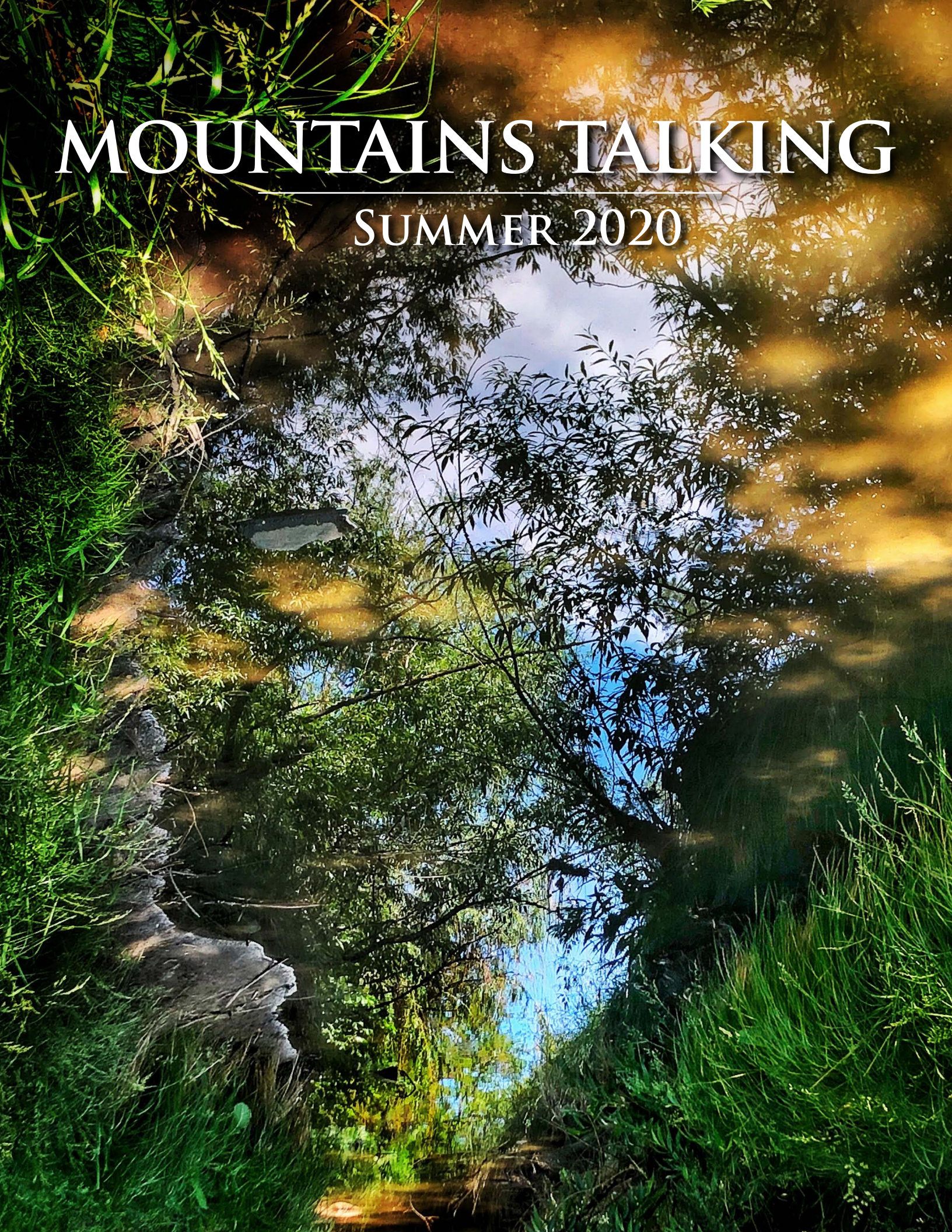


MOUNTAINS TALKING

SUMMER 2020



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WHEN COLD AND HEAT VISIT

KARIN RYUKU KEMPE



Today is temperate weather, but in past weeks we have been visited by cold and heat, the Colorado spring. And some of us may have had chills or maybe fever. As a community, we are visited by an invisible but powerful disease process, one to which we are all vulnerable, no one of us excepted. Staying close to home, we may be visited by the fear of not having enough supplies, perhaps the loss of our work or financial security, or find ourselves far apart from those we love, or, even more frightening, torn by fear of losing them. We are visited, as human beings have always been, by sickness, old age and death, hallmarks of our human condition, none of us immune; visited by grief, anger and fear, arising moment to moment, none of which we can control or prevent.

