C R O S S R O A D S

A Newsletter of the Grail International Leadership Team

November 2020

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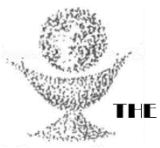

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Letter from the International Leadership Team

November 2020

Dear Grail Sisters,

We hope you are all doing as well as possible given the reality of new and different challenges that we each face during this global pandemic. Yet even though we have been in various degrees of shut downs, with an inability to travel, the life of the Grail has continued to thrive.

On Saturday October 31, we had our first ever international Grail celebration in which every Grail member in every country was invited. This gathering **Grail Thanksgiving—Launching 100 Year Celebration** took place on zoom spanning many time zones, and every part of the globe. Can you imagine? We wonder what our founding Grail sisters would have to say about that.

In the 5 weeks prior to the celebration, we hosted the International Council (IC) meeting which had originally been planned for the Netherlands. During 5 weekly 2-hour sessions, the IC representatives considered the proposals that had been submitted for the July meeting. Leading up to the sessions, we learned how to use Zoom effectively for meetings including the simultaneous translation function. These meetings have been joy-filled as we see each other each week, yet imperfect in many ways. We seem to intuitively understand, that for something wonderful to happen, we have to be willing to take those first tentative steps. And that is what we are doing together.

After eight (8) years as editor for Crossroads, Carol Siemering is retiring from this position. The ILT offers our deep gratitude to her for her creativity, dedication and desire to serve the Grail in this way. As a leadership team, we have enjoyed working with Carol and truly appreciate her enormous efforts in this regard. And at the same time, that we say good-bye to Carol, we welcome and also introduce Mary Francisca Guimarães, a long time Grail member from Brazil as the new editor of Crossroads. Mary and Carol have already begun the transition conversations with each other. So Crossroads, indeed, remains in good hands.

In the meantime, the elections for the next International Leadership Team are underway. As you can see, the life of the Grail is alive and well.

As we celebrate the beginning of our 100th year as Grail, we never could have imagined the experience we are all living through. Yet, this global pandemic is teaching us new ways to go forward.

Many blessings to all,

Dilma Alves, Maria Carlos and Mary Heidkamp

Letter from the Editor *Carol Siemering*

Dear Sisters

I am very excited about this issue of Crossroads. I set the theme around our living in very trying and heartbreaking times. These are times that call for inspiration, for solace, for hope and for action. I invited folks to send art or poetry or prose created by Grail women that has been a response to these times. And as art in its varied forms has always been a way to touch the Sacred, any art poetry, prose, they would like to share simply as a place of respite and joy in these times. I am so delighted with the response! I would particularly like to thank Elizabeth Baubach from the U.S.A. National Office who brilliantly helped me with the layout with these. As usual there are other lovely articles as well. As mentioned in the ILT letter, this is my last issue after 8 years. It has been my privilege and joy working with the different ILT's and always, always with my dear Mary Omedo who put the final issues together. It has been my privilege and joy receiving and sharing all the amazing articles from all who sent them over these years. Thank you and hugs to all.

The Future of the Grail **A talk by Mimi Marechal November 3, 1991**

> *I send you a text of Mimi Maréchal, about the future of the Grail It was in our archives. It is a speech Mimi gave at the Tiltenberg in 1991, when the Grail had its 70th birthday. I think it is a beautiful text to be published in this number, just before our 100th anniversary. Marijke de Koning (Portugal)*

A talk by Mimi Marechal delivered at the Tiltenberg on the occasion of the Grail's 70th birthday 3 November 1991

I have been asked to speak about the future of the Grail. Let us be honest and admit it: we are an endangered species. It can be argued that the Grail will soon disappear from the face of the earth. We are no longer the 10,000 of the great stadium dramas. But the 10,000, and we who are sitting here today, came from a group of five. And even if we were once again to become a group of five that is still no reason to let our hope and conviction fade away into apathy, as long as we still believe in the Grail.

Recently there appeared a book by Dom Cees Tholens, O.S.B. (whom many of us know) under the title: *Dreaming, Thinking, Believing, and Praying with Humanity*. This little book has a short but most interesting preface.

What especially strikes me in the preface is Tholens' idea about "the zone of the Holy Spirit", a realm which remains open, which can resist institutionalization. I believe this is the "zone" where the Grail was born; I also believe that the possible future of the Grail lies there. The zone of the Spirit: it is a wide-open region, a land without barbed wire, where no one fights for superiority of any kind, a land of many surprises.

Before I continue with this dream-language let me mention another idea from Dom Tholens' preface. One of his themes is "conversion of the world". This theme is very familiar to us older Grail members, but we hardly dare mention it today because of its dissonance with the spirit of our time. Tholen's tells us that we must realize that people today, thus also we ourselves, are part of a cosmos that is evolving toward completion and that this completion requires the cooperation of *all* humankind.

