

To Ponder:

I Prayed to a Mystery

By Margaret D. McGee

Sometimes I was simply aware of the mystery. I saw a flash of it during a trip to New York that David and I took before we were married. We were walking on a busy sidewalk in Manhattan. A man with a wound on his forehead came toward us. His damp, ragged hair might have been clotted with blood, or maybe it was only dirt. He wore deeply dirty clothes. His red, swollen hands, cupped in half — fists, swung loosely at his sides. His eyes were focused somewhere past my right shoulder. He staggered while he walked. The sidewalk traffic flowed around him and with him. He was strange and frightening, and at the same time he belonged on the Manhattan sidewalk as much as any of us. It was that paradox — that he could be both alien and resident, both brutalized and human, that he could stand out in the moving mass of people like a sea monster in a school of tuna and at the same time be as much at home as any of us — that stayed with me. I never saw him again, but I remember him often, and when I do, I am aware of the mystery.

Years later, I was out on our property on the Olympic Peninsula, cutting a path through the woods. After chopping through dense salal and hacking off ironwood bushes for an hour or so, I stopped, exhausted. I found myself standing motionless, intensely aware of all of the life around me, the breathing moss, the chattering birds, the living earth. I was as much a part of the woods as any millipede or cedar tree. At that moment, too, I was aware of the mystery.

Sometimes I wanted to speak to this mystery directly. Out of habit, I began with "Dear God" and ended with "Amen". But I thought to myself, I'm not praying to that old man in the sky. Rather, I'm praying to this thing I can't define. It was sort of like talking into a foggy valley.

Praying into a bank of fog requires a lot of effort. I wanted an image to focus on when I prayed. I wanted something to pray "to". But I couldn't go back to that old man. He was too closely associated with all I'd left behind.

Reading:

Human Life's Mystery

by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

God keeps His holy mysteries
Just on the outside of man's dream;
In diapason slow, we think
To hear their pinions rise and sink,
While they float pure beneath His eyes,
Like swans down a stream.

Abstractions, are they, from the forms
Of His great beauty? — exaltations
From His great glory? — strong pre-visions
Of what we shall be? — intuitions
Of what we are — in calms and storms,
Beyond our peace and passions?

Things nameless! which, in passing so,
Do stroke us with a subtle grace.
We say, 'Who passes?'—they are dumb.
We cannot see them go or come:
Their touches fall soft, cold, as snow
Upon a blind man's face.

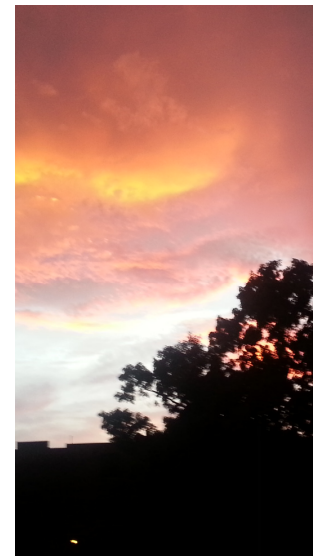
Yet, touching so, they draw above
Our common thoughts to Heaven's unknown,
Our daily joy and pain advance
To a divine significance,
Our human love — O mortal love,
That light is not its own!

Sharing...

a word...

a phrase...

a reflection...



At the Same Time

Think of all the hearts
beating in the world
At the same time
Think of all the faces
and the stories they could tell
At the same time

Think of all the eyes
looking out into this world
Trying to make some sense of what we
see
Think of all the ways we have of
seeing
Think of all the ways there are of
being

Think of all the children
being born into this world
At the same time
Feel your love surround them
Through the years they'll need to grow
At the same time

Just think of all the hands
That will be reaching for a dream
Think of all the dreams that could
come true
Yes if the hands we're reaching with
could come together joining me and
you

By Barbra Streisand

When it comes to thinking of
tomorrow
We must protect our fragile destiny
In this precious life there's no time to
borrow
The time has come to be a family

Think of all the love
pouring from our hearts
At the same time
Yes think of all the light our looks
Can shine and grow this world
At the same time
At the same time

Yes think what we've been given
And yet think what we could lose
All of life is in our trembling hands
It's time to overcome our fears
And join to build a world that loves
and understands

It helps to think of all the hearts
Beating in the world
And hope for all the hearts
Healing in the world
There's a healing music in our hearts
Beating in this world
At the same time
At the same time

Thank You For Joining Us!

Your Prayer Leader

Syndie Eardly

10/25/2016

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Pray to the mystery, trusting in life's divine significance



Our prayer is characterized by silence
Be still and know that I am God!

In that silence we listen for a new word.
God is present in all our lives.
God cares for us, and
our life experiences are a source
of deepening knowledge of God and self.

Inspired by God's Word in the silence
we share from our hearts.