

## MIRACLES BEYOND OURSELVES

A miracle is normally defined as something out of the ordinary, inexplicable, astonishing and wondrous, supernatural even, at least from our standard frame of reference.

Unsurprisingly, a little etymological digging reveals a Greek root, “semeion,” or “something beyond itself.”

But before we can get to “beyond,” we need to establish what we mean by “normal.”

And there is the rub, because for most of us, “normal” means brushing by, unmindfully, not realizing or acknowledging everything before us, as we rush frantically to our next destination, wherever and whatever it might be. In the process, everything dissipates, and in our frenzy, we end up running around with our eyes closed, usually with a spiritual and existential complaint: “I am blind! I am blind! I can’t see! Please help me!” Unfortunately, almost everyone around us is stuck in the same paradox, and we all know that the blind can’t lead the blind. Or at least, shouldn’t.

*continued on next page*



Sadly, it usually takes some tragedy to wake us up from our stupors, to open our eyes, and make us realize what we have, or what we had. In the meantime, we take things for granted.

So it is often the case that we don't appreciate someone until they are no longer with us. And only then do all of our criticisms of them melt away into an awareness of the beauty of spirit they embodied. At other times, we might realize just how miraculous good health is, but not without getting deeply sick first. Or realize the value of a limb, and cherish how useful, and astonishing it was, but not without losing it first. Most importantly, it regularly takes calamities for us to acknowledge how trivial and inconsequential most of our daily concerns are.

It is only then that we realize how we have boxed ourselves in, or allowed others to limit us. And that's when we surface our subterranean longings, and our desire for freedom and liberation arises, loudly calling us and demanding attention.

Why not take an easier road?

Life is a series of miraculous moments, every one of them rich beyond measure with insight, inspiration and innovation, but that awareness comes solely by making ourselves receptive. It is then that we discover that "normal" really means the opposite of what we commonly believe it to be. That is, that far from pedestrian and mundane, we are truly extraordinary beings, endowed with supernatural abilities, of intellect, discernment, delight, sound, smell and taste, music, dancing, and so many other skills that we might never stop living into them.

And that's just the beginning, because beyond any of these capacities, our most singular one is the power to Love. And not just the sweet and tender love that we feel for our partners, children, friends, or other cherished sentient beings, but the Love that pervades the entire Universe. A Love that encompasses everything that we see, and those things that we don't see; that bridges all in our

world, as well as everything at the edge of our ever expanding awareness.

So, are we not beings far beyond ourselves? Are we not walking miracles?

Nice words, some might counter, but how can we access this insight so that it becomes more than a rhetorical slight of hand, or clever word play?

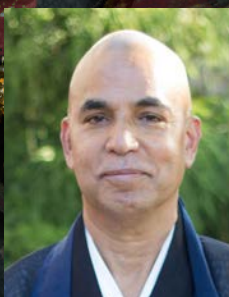
That's where contemplation and spiritual companionship enter.

The first, because if we root ourselves daily in a contemplative practice that best suits us, whatever it might be, we are sure to be able to tap into the wellspring, one far beyond our temporary bodies, and into the Essence of all that was, is, and will be, within us and without us, as a sage once said.

And it is also what spiritual directors, companions, and guides are constantly pointing to.

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep," our spiritual sisters and brothers might say to us, quoting The Bard.

But beyond even that, by acting as faithful mirrors, and helping reveal the space from which we can emerge into our growing awareness, they help support and encourage us on our spiritual discernments right now. So that we might not have to wait until we are on our death bed, or at the edge of tragedy, loss and suffering, to realize what wondrous beings we already are.



And with that finally acknowledge that we already walk miraculously among the stars, both now, and always.

**Rev. SeiFu**



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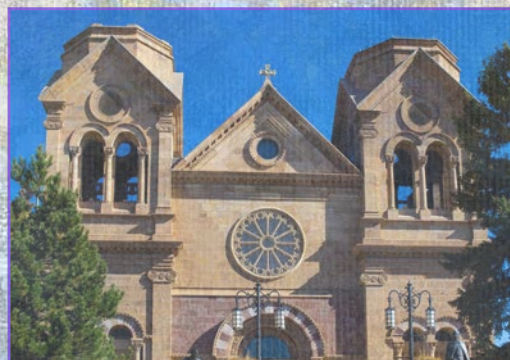
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## PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE

Retrieving a stray Kleenex, on my knees,  
I spied the foreign intruder under my bed.  
Startled out of my reach, in swift surmise,  
It scuttled for its life in harried dread.