That then is "conversion of the world" in our time: all people, no matter what their cultural background, sex, race or religion, working together in a cosmos that is made up of all living beings. We speak nowadays of transformation, the process of change, metanoia. But basically, this is a question of the desire in all human beings for the completion of creation. "Conversion of the world" no longer means that one group tries to convince another of the ultimate truth of its message, but rather that all work together for the completion of the cosmos.

Along with their individual commitment, people today-therefore also we as Grail- want to contribute to this completion communally. In this respect the Grail seeks particularly to call forth the contribution of women. In my view this is what makes the Grail, Grail: the vision of a world in the throes of transformation, change, evolution, with the special commitment of the women of our time in the midst of it. And this has everything to do with the Spirit, "who renews the face of the earth", as the Bible says.

But whether we read it in the Bible or experience this transformation through other sources, it is the same Spirit that binds us all to the one Reality. This Reality may be expressed in different ways, in the language of different eras and cultures, rooted in different religious experiences. The zone of the Spirit is not reserved for a special group of people because "the Spirit blows where It wills"- this too is said in the scriptures- and sometimes even where *we* would rather it did not blow…

It is my deep conviction that all people can contribute, and that many desires to contribute, to this process of completion, to the "salvation of all living beings", as it is called in the Buddhist tradition. Once again: people do this individually, but also together with others, in groups and networks of all kinds-so also in our Grail movement.

Like all things and all people, so too is the Grail in evolution. Our foremothers recognized the signs of the times and spoke a language which was understood by their contemporaries whom they could thus challenge to work together. We today use another language and must continuously search for a new expression of what is, in essence, the same challenge: that we,

that all women, have an enormous power to commit ourselves to changing this world of ours where so much injustice is done to human beings and to all of creation.

Just as many of us older Grail members were inspired by the language of the time in which the Grail was born, so will the Grail have a future if we can speak the language of these times, this time which is now dawning. "Behold, I make all things new," is the famous text which, in the Jewish scriptures, is placed in the mouth of God by the prophet Isaias. We can feel the newness, experience it, hear it, if only we open our hearts to it. In every age the new lies before us, waiting to be seized. We must be ever alert to take

hold of it. The new stands before me at this very moment, in the form of women who work with us here in the Tiltenberg, and who in so many ways express the ideals of the Grail together with us.

The future offers new possibilities for our movement, of this I am convinced. These appear, for example, where we can make links between people who normally do not meet one another, who avoid or oppress each other because they feel threatened by those who are different. Our experience in the Grail can help us to bring change to such situations, however small that change might be. The Grail is a kind of laboratory for what happens in the world at large. To the extent that we succeed in our own intercultural relationships, working together with all our Grail "identities" (races, cultures, ideologies, world views) in an authentic and equally valued way, so will we be able to share the fruits of those challenging relationships with others outside the Grail.

More specifically, there is a special opportunity for the Grail in the meeting of the world religions: Judaism, Islam and Buddhism are coming ever closer to us, and they too belong to the zone of the Spirit. We know from our experience here at the Tiltenberg that people today, no matter how secularized they may be, are searching for an authentic spirituality. And we see all around us that where the world religions do not fulfil this religious striving, there fundamentalism thrives. Fundamentalist groups fill the void left by the absence of spiritual nourishment.

People who do not belong to organized religions are also in search of another dimension of life. One of the faithful Zen practitioners at the Tiltenberg, a professor emeritus of philosophy from the University of Gent, is president of the Organization of Atheists of Belgium. This man's quest is profoundly inspiring and I recognize there the zone of the Spirit. Or let me take another example of someone who comes here regularly: a man who used to be completely estranged from his Christian roots greatly surprised us recently with his decision, after years of Zen practice, to study theology in order to become a pastoral worker. He is now studying at the University of Utrecht, still supported by his Zen practice.

I mention such examples because a great part of my own Grail work is connected with Zen. My point, however. is that the hunger for spiritual nourishment at this moment is immense and that, if we have something to offer, there is a great response. What I want to emphasize regarding the future of the Grail is the task of fostering faith and a deep spiritual life. This is what we stand for as Grail members, however differently we may express it, according to our Faith Message from the 1988 LG.A.

I believe that the future of the Grail also depends upon the fact that the Grail is a movement. The Grail is *moveable*, it is mobile. In the 1960's the French-speaking Grail members said, "Le Graal est une mouvance," which was then a new term for all the flexibility that was growing in society. It is difficult at times to keep believing in this moving movement, difficult not to worry on the one hand that the Grail is becoming rusty when something new is rejected, or else that it is losing its identity if something unfamiliar comes in. It is sometimes hard to stick your neck out to keep this "mouvance" alive. And yet, it is the "moveability" of our movement which is necessary in order to make dreams about the future into reality.