The koan I want to talk about this morning is Tungshan's Cold and Heat; it comes up a lot for me these days. You will remember Tungshan (Tozan in Japanese), as one of our most renown Soto ancestors; he lived 807 to 869 and gave us the Five Ranks, as well as many other wonderful teachings.

The Blue Cliff Record, Case 43:

A monk asked Tungshan, "When cold and heat visit us, how should we avoid them?"

Tungshan said, "Why not go where there is neither cold nor heat?"

The monk asked, "Where is there neither cold nor heat?"

Tungshan said, "When it is cold, let the cold kill you. When it is hot, let the heat kill you."

These visitors, heat and cold – should we try to avoid them? We cannot, we cannot. But at times, how we wish we could! Of course, none of this has to do with temperature but rather with dis-ease, dukkha, suffering. And each of us has our favorite ways of distraction or distancing;

that too is our human condition. And yet, we can't get away from dukkha, can't avoid it.

The first step is to just to see that we cannot. Tungshan challenges us: "Why not go where there is neither cold nor heat?" To move away, isn't it our first instinct? We squirm in the face of discomfort. But is there anywhere without cold or heat? No...no. Of course, Tungshan knows this, knows it in his bones. He is not playing with words and he is not misleading us. He is pushing the question deeper, closer. Where is that place of no cold no heat? Can it be anywhere but right here?

"When it is cold, let the cold kill you. When it is hot, let the heat kill you." Dramatic and demanding language. What is this killing? What is killed? What dies? We only know hot as compared to cool, cool compared to hot. Yet cold is completely cold. Hot is completely hot. Without comparison, heat and cold disappear. Even more, as heat kills you, you kill heat. As cold kills you, you kill it in that instant.

No koan is a reflection of dualistic thinking, but rather expresses the death of any separation. Live as cold, live as heat. Holding apart dissolves and the world is our entire body, our own breath and blood. We find intimacy with fear, with fatigue, and with loss; intimacy too with joy, with love, with beauty. We are not dissociated or deadened, but completely alive, engaged in each moment without boundaries.

If we truly gave up all attempts to avoid our life of right now, what could that be? What if we did not try to run away, or change our experience? If we didn't try to act like a spiritual person? If we did not try to manipulate or manage ourselves? Can we let the past be past, over and done with?

Right now, each of us is at home; we know we should not leave. But even more, each of us is at home in this body, our own body, and even if it gets sick, that is still home. You will need to live in that sickness, as that sickness, not longing for some alternative future. Past and future are like dust in this furnace, already burnt up.

Continued p. 14

TEMPLE PRACTICE & COVID-19 GUIDELINES

As we continue to feel our way through the pandemic, we are happy to begin offering some limited in-person activities at the temple. Our hope is that these will provide our members with the chance to practice in the serene temple environment while safeguarding the health and well-being of all involved.

This does, however, involve a certain amount of diligence on the part of participants. We have posted general guidelines for temple practice at both front and back doors as well as the gate to the garden, which you will no doubt see. These enjoin us to:

- **Wear a mask** at all times when inside the temple, in the garden, or working on the temple grounds
- **Use hand sanitizer** when entering the temple or garden

- **Maintain physical distance** of six feet or more from other participants and the resident caretaker

- **Stay at home if you have symptoms** such as a temperature over 100.4° F, chills, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, muscle pain, or recent loss of taste or smell, or otherwise are showing symptoms of cold, flu or allergies.

A small cart with hand sanitizer, masks, gloves and other supplies has been placed at the back door and will be moved as necessary. A printout with more detailed Covid-19 guidelines is also available on the cart.

Please stay in the public areas and do not enter the kitchen or upstairs, to minimize exposure for yourself and the resident caretaker, who uses those spaces. While you may obviously use the restroom if you need to, it may be preferable to simply wait until you return home.

DAILY VIGIL PRACTICE

Each day between noon - 1 p.m. our members are invited to come to the temple for a daily solo vigil practice (couples in a relationship are of course also welcome to practice together if they wish). You are welcome to either take a zabuton outside and sit in the garden, or to sit in the shrine room or zendo. Other cushions are available if needed, but we encourage you to bring your own.

Advance registration for vigil practice is required; to sign up, please go to Signupgenius.com or contact the office. Vigil practice is open to members only.

ZCD member Ginny Swenson writes this regarding vigil practice:

Historically vigil has been present in many cultures and in many spiritual practices. Sometimes vigils are defined as sustained periods of prayer or meditation. They are a way of holding and bearing witness to something significant, something profound, something transformative.

