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What Canst Thou Say?

Friends • Mystical Experience • Contemplative Practice

*You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this: but what canst thou say?
Art thou a child of Light and hast thou walked in the Light, and what thou speakest,
is it inwardly from God? —George Fox*

Angels

The One Sent to Help Alicia Adams

I was homeless and ill. Following my guidance, I found myself in a park in Wickenburg, Arizona. “Now what?” I asked my spiritual Teachers, who were guiding me step by step.

“Wait!” they told me. “We are sending someone to meet you. Perhaps they will offer their assistance.”

It was getting dark and cold. I felt very alone as I waited in the deserted park. I was also getting frightened. I sensed that someone was watching me. I caught glimpses of him as he moved between the bushes, his attention focused on me. I packed up my notebook, which I used to communicate with my Teachers, and prepared to move to the other side of the park. He stumbled into the open, headed for me.

He was old and shabbily dressed and, as he approached, I noted that he was none too clean. He staggered a bit. “A drunk,” I thought. No one to fear but also no one I wished to be with! I got quickly to my feet and picked up my pack.

“All alone, Dearie?” he asked me.

“No, I’m just waiting for friends to pick me up,” I replied.

“I didn’t mean to frighten you, Dearie,” he continued. “I thought that if you were all alone, you might like to come home with me.”

That was the last thing I wanted to do! I thanked him politely but said my friends would be here soon. He staggered off. Relieved, I sat down again and pulled out my notebook. “What now?” I wrote. “It’s getting dark and cold. I can’t stay here.”

“You refused his help.”

“Who?” I wrote. “I didn’t talk to anybody—except that old drunk!”

“That old drunk, as you call him, is the one sent to help you.”

I was stunned. “What do you mean? I can’t go with him! Why would you send him to me?”

“God doesn’t see him as you do,” was the reply. “God sees his heart. He wanted to help you. He knows all about being lonely.”

I was shown, then, that God sees our love—not our outer appearances. Of all the people in the town, this man was the only one to offer to share what he had with me. I was broken down in my pride; I was ashamed. When he returned, to repeat his invitation, I went home with him. I slept on a couch on the front porch of his very small trailer. It was very dirty—strewn with his clothes and dirty dishes. At one point, I tried to clean for him. “I don’t need you for cleaning!” he corrected me. “I need you for company!” Thus I learned that a drunk may be an angel, the one sent to help.

Alicia Adams is a member of Berkeley Meeting, California.

From the Editors:

Many believe in guardian angels. There are also those who fiercely oppose the notion of God acting directly in our contemporary world. These are stories of individuals who encountered a loving presence. Can it be that many are helped—and help others—unaware of the Grace that moves through us?

*Mike Resman and Judy Lumb
Editors for this Issue*

Breath and Angelic Presence

Judith Favor

A totally new (for me) form of angelic breath-presence happened the week after Easter during the 2008 conference of Spiritual Directors International. After a contemplative plenary session I found myself caught in the crowd, moving at the speed of six hundred participants making our patient way toward the reception for authors. As the crowd came to a standstill I was greeted in a kind voice by a man standing very close beside me. I turned toward him and flippantly asked, "Do you recognize any famous writers in the room?" He paused for a moment then tenderly replied, "All of them. All of us. Each person is famous to God."

That deepened the conversation. We chatted for awhile at the edge of the room, eyes at the same level and shoulders touching. I noticed the sweetness of his breath. A palpable sense of goodness and mercy flowed on his breath as we shared impressions and ideas. After awhile the crowd thinned out and we parted with ease. Two bites of cheese

later I realized that I felt complete. I decided to return to my hotel room rather than engage in conversation with any of the famous authors.

I felt curiously enlivened that night, too excited to sleep, so I spent longer than usual counting my blessings. During an extended gratefulness examen it dawned on me that I had received an unexpected gift. The sweet breath of a stranger had imbued me with great Life energy. The longer I reflected on the experience, the more I sensed the scent of the Holy Spirit in it. So this is what Ruah tastes like! Could this kind man be an angel sent from God, a messenger carrying the very fragrance that the disciples smelled when the risen Christ breathed on them?