This future has already begun. At least, to the extent that I myself can formulate the signs of the times, can "diagnose" the expectations of society, I believe that the future of which I speak has already begun.

Although I, we, tell an imperfect, incomplete story, women who recognize in it something of what is alive in themselves-however hidden it may be-these women will become part of the future Grail so that we may, all together, work for the completion of the cosmos. And in order to achieve this I believe we must sometimes dare to let go of the organizational side of our movement so that we can attend to the possibilities of the zone of the Spirit. Dom Tholens contrasts in his preface the *institutional* (the side of the letter and organization, which often threatens to paralyze people) with the *open* (the side that moves away from the letter toward the Spirit), two aspects that are found in all human groups, including religions, and also in our Grail. We can't escape this tension. But thanks to our seventy-year history-which of course also carries with it a danger of rigidity-we are in a position to recognize the possibilities that lie before us.

When I met the Grail in Scotland more than 30 years ago, I was intoxicated with my discovery. In the course of my Grail life I have frequently met women who were as enthusiastic about the Grail as I, even when our daily experience showed us that the Grail is a movement of frail human beings. Precisely because of my positive experience with the Grail I want to believe in the possibility of other women participating in our movement, in whatever "moveable" form it may take. Therefore, I believe that we have at least 70 years before us in which to continue working together for the completion of the cosmos, "the conversion of the world."

Translated from the Dutch by Eva Fleischner,
with the patient help of Marianka Schep.

In Memory of Eva Fleischner

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by Mary C. Boys

When Eva Fleischner left Boston for France in 1949 as a Fulbright scholar, she was engaged to be married. When her fiancé arrived in Paris to join her, she had changed her mind. Something deeper was beckoning: "If I had to pick one word for what had happened to me, it would be 'God.' "

What was it about that year in Paris pursuing studies in medieval philosophy that enabled her to discover, as she told her friend Herbert Heavenrich, author of *In Search of the Sacred*, "things I had been searching for all my life without knowing it"? How, then, in midlife did Judaism become so significant in her thirst for the living God?

Fleischner died in Claremont, California, July 6, 2020, the eve of her 95th birthday. I knew her as a woman of simple elegance and sophisticated thought, charismatic in an understated way.

Fleischner's peripatetic life began at 13, when her parents managed to get her out of Austria following the Nazi Anschluss (annexation) in March 1938 to a convent boarding school in England. She rejoined her parents in the U.S. in 1943, and enrolled at Radcliffe College. Graduating in 1946, she worked as an editorial assistant at Houghton Mifflin, becoming a U.S. citizen in 1949.

Her Paris sojourn affected Fleischner profoundly, particularly her experience of the postwar renewal in the French church. Jesuit theologian (and later cardinal) Jean Daniélou at the Institute Catholique invited her to participate in Circle S. Jean Baptiste, a student group that studied other religious traditions and provided an expansive understanding of Catholicism.

About a year after her return from France, Fleischner took up an invitation to join an international women's movement, the Grail. Founded in the Netherlands in 1921 by Jesuit priest and scholar Fr. Jacques van Ginneken as a way to animate and advance women's contribution to the church and world, the movement came to the U.S. in 1940.

Janet Kalven recounted in a 1993 article in the U.S. Catholic Historian that the two Dutch women who introduced this movement in the U.S., Lydwine van Kersbergen and Joan Overboss, conveyed the sensibility that "women *count*: together we can influence the course of history."

By the time Fleischner traveled to Grailville, the U.S. center in Loveland, Ohio, in 1952 to spend a year of intense formation, it was becoming a prominent center of church renewal foreshadowing the Second Vatican Council, especially in liturgy and in scripture-based study and prayer.

In 1957, Fleischner pledged to live a life of devotion to God through the mission of Grail. She told Heavenrich, "It was through the Grail that I found purpose and meaning in life … and with a whole new commitment which I didn't know was possible before."

Life in the Grail fostered what became Fleischner's deep connection with the Psalms. In an autobiographical essay in *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism,* she wrote that the Psalms "profoundly and permanently changed my prayer life and my relationship to God." They also "predisposed me to eventually appreciate Judaism."

The years at Grailville allowed her to obtain a master's degree in liturgical studies at the University of Notre Dame — and to gain a stellar reputation as the head of their bakery, overseeing the production of 50 loaves of bread a day.

Unsurprisingly, the opportunities the Grail offered women at times led to conflict with ecclesiastical authorities. Fleischner experienced the shadow side of Catholicism in a dramatic way in 1963.