Vigils are about wakefulness and can teach us to face the inner darkness or a state of unknowing. They are a means of staying open, staying present to whatever will come. They are a time of stillness. Vigils are sometimes explained as a period of waiting, a waiting for what will come.

I think during this time of Covid-19, we have never quite been in a position of waiting without having any insight into what we are waiting for. But we know vigils can help support pain and suffering and can be a space that others can lean into for support. Sometimes vigil comes from a need to be together – to come together. If we hold vigil at this time, we are holding this world experience and waiting without any specific hope or desired outcome.



GARDEN ZAZEN

We are also offering zazen for our members in our beautiful Zen garden through the summer months each Thursday morning from 6:30 - 7:20 a.m. To accommodate physical distancing, attendance is strictly limited to five participants (plus the jiki). Mats will be provided and placed beforehand on the deck; however, please bring your own zafu and other cushions if possible.

Please wear a mask while in the garden. When arriving, please enter via the back gate from the parking lot (rather than the front door), use the hand sanitizer placed by the gate, and then take the next available seat closest to the back door (by the kitchen). This will help minimize crossing in front of the other attendees.

Beginning at 6:30 a.m., we will sit for two twenty-five rounds timed by the jiki, with a single bell between the rounds to change your posture if you wish. The sitting will end with two strikes on the small keisu at 7:20 a.m. At that time, make a seated bow, stand, face outward, and when the keisu is struck again, make a final standing bow. In consideration of our neighbors and the quiet, serene atmosphere, we will not have any chanting. Take your cushions with you, but leave the zabutons where they are for the jiki to collect.

The columbines are blooming and the finches sing beautifully in the morning. Please come enjoy this tremendous new setting for our zazen together!



SUMMER BLOOMS

With summer here, we have essentially completed the landscaping around the temple. Under the guidance of Desirae Wood of Dobro Design, who travelled from Portland, Oregon, to help supervise the project, the crew from Phase One Landscapes spent days placing literally hundreds of xeric plants, including blue and golden columbine, yarrow and snow-in-summer. They also carted in and spread the gravel for our enclosed Zen garden and walking path, and installed drought-resistant buffalo grass around the perimeter of the property.

As the years pass and the garden becomes more established, the temple grounds will truly be transformed into a place of beauty and serenity. Our deep thanks to Desi and the crew from Phase One, who worked so hard to make this dream a reality. Thanks also to the members of our landscaping committee, who have likewise been investing much labor and energy in maintaining and making improvements to the grounds of the main temple and to our adjoining property at 1852 S. Columbine.



TO PRACTICE ALL GOOD

JOEL TAGERT

Many years ago, when my ex-wife Lindsey and I were living with Robert Aitken Roshi in Hawaii, a monk from Sri Lanka came to visit. I offered my hand and he shook it. Lindsey then offered hers, thinking nothing of it: and the monk recoiled. Touching a woman was against his vows. I was shocked and outraged then, and I remain so today. To use one's vows to perpetuate discrimination seems to me a betrayal of the Buddha Way. If we mean to practice the truth of this moment, we cannot hang onto the prejudices of the past.

I have begun with an easy example, one far away in time, place and culture, but we must be careful of the strong tendency to regard right action as "out there." We imagine ourselves leading marches, volunteering at soup kitchens, working for campaigns, and so on. What we do not imagine – what we conspicuously avoid, in fact – is confronting how structural inequities play out in our individual lives and immediate communities.

It is far too easy to look at enormous institutions and the terrible suffering they wreak and say, "This needs to change." It certainly does: racism, sexism, widespread violence, militarism, war, mass incarceration, poverty and homelessness are inflicted by policy as much as individual behavior, and we desperately need to organize to change those policies. At the same time, the very scale of these institutions makes it extremely difficult to act effectively, and this gap, between what we see is necessary and what appears to be possible, results in the despair and apathy that prevail in our society.

Meanwhile, we ignore what's closest to home. Individually, we may benefit from racist, sexist and classist systems, and "It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it," as Upton Sinclair said. So first, we must examine our own lives, particularly how our grasping minds insist that all we have, we earned ourselves, and we need not share it. How far this is from gratitude – the recognition that all we have, we have been freely given.

Second, we must be unsparing in examining our community and our practice and consider how the structures we have created or inherited may subtly exclude people who might otherwise practice with us. Most often these mechanisms are not obvious; they persist precise-

ly because they operate below our field of vision. They inhere in our unconscious assumptions about what Zen practice is and what the sangha is and is for.

