

ON MYSTERY AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

How did we come to be?

To what do we return when we die?

What is our true purpose in this life?

These fundamental metaphysical questions have been the province of spirituality, religion and philosophy for millennia, and are some of the core issues that spiritual directors and companions tackle.

And yet, for all of the verbiage written about these topics throughout the world across the ages, the answers to these questions are difficult, if not ultimately impossible, to capture with words. In this sense, what they point to remains a mystery of sorts.

“Of sorts,” because we can certainly experience deep insights concerning these queries, intuitively, experientially, profoundly, lovingly, and with unwavering intensity.

The road to this awareness is often referred to as “mystical” or, to use the term in its original Greek

context (μυσω), a “concealed” one. All great spiritual paths have this discernment embedded right at the heart of their practices. Nevertheless, it can often appear hidden from easy access, and can be hard to approach, and then only with deep contemplation and stillness.

Which brings us to the connection between spiritual direction and mysticism.

Spiritual directors and companions help you get closer to the insights that already lie within you. It is no accident that one of the key characteristics of our work is to listen; attentively, mindfully, and deeply. Allowing you to unspool your own discernments and strong intuition, and to put it into words that more or less approximate the level of your transcendent awareness, even though those expressions are more

akin to the “finger pointing at the moon” than to the moon itself.

With a spiritual companion, access to this mystical connection with God, the infinite, the ground of all being, the Universe, beyond the beyond, or however you might choose to describe it, can become easier.

The mystery begins to reveal itself.

In the Catholic tradition in which I was raised the priests and nuns spoke to us of *mysterium fidei*, or the mystery of faith. Things that cannot be explained by normal means. Revelations “hidden in God.” And they told us of the importance of prayer to help us discern some of those mysteries.

In many strands of Hinduism and Buddhism, deep meditation is a central practice, meant to contemplatively connect us to the fountain head, and the well-spring of every thing.

In the Sufi tradition, whirling dervishes dance their way to this place of intimate union.

Indigenous spiritual traditions practice rites of initiation and entry into the world beyond our ordinary reach, with which we are encouraged to integrate.

And those in the growing “spiritual but not religious” category also have varying approaches: communing with nature and the universe, singing, drumming, and embodying, among myriad others.

These are but a few examples, which abound in every spiritual path.

Spiritual companions are akin to mirrors in some ways. Not here to show you “the path” or “our path.” But rather for you to more clearly see the road you are already on (and have always been), even if sometimes you may have been walking it in relative darkness, not knowing you were on it all along.

So that you can illuminate your own path, illuminat-

ing it for us, and everyone else, as well.

And as our collective intuitive attunement grows, it will continue to drive and motivate us in mysterious ways. Occasionally nagging, disturbing and upending us. But all the while encouraging us to strive harder and further than we thought we could to reunite with our true essence. Fulfilling our otherworldly longings by reconnecting us to the undergrowth of our Being, with a capital “B.”

As we finally bathe in the infinite, we will have found our way home, describing the indescribable, thinking the unthinkable, pondering the imponderable, and experiencing something far beyond ourselves.

May it be so.

Anil Singh-Molares

Listen

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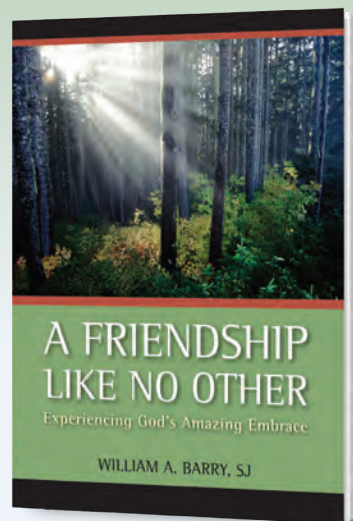
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POEM

SEASONS OF MEDITATION

Winter

As meditation descends,
the crunching footsteps of the mind
are softly covered in the deepening stillness
of perfect whiteness,
Leaving faint traces of the path taken,
blue shadows cast by the subtle light of grace.