The Grail had sent her to Rome for the second session of Vatican II as a reporter for its publication Ecumenical Notes. An accredited journalist, Fleischner was included in an invitation to the otherwise all-male U.S. press corps to attend Mass on Oct. 30, 1963, in St. Peter's Basilica. As the approximately 20-member U.S. press corps made its way to Communion, a Swiss Guard physically restrained Fleischner, preventing her from receiving Communion and leaving her in "tears of rage."

This unforgettable experience presaged a much longer encounter with Christianity's sinfulness. In the late 1960s she began doctoral studies at Marquette University in historical theology. Reading Martin Luther for a seminar, she was shocked by his vilification of Judaism. Her study of Christian texts across the generations revealed that Luther was not alone.

During her Marquette years, Fleischner began an intense study of Judaism and of the Holocaust, completing her degree in 1971 with a dissertation on *Judaism in German Christian Theology Since 1945.* Appointed as a professor of religion at Montclair State College (now University) in 1972, she developed a course on the Holocaust that she taught regularly for nearly 20 years — long before such a course became common.

Fleischner had a major role in the planning and implementation of an international symposium on the Holocaust held in June 1974 at New York City's Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine, editing its presentations in a 1977 collection, *Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era? Reflections on the Holocaust.*

In the 1980s Fleischner went to France to interview three French Catholic women involved in the resistance to Nazism and rescue of Jews. In a lecture on "Memory of Goodness," at a conference in Oxford in 1988, she said that these interviews were good for her to "'touch,' as it were, goodness within my tradition." Such encounters, she added, proved healing and counterbalanced the heavy burden of "prejudice, cowardice and betrayal within my Roman Catholic tradition."

In 1999, Australian Cardinal Edward Cassidy appointed her to the six-member International Catholic-Jewish Historical Commission to undertake a review of Vatican archival material from 1939-1945. The commission's mandate involved the sensitive matter of assessing 11 volumes of documentation pertinent to the papacy of Pope Pius XII.

Their report, presented in Rome in November 2000, raised 47 substantive questions that should be pursued, and identified other sources that would provide a more comprehensive analysis of the role of the Vatican during the Holocaust.

Their concluding counsel that "openness is the best policy for a mature and balanced historical assessment" has at last been heeded: Pope Francis announced in March 2019 that the archives pertaining to 1939-1958 would be fully opened on March 2, 2020.

The archives did indeed open, only to be closed on March 6 by the pandemic that ravaged Italy and has continued its destructive path across the globe. The archives are scheduled to reopen following the traditional summer recess.

I knew Eva Fleischner primarily through our shared membership in the Christian Scholars Group on Jews and Judaism (she became a member in 1972, I in 1988) and on the Committee on Ethics, Religion, and the Holocaust at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

It is no exaggeration to say that we revered her — not simply for the sharpness of her intellect but also for the fierceness of her passion and the depth of her person.

She is indeed a "memory of goodness." As Jews say, "May her memory be a blessing."

https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/eva-fleischner-jewish-catholic-scholar-leaves-behind-memory-goodness

Our Ladies of the Broken Egg *Simonetta Romano* USA

This painting is part of a series of "devotional" paintings - inspired by images created by European Renaissance artists - I have been working on to meditate on the unavoidable suffering we face when things fall apart and break. Painting "devotional" images is one way for me to search for meaning and for the human qualities I need in order to face reality and live fully at a time of crisis, like the present moment in the entire world.

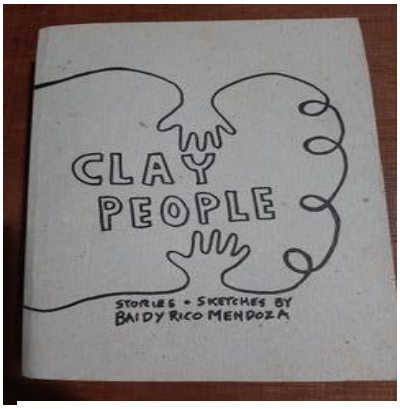
In Memory of Braidy Mendosa *The Grail in the Philippines*

On the morning of April 26, 2020, third Sunday of Easter, **Thebaida "Baidy" Mendoza**, joined her father, mother, brother and sisters in eternal peace. She passed on in her sleep. Her nephew, Nacho, his wife, Nina and their son, Nico provided loving company in their home for Baidy in her last years. She was nearing eighty-five years. Her family sent this message to us*: "Though we cannot come together, let us unite in prayers. She was an inspiration for many of us, a beloved friend, funny, time with her was full of life . . ."*

Baidy was a pioneer Grail member in the Philippines, working in Indonesia with an international Grail team prior to political turmoil there. Before this, Baidy had trained in de Tiltenberg, the Netherlands as well as in Grailville, Ohio where she learned making crafts with Trina Paulus. She was a clay artist and would share this skill with grassroots women during leadership seminars organized by the Philippine Grail in the late eighties and early nineties. During our 40th anniversary as Grail in the Philippines in 2015, we asked Baidy to mold clay Grail cups for us as souvenirs.