Historically, Buddhist clergy have mostly eschewed political involvement, perhaps partly because, in the various repressive regimes of the past, speaking up could end with an axe at your neck. Still, too often Buddhist priests have counseled their parishioners to attend to their perceived societal duty first and foremost – no matter how murderous or even suicidal that duty might be. This is how we are left with the outrage of Zen teachers exhorting young men to battle in imperialist World War II Japan, including some in our own lineage. Compassion is thus relegated to something reserved for those close to us, in relationship, in nationality, in race, and in space and time. Help the beggar on the street, this view says, but don't try to change the conditions that forced them to beg. Seeking to extend our compassion beyond our immediate circle becomes mere hubris, the deluded ambition of a clouded mind.

How terrible to smother our deepest aspirations this way, and how futile! I am reminded of Master Hakuin excoriating the dead sitting of the "silent-illumination" Zen school prevalent in his day: "You might cover your ears with your hands, or cover your eyes with a blindfold, or try some other means to avoid the poisonous fumes. But you can't escape the clouds that sail in the sky, the streams that tumble down the hillsides. You can't escape the falling autumn leaves and scattering spring flowers."

What use is a Dharma that preaches inner well-being while ignoring outer well-being? How can one speak of ending suffering while refusing to address the painfully obvious outward causes of suffering? It's like sitting beside a starving child and saying, "The real problem is your desire to eat." It's like knowing a well is poisoned and telling the villagers that they, like the water, have no abiding form. No! Feed the child! Dig a new well!

Greed, hatred and ignorance are not merely spiritual malaises to be addressed solely on an individual basis. They are *systems* embedded in our politics, economics and culture. Divorcing the Dharma from engaged action is to destroy it. It is to pull the fangs of the Dharma lion; it is to enter a cave and wall it up behind you.

To put into practice what is good and just, to act from noble purpose: "This is the path of fulfilled enlightenment," as says our Precepts ceremony. Forgetting that purpose, we fall into a pit of confusion and aimlessness. Remembering it, we walk hand in hand with our im-

mediate Dharma forebears (Danan Henry and Robert Aitken are and were devoted social activists), and with the Buddha himself, who famously challenged the caste system in his time, accepting anyone and everyone into the Buddha Sangha. We have our work cut out for us. ❀

WATER

PEGGY METTA SHEEHAN

Once there was a fish who had heard tales of the Source of Life, which would bring whoever found it their heart's desire. The fish swam to every corner of the ocean, asking: "Where is the Source of Life? How can I find it?" She kept getting pointed toward different tasks and to more remote parts of the sea—farther, deeper, higher.

After many years of seeking, the fish arrived back at the place where she had first started. Entering her home waters, she encountered an older fish who asked, "What is going on with you, my friend? Why do you look so worried and dejected?"

"I've spent years looking for the Source of Life," the fish explained. "I can't even begin to tell you how many things I've tried or the number of places I've searched—all in vain. I don't suppose you know where I could find it?"

*The old fish smiled and said, "I've heard many names for the Source of Life in my day, but the simplest is 'water.'" (Loch Kelly, *Shift into Freedom*)*

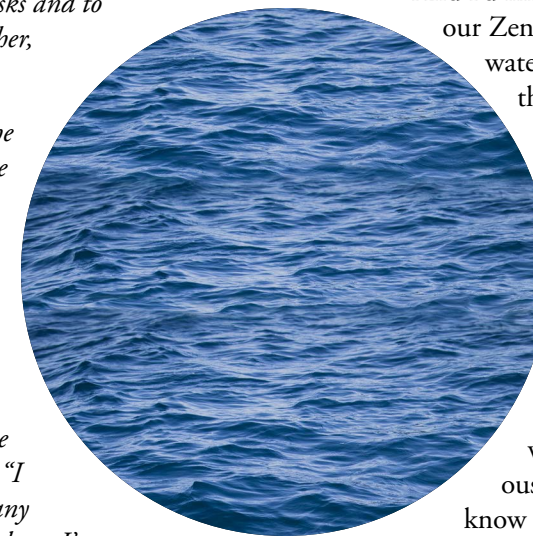
I know we can all relate to this and even profess to how hard it is to see! The path of Zen is fairly simple and straightforward. Sit quietly, unmoving even, so as not to create waves, and water will be revealed. Once we see water, a radical shift in perspective has occurred, and we now know for ourselves that everything, everything is water. And that includes the waves themselves. In fact the waves may even show you the way to water.