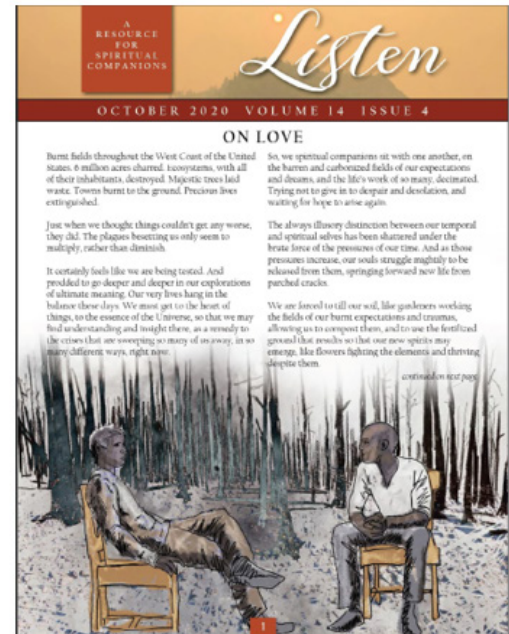
I only had to see the scurrying motion,  
And in a flash my armored had descended.  
Protesting for its life in brave commotion,  
It yielded to the second blow—unfended.

What drive so geared my slamming hand?  
Fear of a bite as I slept undefended?  
Ancestral genes? Ego's command?  
It curled its legs into death. Unmended.

Since Cain's raised hand and murder's nascence,  
Pre-emptive strikes are deft of aim.  
But this instinct killed my own complacence:  
I didn't even know the small thing's name.

*Sr. Honora Remes is a Daughter of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul living in St. Louis, MO. She loves offering directed retreats and facilitating Spiritual Awakening groups with homeless women transitioning into secure living situations. E-mail Sr. Honora at [Honora.Remes@doc.org](mailto:Honora.Remes@doc.org)*

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The physicist studies photons and particles,  
while the seeker watches the sweet pea blossom  
and waits at dawn for the hummingbird to sip its nectar.  
What brings us to our knees before the altar of the holy?  
In the darkness below ground,  
what stirs inside the seed of the sweet pea?  
In the moment when you strike the match,  
what calls fire out of the sulfur tip?  
It's the physics of desire,  
and God writes the equation for its fulfilling  
in every place we might look.

Mary Camille Thomas

\*Title from Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

Mary Camille Thomas' bio states: "I'm a cradle Catholic, I dip my cup into the sweet water of the spiritual life wherever I find it, whether in a mountaintop Benedictine monastery or an Ohlone sweat lodge. My poetry has appeared in *Sisters Singing: Blessings, Prayers, Art, Songs and Sacred Stories by Women* and on my blog, *The Kingdom of Enough*." E-mail Mary at [marycat@cruzio.com](mailto:marycat@cruzio.com).



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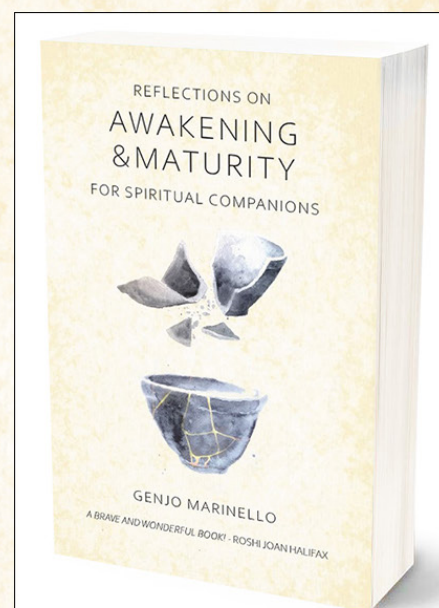
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The leaves are falling, falling as if from far up,  
as if orchards were dying high in space.

Each leaf falls as if it were motioning “no.”

And tonight the heavy earth is falling  
away from all other stars in the loneliness.

We’re all falling. This hand here is falling.

And look at the other one. It’s in them all.

And yet there is Something, with hands  
infinitely calm, holding up all this falling.

(“Autumn,” Rainier Maria Rilke, trans. ASM)







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