Baidy collected sayings / passages from Fr. Jacques van Ginneken, S.J., who inspired the early Dutch Grail members. This is a source book for us coupled with many love notes she would distribute to us during recollections or on liturgical feasts like Advent or Pentecost.

She shared much love with us with her zest for life, organic cooking, and fun activities.



Baidy extended warm hospitality to international Grail guests in her hometown Labrador, Pangasinan, Central Luzon with an artist's home and a nice beach.

Baidy treasured being a Filipino. In 1998, on centennial celebration of the Philippines as the first Asian republic, she launched "Clay People". It is a hand folded book on Filipino lives and humor, twenty real life stories with continuous line drawings. A nationalist journalist and multi-awarded author described "Clay People" as "fabulous."

We thank Baidy for her gifts of creativity, integrity, and fidelity, great blessings for us! Please join her family and the Philippine Grail in prayers for her eternal joy!

The Secret *Audrey Schomer* USA

"I will tell you a secret: We are all not going to die, but we shall all be changed." 1 Cor. 15:51

What in the flame attracts the moth
as it darts now close now far
seeming to dance to music
that none of us can hear?

Wing beating with abandon
to the rhythm of the flame
that cone of sunshine burning bright
beckoning, consuming, giving light.

Drawn by rays we cannot see
more violet than we can sense
What presses you to this fatal flight
More love and fear than you can bear?

What is the mystery in this fire?
The paradox that seems absurd
The moth in its dance of life
Chooses death, chooses light for its pyre.

Tell us your secret, my friend
Whisper it in the dark of night
Tell us the mystery of fire
So we may learn to dance in its light

If It Wasn't For Blood *Renee Womack Keels* USA

Created to honor the nine people killed in Charleston SC in 2015 at mother Emmanuel AME CHURCH. It travelled and was on display at Boston College and in Columbus.

The Memories of a Cyclone (English and Portugese) *Sadia Mariano* Grail Mozambique

A year has passed since Mozambique was hit by a fulminate cyclone, Idai, which rattled the sewing of our mother earth ... her children continue to struggle to remake life. The memories of the moment are still very much alive in us. Give homage to your, Mother Earth Beira, who saw your uterus torn apart without mercy, through this poem in silent cry.

One look we give you oh Mother!

The anguish fills me with pain to see your sadness and anguish in your drowning cry for help.

I see your wounds, ones that have courageously healed to give me comfort, a smile, a joy. Others that involve your gasp breath that does not disguise the raw opening of your wounds.

Oh my mother Beira! I know your past struggles facing the threats of your disappearance due to the aquatic invasion, I saw your suffocation caused by the sensation of nakedness that the creaking of the wind whistled and shook your roots.

It is difficult to find answers from the source of your strength, only your love and the continued compassion in wanting to breastfeed your children with breasts that day after day runs out of milk.

That is why I ask you for one thing, allow me to heal your wounds, clean them and heal them; I can no longer see you cry, because your cry weakens my joy and that of my brothers and sisters.

As memórias de um ciclone...

Passa já um ano que Moçambique foi assolado por um fulminante ciclone, o Idai, que rangeu a costura da nossa mãe terra...seus filhos continuam lutando para refazer a vida. As recordações do momento ainda estão bem vivas em nós. Dai a homenagem a si, Mãe Terra Beira, que viu seu útero dilacerado sem piedade, através deste poema em grito silencioso.

Um olhar damos a si oh Mãe!

Me enche de dor a aflição ver a sua tristeza e angustia no seu pranto afogante de pedido de socorro.

Eu vejo as suas feridas, umas que corajosamente cicatrizaste para dar-me um conforto, um sorriso, uma alegria. Outras que envolvem o seu suspiro afogante que não disfarça a abertura crua das suas feridas.

Oh minha mãe Beira! Conheço as suas lutas passadas voltadas às ameaças do seu desaparecimento pela invasão aquática, vi o seu sufoco causadas pela sensação de nudez que o ranger do assobio do vento atormentava e sacudia as suas raízes.

Custa encontrar respostas da proveniência da sua força, so seu amor e da continua compaixão em querer amamentar os seus irmãos com os seios que dia após dia vai ficando sem leite.

Por isso uma coisa eu te peço, permita-me curar as suas feridas, limpá-las e cicatriza-las; não consigo mais ver-te chorar, pois o seu choro desfalece a minha alegria e a dos meus irmãos.