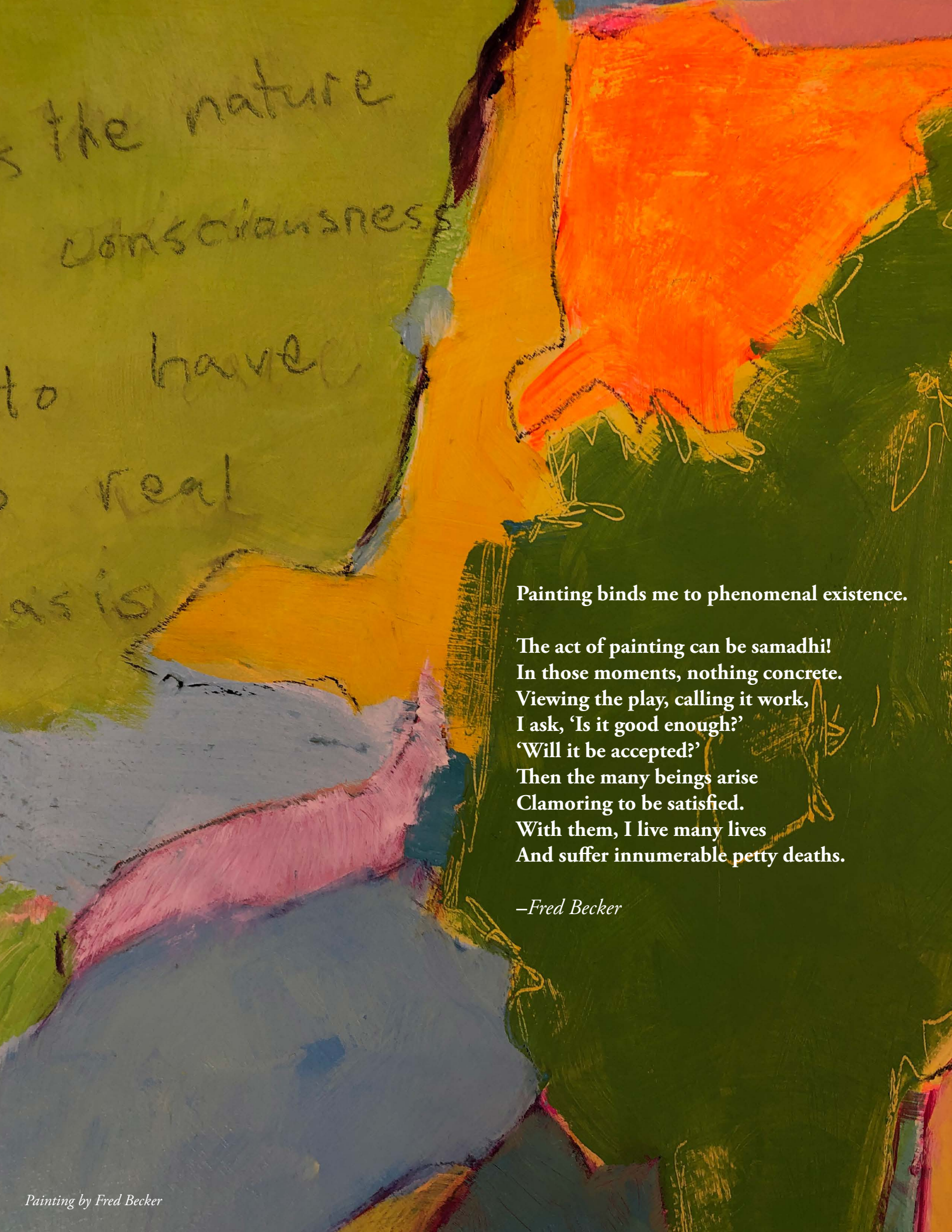
The blessing here is that once we see, we can't not see. Even if our view becomes clouded at times, we still know water. We know we are swimming in it.

And I'd like to suggest that in the same way our Zen practice opens or exposes the way of water, it is long past time to acknowledge the waters of racism that our culture has been swimming in for centuries. Once we see it, we can't not see any longer. That is a radical shift. And as with any first glimpse, it is just the beginning. Immense work, dedication and ruthless honesty will need to follow. This is our Work, the Way of courage, humility, patience, listening, and genuine inquiry. Will we still be stupid, insensitive, oblivious, hurtful at times? Yes. But we now know this water and we'll begin to behave and act differently, for it is the natural consequence of true seeing.

We can change. It is absolutely possible to change these tides. It happens again and again in the practice of awakening. In an instant eighty thousand teachings are fulfilled.

There is finally a deep crack in the structure of systemic racism because, at last, enough of us see. Cracks have occurred before, but this time we will not allow it to be covered over again. May we forgive and be forgiven for how long it has taken. From this right view, with openness, inquiry, and letting go over and over of unfounded defensiveness (ego clinging) we will step into water that holds and cares for us all and always has. ❀





Painting binds me to phenomenal existence.

