  
~ Leonard Cohen from "Anthem"

Our apprenticeship with sorrow has led us here, to the very edge of culture and the wild, uncertain times we are in... We are being called upon to gather the wisdom we have found on our long walk with sorrow and make it available for others. We must enter the healing ground as elders who have been seasoned by grief, recognizing we carry soul medicine for those who are beginning their apprenticeship. Perhaps now we can begin to build a new culture, one that honors soul and the soul of the world.

~ Francis Weller in *THE WILD EDGE OF SORROW*

Someone I loved once gave me  
a box full of darkness.

It took me years to understand  
that this, too, was a gift.

~ Mary Oliver in "The Uses of Sorrow"  
from *THIRST*

...many people have trouble with forgiveness because they have been taught that it is a singular act to be completed in one sitting. That is not so. Forgiveness has many layers, many seasons.

~ Clarissa Pinkola Estes in *WOMEN WHO RUN WITH THE WOLVES*

All intimate relationships—close friendships and good marriages—are based on continued and mutual forgiveness. You will always trespass upon your friend's sensibilities at one time or another, or your spouse's. The only question is, Will you forgive the other person? And more importantly, Will you forgive yourself? We have to deepen our understanding, make ourselves more equal to circumstances, more easy with what we have been given or not given. We must drink from the deep well of things as they are.

~ David Whyte

So let us pick up  
the stones over which we stumble,  
friends, and build altars...

Let us name the harsh light and  
soft darkness that surround us.

Let's claw ourselves out from the graves we've dug.

Let's lick the earth from our fingers.

Let us look up and out and around.  
The world is big and wide and wild and wonderful and wicked,  
and  
our lives are murky, magnificent, malleable, and full of meaning.  
Oremus.

Let us pray.

~ Padraig O'Tuama in *DAILY PRAYER WITH  
THE CORRYMEELA COMMUNITY*



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To live without forgiveness is to live separated from the sacred and from the most basic instincts of our heart. To live with forgiveness is to reveal in each moment the beauty and value of life. To live with forgiveness is to choose in each moment an active role in creating relationships, organizations, communities, and a world that works for everyone.

~ Robin Casarjian in *FORGIVENESS*

Finally, "love endures all things."... Everything that is tough and brittle shatters; everything that is cynical rots. The only way to endure is to forgive, over and over, to give back that openness and possibility for new beginning which is the very essence of love itself. And in such a way love comes full circle and can fully "sustain and make fruitful," and the cycle begins again, at a deeper place.

~ Cynthia Bourgeault in *LOVE IS STRONGER THAN DEATH*



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