As the conference went on I wondered if I'd ever see this mysterious angel again. If we did meet, would I be brave enough to speak of my experience? I wasn't sure that I could describe it in any way that would make sense.

Three days later we crossed paths again. Something in his gaze invited me to risk it. Would you be willing to hear about the intimate taste of Spirit I experienced in your presence?" I

blurted. He was. The angel in the cable-knit sweater met my eyes and listened with care. When I was finished he simply said, "So that's how it happens." I think he meant resurrection, though I can't be certain. I nodded. "Yes, that's how it happens." We nodded in mutual understanding and continued in separate directions. It was enough.

There's nothing like a mysterious angelic encounter to reaffirm the essence of Eastertide. Each breath is precious to me these days, sweeter than ever before. I savor John's Gospel account of the Risen Christ breathing on the apostles. I now taste that sweet breath, too, as I "Receive the Holy Spirit" and pass it along to those I encounter along life's way.

Judith Favor is a member of Claremont Friends Meeting, is active in Southern California Quarterly Meeting, and offers retreats at Ben Lomond Quaker Center

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## Angel in a Trench Coat

Jacqueline Z. W. Hannah

Monday, April 28, 2008, 5:59 a.m.

I dreamed last night of innocence. A police detective in a long coat has come to question me as a witness. It becomes clear he knows a lot about me. I share some small thing about my life to give context to what I am saying to him and he already knows this small, personal thing. I suppose I should notice and start to be worried, but I am not, at least not yet. Then I bring up the murder.

I am living in a very large home that is shared by five or six people as I was in '94. But in the dream, unlike reality, a woman has been murdered in that house during the time I was living there. When I bring up the murder I

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am very calm at first, very matter-of-fact about it, just a side note brought up as part of another point. But the detective's response, "Yeah, we are still looking for a left-handed person connected to that," sent chills down my spine. I am left-handed.

Is this what this officer is really here about? Is he here to trick me? Does he think I am the missing murderer? The conversation goes on as if he never mentioned it, as if it is just a conversational aside too unrelated to our topic to even comment on, but I strongly suspect it was done on purpose, to get a rise out of me. I feel guilty, horribly guilty. Was I involved? Had I been an accomplice?

I am afraid I was an accomplice of some kind. My conscience feels blood-stained and shamed, but I do not know why. I have no clear memory of ever doing anything that day, though I was in the house when it happened. I have only my conscience to go by, and it feels filthy. The conversation with the detective continues as I search inside myself. The detective moves on to interview another potential witness who is waiting in the next room.

I notice that we are in my grandmother's house, full of good memories for me and yet the constant ghost of knowing. These walls contain the history of all the rage and abuse my grandfather showered on my grandmother, my mother, my aunts and uncles. And I begin to feel suspicious of myself. I look back at my life and it isn't just this murder, for I have been close to many crimes and acts of violence. Perhaps I am pretending to be an innocent bystander to all of these events, but beneath my hazy denials I am actually part of the violence in each one. Perhaps I am guilty, guilty, guilty.

I go after the detective and ask if I can speak to him again. "If, hypothetically, someone were to share information about someone else that



Helen



## Gifts of Angels

Judy Lumb

**H**elen Hufendick has been a friend of my mother (Blanche Morrell) for many years. When my mother's breast cancer recurred in December of 2006, Helen began visiting regularly. With every visit she brought a gift, usually a statue of an angel. I thought they were angels to care for my mother, but Helen said she always thought of my mother as an angel. Mother died peacefully at home on August 16th. A few days later Mother called to me to wake me up. Now she is an angel.



Blanche

might have been involved in a crime, would, oh, never mind . . ." Why am I asking this? I don't know, but I suspect myself of being about to share some false testimony to send the cop off in some other direction to make myself look innocent of being the bad, bad person I am.