**The act of painting can be samadhi!
In those moments, nothing concrete.
Viewing the play, calling it work,
I ask, 'Is it good enough?'
'Will it be accepted?'
Then the many beings arise
Clamoring to be satisfied.
With them, I live many lives
And suffer innumerable petty deaths.**

—Fred Becker

FATHER'S DAY AND INTERCONNECTEDNESS

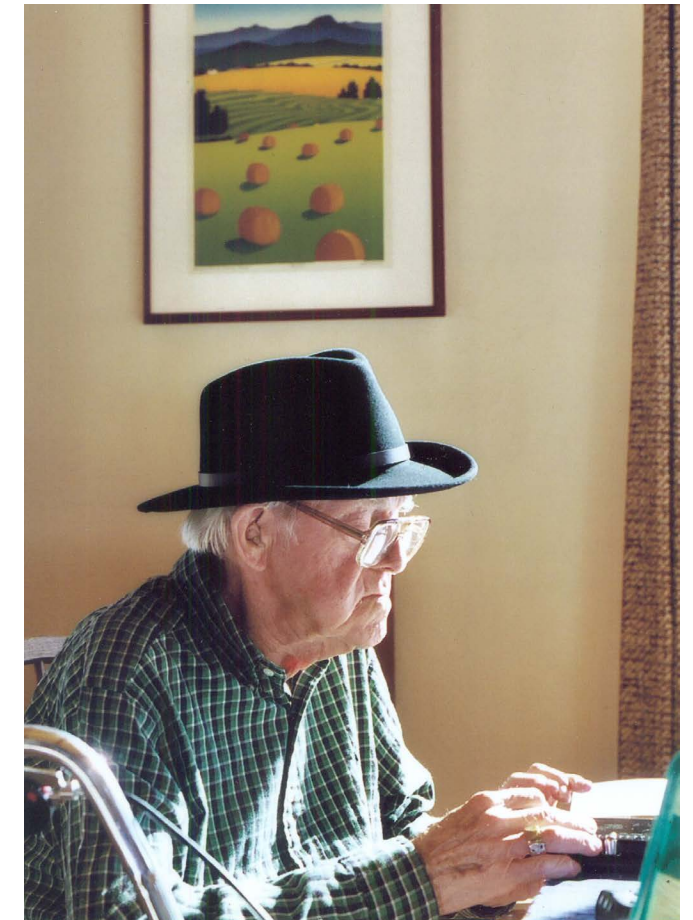
DAVID MARVIN

This week represents six months since having a cardiac bypass procedure that saved my life. I am still processing the experience from a practice perspective and wanted to share an experience that I had with my father, Hugh M. Marvin, who died in 2008 at the age of ninety-five. While I was struggling with how to manage my fear and learn about my disease in order to make sound medical decisions, my father's presence emerged from the shadows to support me.

I have tried to write that last sentence in a way that makes sense and still I am stunned by what is conveyed by what I just wrote. Dad, who has been dead since 2008, comforted me, walked with me, stood with me man to man, and helped me manage the twelve days between diagnosis and surgery. It was a loving, calming presence that joined with me to remind me of what I already knew about how to manage this situation. It was an acceptance of the two of us as equals and that his wisdom had been conveyed to me in ways that I had integrated into my life in the past, so all he had to do was be with me to prompt me to access those lessons. There was no advice, no separation between father and son, merely a loving presence walking with me, supporting me. It was one of the most beautiful experiences of my life.

I have emerged from this experience understanding the natural state of interconnectedness that exists between we beings at a much deeper level. Though I understood interconnectedness intellectually prior to this experience, it was the opportunity to receive the support, the help, the love from so many people, including people from the sangha whom I don't know well, that changed how I know and trust this natural state. I have a felt sense of what this is, what it means. I trust it at a deeper level and am working to remain open to what else I can learn about it.

Father's Day was a lovely celebration for me this year as I thanked my dad for helping me to grasp interconnectedness in a broader sense. For even as people rallied around me and my family during this crisis, it was my



father's presence that greatly expanded how I think about the fact that we are interconnected. It became clearer that interconnection wasn't just with living beings, or perhaps my definition of "living" has been expanded. The wonder of this experience is something that I am still processing. In conversations with my wife about God (she is Jewish), I usually defer, as my early experiences with the concept of God were not very resonant with my life experience. Suddenly one day leading up to Father's Day as I was hiking, it occurred to me that maybe this was an experience of God? Is it okay to mention that word, that concept with people who follow Buddhism? ☸



SUMMER AT-HOME SESSHIN

Along with many other firsts, the ZCD held its first at-home sesshin this summer, from June 2 - 6. Over thirty participants joined together for our intensive schedule of zazen, chanting, kinhin, dokusan, talks and teisho, facilitated by Zoom and other online tools.

