

INNER HEALING AND SOUL CONNECTION

Tony Devaney

For those who are travelling as pilgrims on a spiritual path, apparent inactivity and illness may at times conceal an intense interior activity and purpose, a hidden process of transformation and evolution of consciousness. Such a process involves an alternation between discipline and spontaneity, between creative striving and receptiveness or submission to a higher Will.

Over the last few years recurring health problems have made it difficult at times for me to interact socially or to communicate verbally and have restricted my mobility. I have however continued to experience an ongoing and deepening sense of spiritual connection and unfolding.

There are times during prolonged adversity, even apparent catastrophe or misfortune, when one may reach a point of giving way, of realising that individual effort though essential to our development can only take us so far on life's journey. At such times a higher consciousness may intervene, often when we least expect it. We may have a vision of light, an externalised form of the light which exists within our own soul, which draws us on towards a greater light - the source of all Being.

This first happened for me in 1978, when I was going through a difficult divorce and a period of career change and personal growth. The powerful and transforming experience combined word and vision, giving rise to my poem, *The Journey*. Although since writing the poem, I have encountered many helpful voices and visions along my spiritual path, I know that genuine spiritual development is also about entering the darkness, the 'cloud of unknowing,' to discover the spirit within which is the source of all true wisdom. The working of grace in our lives flows from such a connection.

THE JOURNEY

The game is known now
The clouds are burning,
Wheels within wheels
Of inner self
Inexorably turning

Bright orange vision of the fire
Which threatens to consume me,
Yet silhouettes my child-self
And brings life's meaning
Closer to me

Explosions of feeling
Are thrown out
Like flares Upon the Sun
Time hangs alone - Suspended
The j o u r n e y has begun

I have always practised the art of ‘not knowing’ of refusing whenever possible to absorb inappropriate information for my own stage of spiritual development. I have resolutely pursued my own inner and outer path with all the light and shadow, joy and suffering, that this entails.

For as long as I can remember there has always been a higher invisible presence at my shoulder, leading me on. John Henry Newman's verse, *Lead Kindly Light*, has over many years had great resonance for me. Its echo is present in my own short poem, *Earthly Years*. (1980)

EARTHLY YEARS

A need to fail - a will to win,
To find the truth is to begin.
Each moment glows as it appears
To light the way through earthly years,
When constructs change
And don't belong –
And Life is an eternal Song.

In June 2016, I moved to Clevedon in Somerset. Soon afterwards I wrote the following poem.

LIFE ETERNAL

(Written 25th July 2016, above St Andrews Church, Clevedon)

The splendour of a sunlit bay
Viewed from upon Church Hill.
The coast of Wales, a yacht's white sails
The water calm and still.

On Poets walk a lark ascends
Reminding me of absent friends,
Their spirit now so close to me
In golden radiance on the sea.

And on a seat where pilgrims rest
These lines reveal the spirit's quest.
'I am a thousand winds that blow
I am the diamond glints on snow

I am the sunlight on ripened grain
I am the gentle autumn rain.'
At one with nature, sea and sky
Who knows real Peace will never die.

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(Original text 2008, Edited and revised February 2017)