Fabric Art *Elizabeth Schickel Robinson* USA

Winter Landscape with Cardinals
Elizabeth (Lebe) Schickel Robinson

Ohio Summer Night Alive with Fireflies
Elizabeth (Lebe) Schickel Robinson

Rejoice Red Tulips
Elizabeth (Lebe) Schickel Robinson

Lebe 1
Elizabeth (Lebe) Schickel Robinson

Grailville Back Pond Dragonfly
Elizabeth(Lebe) Schickel Robinson

After my mother's death in 2007 I received a few boxes of her textile scraps. I enjoyed opening and unfolding the carefully put away remnants. Some of them smelled like her. Quite a few I remembered from this and that over the years, homemaking projects like curtains, dresses, dish towels and table runners - some of which I remembered working on together.

The fabric pieces you see today are the result of time spent working with these remnants and weaving them together with memories of mom, who raised me with great love.

My mother had an eye and spirit for beauty. She helped root in me joy and spiritual sustenance in creation. Her steady warmth, love of life and wide-open eyes found continual delight in the extraordinary beauty of the ordinary.

This project was completed over 2 years as time allowed and was healing. It provided a dedicated time and space to grieve, reflect and be grateful. What resulted are simple images of creation that give me, and I believe her, much happiness.

Com a Esperança e Dor do Mundo *Manuela Alfanso* Portugal

Hoje o vento fustigou muito as árvores . Elas dançaram o ritmo da sobrevivência…

Dancei com elas enquanto ia lançando o adubo junto às raízes do alimento das árvores , na esperança de que a água da chuva prometida complete a acção, reforçando a força e resistência das raízes de fixação.

Apanhei as nozes, protegendo a cabeça, e que iam caindo rápidas como pedras dirigidas, também elas estonteadas pela força quase violenta do vento.

Eu ia pedindo ao vento que as afastasse para longe de mim. Ele acedeu. E lhe sou grata.

…Começou assim hoje a oração da manhã recheada de espectativas, riscos e cumplicidade com os elementos .

Como prece escolhi a canção " Vincent " by Don McLean que é dedicada a Vincent van Gogh,

Famous Painter from Holland. E hoje dedicada aqueles e aquelas que hoje, como ontem, habitam o planeta e nele vivem o momento complexo e histórico que partilhamos.

Que nosso coração se abra à Beleza, ao Mistério e ao Ritmo de Tudo o que vive e respira,

e que essa abertura fale a Ternura, gere Co - Criação, escreva Vias e Passos, Visões e Sonhos, Laços e Abraços

reforçando Vida e Esperança aos Humanos ,

que Sabedoria e Discernimento, ainda não envolveram.

Possamos assim nos abrir

ao segredo e ao brilho das noites

que transportam como grito

a Luz das estrelas.

Nota : excerto do diário de 19 de Outubro de 2020

Notes from a Diary Page *Manuela Alfanso* Portugal

Today the wind lashed the trees very hard. They danced the rhythm of survival...

I danced with them as I was throwing the fertilizer close to their food roots, hoping that the promised rainwater would complete the action, reinforcing the strength and the resistance of the fixing roots.

I picked the walnuts, protecting my head, as they were falling down fast like driven stones, also stunned by the almost violent force of the wind.

I kept asking the wind to drive them away from me. He acceded. And I am grateful to him.

Thus began today's morning prayer full of expectations, risks and complicity with the elements..

As a special prayer I chose the song "Vincent" by Don Maclean that is dedicated to Vincent van Gogh.

Famous painter from Holland. And today dedicated to those, men and women, who inhabit the planet and live on it the complex and historical moment we are sharing.

May our hearts be open to Beauty, to the Mystery and to the Rhythm of Everything that lives and breathes.

And may this opening speak Tenderness, generate Co-creation, write Paths and Steps, Visions and Dreams, Ties and Hugs

strengthening Life and Hope to the Humans,

that wisdom and discernment have not yet involved.

Thus may we open ourselves

To the secret and the brightness of the nights

That carry as a scream

The light of the stars.

Note: excerpt from the diary of 19 October 2020

Haikus *Deirdre Cornell* USA

from her latest book: Walk on Air: Haiku over the Hudson, poems for mindfulness Finishing Line Press (Kentucky), 2020

Wherever you are,
Stop, look around. Breathe. Is this
Where you find yourself?

The present moment:
Now – and there is only now –
Be here, on this bridge.

I almost did not
Notice one tremb'ling, green leaf.
Then I stopped. And did.

Waiting patiently
for my attention, Your voice,
Holy One, calms me.

"So…are you happy?"
Suddenly – flock, birds, wings, flight.
Yes. I am happy.