While the format at first may have seemed unusual, for many of us it quickly became a return to the familiar schedule of sesshin. A bell sounds: we bow. The clappers strike: we walk. The bell rings three times: we settle into the glow of the light on the wood floor, and the sound of cars passing, and the air passing through our nostrils. The rhythm may be conveyed by electrical impulses lighting up fiberoptic cables, but the dance is ancient as the mountains.

There were, of course, some necessary modifications. We shortened the afternoon block of sitting to allow those at home to attend to any daily business or family responsibilities. We simplified and eliminated some of the chanting and ceremonies, in particular our opening and closing ceremonies, which normally involve the coordination of instruments, chanting and ritual actions. Dokusan was offered daily as usual by all three of our teachers, but

students signed up online beforehand. We prepared our own meals and slept in our own beds.

It may be something is lost practicing this way: embodied presence, the shoulder-to-shoulder practice usual in sesshin, in which we become really intimate with each other not through words, but through immediate sensory contact. We become intimate the way roommates are intimate, and these bonds are the unseen intendment of sangha.

But not everything missing may have been missed: gone also was the fatigue of poor sleep from a snoring dorm mate, concerns about food, waiting to use the shower. Sitting in one's own space, while still following a disciplined practice schedule, one can find great freedom and ease, much as the hermits of old found sitting on high mountain peaks or by still lakes. Sitting alone, together, we join with all beings in echoing the Buddha's words: "Above the heavens and below the heavens am I, alone and sacred."

– Joel Tagert

How...?

How does the air know to support a bird in flight
And yet give way?

You could ask the same of a fish
In water.

How does the flower know when to bloom,
Or the bamboo to send up its shoots?

How does the pear know to split apart
Before the edge of the knife?

How does the candle flame know to cease
When all the wax is gone?

And how does this body-mind know when it is time
At last to return
To the One?

– Ken Tetsuzan Morgareidge



Photo by Geoff Keeton

Continued from p. 3

When I went to the memorial service for my first dharma teacher, Toni Packer, I heard a story about her last days, as she lay in bed resting beside someone who became one of her dharma heirs beside her. He said all of a sudden her eyes became very wide and open; she said quietly and in wonder, “It’s always now, now.” And of course, it is always now, now.

When Tungshan himself was old and got sick, a monk asked him, “You are ill, teacher, but is there one who does not get ill?” Tungshan replied, “There is.” The monk asked, “Does the one who is not ill look after you?” and Tungshan said, “I have the opportunity to look after him.” The monk said, “How is it when you look after him?” Tungshan said, “Then I don’t see that there is any illness.” (Book of Equanimity, Case 94).

Living as our sickness, in our sickness, is how to look after it, but this story goes on. Tungshan then asked his monks, “When you leave the body you inhabit, where will you go to see me again?” How will you meet me?

He felt his time had come, so he had his attendants shave his head, help him bathe and get dressed. The bell was rung so each monk could come in to say goodbye. He lay quietly in bed with his eyes closed; all the monks began wailing and moaning. “He’s gone, what will we do? He is really gone, oh, oh, oh...!”

Suddenly, Tungshan opened his eyes, sat up and scolded them, “What are you fussing about? Where is your practice?”

He then instructed the temple director to organize a “delusion” banquet. The monks were overjoyed that he wasn’t going to die yet after all and the cooks delayed the preparations to put off parting from him. But after a week the banquet was finally prepared and Tungshan had his last meal with his sangha. He then said, “Don’t make a such big deal about it. When I pass away don’t go carrying on.”

He returned to his room and sitting upright, passed away. He was sixty-three years old, not so old by our terms. (*Zen’s Chinese Heritage*, ed. Ferguson)

“When it is cold, let the cold kill you. When it is hot, let the heat kill you.”

As Tungshan said on another occasion, “I am always

intimate with it.” Melting in close, coming in so close that you are cold itself, you are heat itself, intimate with it. The smell of morning coffee, the soft snore of an old dog asleep, the warm wet air in your mask. Whatever is here now, the life of this moment, your moment. And yes, maybe this painful breath in, a new tingle of fear, if it is that time. The fact of uncertainty is in so many aspects of this life, our everyday, in-our-face lesson in impermanence.