Spring

The sap rises,
pushes through the frozen earth,
up, up, up the trunk,
softens, expands,
To emerge as pale green buds of love,
Leafing into ever-new remembrance of life.

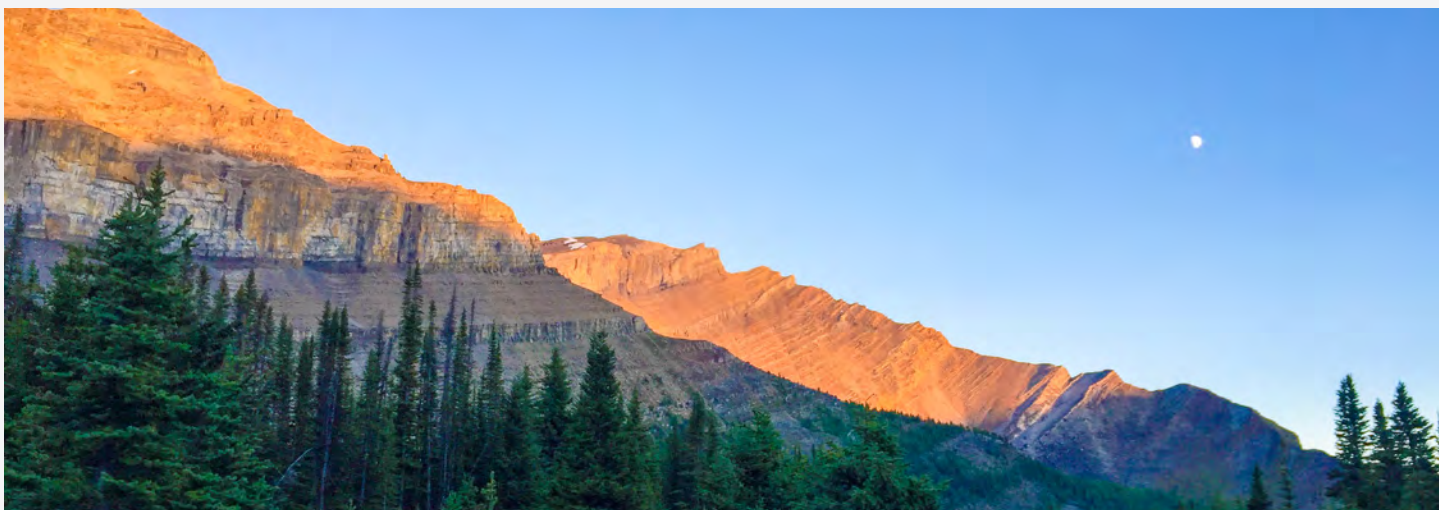
Summer

Crickets' thrum pulses with the breath,
Playful birdsong praises the light,
Cloudburst blesses the abundance--
sacred green earth.

Autumn

Serenely, like a leaf,
the mind drops
into a pool of silence
and dissolves there,
Grateful to return to its source.

Jennie Boyd Bull is a retired editor, LGBT community pastor, bookstore manager, librarian, and archivist. She has followed an Eastern meditation path for over 30 years, teaches Taiji and Qigong, and enjoys hiking, gardening, weaving and writing.



POEM

elegy

there is
on the floor of the dais
in a golden shaft
of late October sunlight
a fly
on its back
legs up
twitching
against the final
throes of life

it is so still
for so long
I am sure it is dead

until it twitches again

in violent tremors
of a finality
so small and insignificant
the people here to practice
waking and awareness
overlook entirely

the teaching carried out
before them

eyes closed in meditation
we sit in silence
and when I finally look again

the tiny body is so still
for so long
I am certain it is dead

until it twitches again

Megan E. Freeman's debut poetry collection is Lessons on Sleeping Alone. Her poetry has appeared in multiple anthologies and literary journals. She lives near Boulder, Colorado. www.meganefreeman.com



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All the birds have flown up and gone;

A lonely cloud floats leisurely by.

We never tire of looking at each other -



Only the mountain and I.

-Li Po

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