Art in the Pandemic *Mindy Burger* USA

I have been really fortunate to be able to continue my regular yoga practice with my yoga teacher via zoom. She pointed out the irony/connection that at the very moment the earth itself is struggling to breathe, we are faced with a pandemic which has as a primary symptom...the inability to breathe. These first few pieces were inspired by that awareness.

The giant lotus was done as part of a group project with our local community art center. During the shutdown, folks from around the neighborhood could pick up materials from their front porch and create flowers representing messages and/or hopes for the community, a coded language of flowers called floriography. (https://kennedyarts.org/learn/) I constructed this giant lotus which has the meta prayer on it's leaf. It now sits outside the Local grade school.

The Flatlands *Sharon Thomson* USA

This could be forever, finally
field after field wheat
and a dance and the wind weaves
in a long rush: gold.
Waves of it, that soft hiss
from here to the distant edge
where it looks like
you can fall off the world
but you don't. We know that.
Breathe.

It's morning. The sky is on
on every side of us, far away
out there clinging
to the ground.

We will Meet Again *Alice Fernandes* Portugal

Título: ... "sentou-se à beira do poço"

"A fé nasce da escuta" (Romanos 10,17) e nasce também da sede.
No encontro de Jesus com a samaritana é revelado o dom da água da vida (João 4, 5 – 42)

Há que sentar-se na beira
do poço da sombra
e pescar luz caída
com paciência

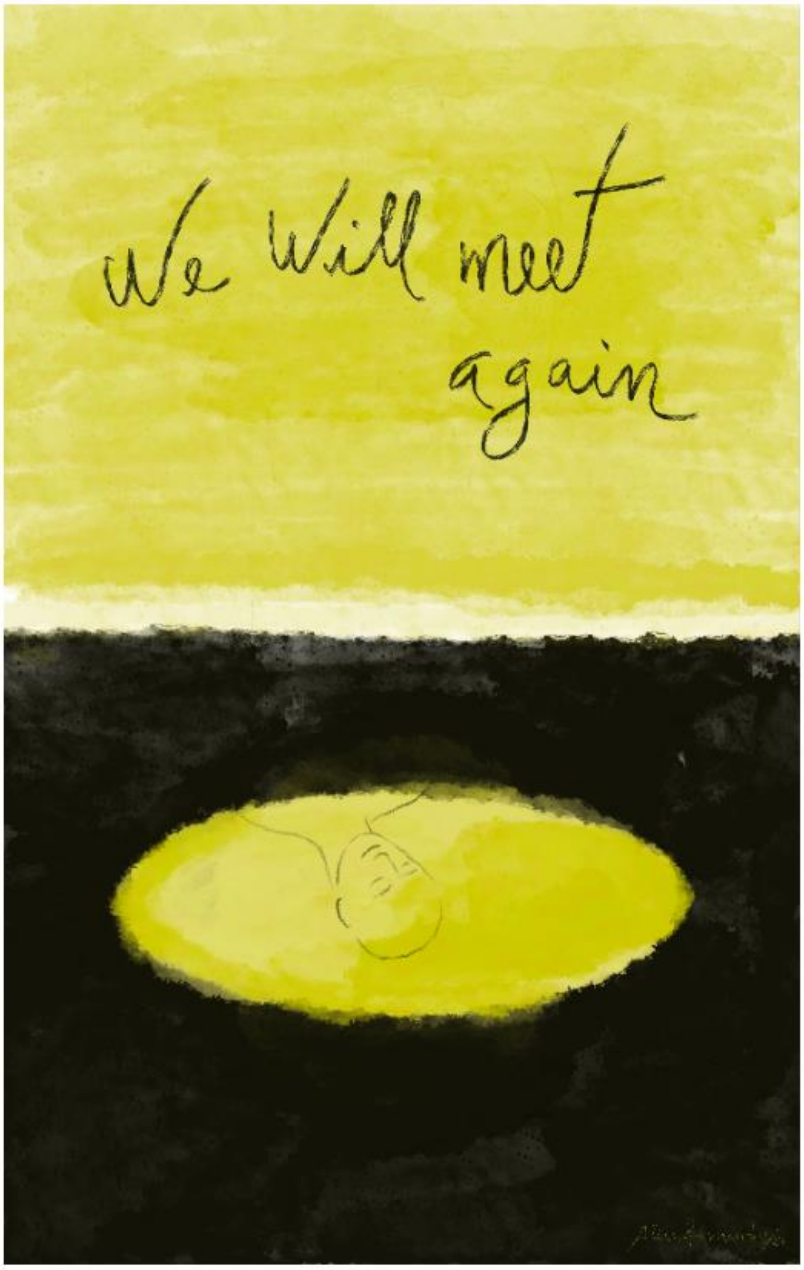
-Pablo Neruda

Title: ... "he sat by the well"