Our practice is not a barrier or an armor, not a tool; it does not protect us from our life; it is our real life. It is the reality of our world, this world, as who and what we are right now. But that fact is not all we are. We’re not boxed in by the concreteness of our experience. We can respond, we can be wise, act in cooperation with circumstances, but the truth is we already live where there is no hot and cold, where there is no danger and no safety, no health and no disease. We have to see this ourselves; no one can do it for us. This is not a matter for despair, but for gratitude that we can.

The poet David Whyte wrote (“Everything is Waiting for You”):

*Your great mistake is to act the drama
as if you were alone. As if life
were a progressive and cunning crime
with no witness to the tiny hidden
transgressions. To feel abandoned is to deny
the intimacy of your surroundings. Surely,
even you, at times, have felt the grand array;
the swelling presence, and the chorus, crowding
out your solo voice. You must note
the way the soap dish enables you,
or the window latch grants you freedom.
Alertness is the hidden discipline of familiarity.
The stairs are your mentor of things
to come, the doors have always been there
to frighten you and invite you,
and the tiny speaker in the phone
is your dream-ladder to divinity.*

*Put down the weight of your aloneness and ease into the
conversation. The kettle is singing
even as it pours you a drink, the cooking pots
have left their arrogant aloofness and
seen the good in you at last. All the birds
and creatures of the world are unutterably
themselves. Everything is waiting for you.*

Everything is waiting for you now, waiting for you here. Look, listen, feel.

Probably like many of you, I have at times hoped that all this, the deaths, the suffering, the fear and uncertainty, so many forms of loss, not the least of which is our sense of safety and our dream for the future, might be worth it if we learn something as a species, if we are able to come out of this wiser about the trajectory of global warming, more compassionate in addressing inequities of race, of economic status, more determined to create a world which respects basic rights such as health care as much as education – all the things we want. As Richard Rohr puts it: “The shell must first crack for the expanded growth to happen.” So hope arises for me as maybe it does for you.

But this practice is not about our hope, our dream of the future. It’s not about what we yearn for. It is this here, this, this. And not just this. The shell cracking, melting. The place of no heat and cold is not a place apart, a place of no suffering, no inequity, no loss, no hardship or hunger. All of these are included, everything, both light and dark, easy and hard. You and me too.

And still we say thank you, we say yes. Thank you is “this now is it.” The real, complete “this now.” The refrigerated trucks in New York holding fresh bodies. The anxiety during the second week of our illness, not knowing if this body will be able to heal. Another day of not knowing. The kindness of a neighbor bringing groceries to the front step. The full moon in the window, and the howling of neighbors at eight. The pale light of dawn as the world wakes up and the birds start their racket.

A monk asked his teacher, “When the great thousands of universes are altogether and utterly destroyed in the kalpa fire, I wonder if IT will also be destroyed or not.”

“Destroyed,” said the teacher.

“If so,” persisted the monk said, “do I follow the other and perish?”

“You follow the other and perish.”

A monk asked another teacher, “When the great kalpa fire bursts out, the whole universe will be destroyed. I wonder if it will also be destroyed or not.”

This teacher said, “Not destroyed.”

The monk said, “Why is it not destroyed?”

“Because it is the same as the whole universe.” (*Book of Equanimity*, Case 30)

Destroyed, not destroyed: two faces of the same reality. When we know ourselves as vast as the universe, then to be sick is to also be well; we rest in that stillness. To be well, when so many are sick, is also to be sick. Can we be also at rest in this, not falling into one side or the other?

When we know ourselves as vast as the universe, then to be sick is also to be well; we rest in that stillness.

This stillness is not really a balancing point. It is vast and not-knowing; it is where all such issues come to rest, fall away, fall into one point. This stillness is another word for silence, the silence at the heart of everything, and it is not static.

Language can catch us, but it can also point. Tungshan said, “When one is completely liberated, there is no shadow left over.” And Miaozong commented: “When the rivers are at peace, they cease to flow.” (*Zen Echos*, trans. Grant.) Hongzhi

wrote: “Embodying and fulfilling the way of non-mind, finally you can rest.” (*Cultivating the Empty Field*, trans. Leighton.)

There is no rest other than here, no cold, no heat. Like the monk in our original koan, we imagine we have a choice, as if we could avoid our true life of this moment. Foolish. Indeed, we may try to escape into all manner of dream, distraction or sedation. And yet, our life, this life, unfolds, and we unfold in it, as it actually is, whether we are awake to this or not. When the rivers cease to flow, even the moon and the highest mountains are soaked.

What other life do you have? ☸



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