"Faith is born out of listening" (Romans 10:17) and is also born out of thirst.
In Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman, the gift of the water of life is revealed (John 4, 5 - 42)

You have to sit on the edge
of the well of shadows
and fish for fallen light
with patience

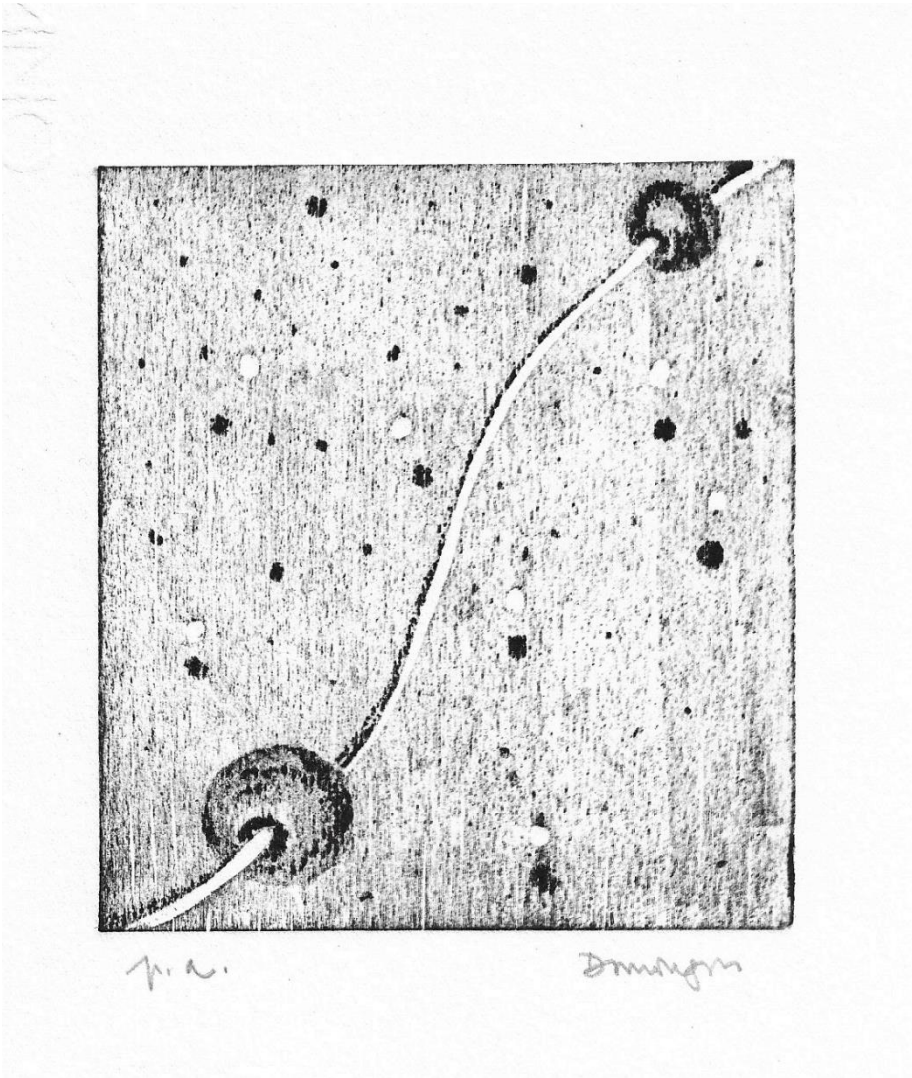
-Pablo Neruda



Alice Fernandes shares the image of a work she did this year in Portugal for an exhibition during the initiative "Meetings in Grijó" at the Monastery with the same name.

“What appears written in the drawing seems inconsistent with the title of the work, but what I try to say is that the attentive listening of the other ("he sat by the well") can nurture our reunion with God (We will meet again).”

Something Binds US ***Domingas Vasconcelos*** **Portugal**



The Grandchild *Carol Siemering* USA

This was submitted on the advice of Mary (Scooter) Heidkamp, a way to share in the celebration of those of you who have recently had this experience. It is also a way to end this issue in love, in joy and most of all…in hope!

The Grandchild

How can there be such
flesh wrapped joy?

I am utterly undone.

Is he not the bone of the bone of my bone?
His mother his aunt
were once small-wonderful
and yet
he touches places in me
yet untouched.

As if the drapes to a window
have been drawn aside at last
to reveal a place so new so verdant—
where each emergent growth
is wrapped in radiant light
attended to and clarified.

ah

In these my yonder years
on some deep level of which
I am only dimly aware—
my cells salute
in a pure and primal way
their own progeny—
mitochondria and starstuff
which carry on in his sweet self.

In this rare garden then
in reverence in awe
as I might before a Buddha sit—
I bathe here
in this
remarkable
baby
bliss.