As I am talking to the cop, I realize two things. One, I am naked from the waist up. Two, I really am scared of turning over some knowledge that might help in that old murder case. There is something buried in that haze of memory that is coming to the surface and I am trembling with it. I think, "Why even tell him? He must think I am a horrible criminal because he knows enough about me to know I was nearby or a witness to all those crimes. He won't believe me."

But I do tell him, words just come as I wrap my arms around myself and shake. "I wasn't the only left-handed person in that house," I say quietly, staring at the wall next to his head. "I was in the house. I did hear something. There was this man; I don't think I ever knew his name.

"I should have called the cops, but I didn't know back then you could call 911 about something like that. That I could just say, 'Hey, I heard this short

female scream and then this thump on the floor above me and I don't know that anything bad happened but I have a bad feeling,' I thought I'd get in trouble for making a non-emergency call to 911, that they would just tell me to go check it myself."

I look up at the detective, wanting something but not knowing what, too far gone now to try to protect myself from how exposed I am physically and emotionally. His eyes are not hard, I even sense some kindness in them—had it been there all along? Is it my own expectation that he is looking to find me guilty that has made me think he is trying to trick me into confessing to something?

His exact words escape me now, but he tells me that he knows about the other left-handed person in the house, that he knows it is a man, that he has a vague description of him but nothing else and that he has never suspected me. His words are gentle, and with his gentleness it comes to me that I really am innocent. I have not done anything wrong, I was never a part of a murder or any of those other things I witnessed just because I was not able to prevent them or to do something about it afterwards. In none of those circumstances was I in a position to do anything; if I

*had done anything I was likely to have gotten hurt myself at worst, disbelieved and ignored at best.*

There is a sense of lightness since I woke up from that dream. The cliché is true, “I feel as if a great weight has been lifted from me.” Not from my shoulders, but from my chest and stomach. I feel as if my lungs are opening more deeply, more easily, are taking in so much more oxygen with so much less effort than before. I feel wrapped in great and gentle arms, like a child that has found solace in a parent’s embrace and is believed, cherished.

“What was that dream all about?” I ask myself. I suppose I don’t really need to know, but as I ask myself things float to the surface. Times that I was in the house when a friend’s parents were drunk and slapped her so hard that blood was coming from her mouth. Times when a friend’s parents said horrible, shaming, untrue things to her in front of all of us at her birthday party and I wanted to kill them. I never knew I felt so guilty about it, that I had felt such shame for not protecting them all or speaking up for them—until now, when the responsibility has been lifted from my shoulders by Spirit dressed in a detective’s trench coat. I still want to be able to go back and stop those things from happening, but I no longer feel shame. I just feel like having a good cry.

*Jacqueline Hannah is a member of Urbana-Champaign meeting, Illinois. She has a calling to bring whole foods, not produced by slave labor, to the community through the Common Ground food coop.*



*One of the angels presented to Blanche by Helen (p. 3)*

## Our Names Are Known

Carol Roth

In the summer of 1972 there came an opportunity that my husband Frank felt he couldn’t pass up. He had been offered employment on a missile base site on the atoll of Kwajalein in the South Pacific. He would leave immediately and then send for me and our five-year-old daughter Susan to join him. This change would also give us a break in our stormy marriage. Frank was a deeply troubled man, given to bouts of physical abuse. I had sought help from his beatings from clergy, from the police. There were no support groups available, and shelters for abused women were non-existent. I had learned to become a silent victim, to pretend all was well. Now, it seemed as though there was a possibility that everything could really change for us. I watched him board his plane, his face happy, hopeful.

All of a sudden, this formerly cold, always angry man was sending warm, loving tapes home. He spoke of the beauty of the South Pacific, of the housing he was securing for us, of how much he missed us. I obeyed his orders to sell everything we owned to fly out to join him.

It turned out to be the worst decision I ever made. Frank was there when our plane landed. His face was dark and angry as he led us to another plane that would take us five hundred miles to a tiny atoll called Majuro. At the last moment housing for Susan and me on Kwajalein had fallen through. We would have to stay on Majuro while he flew in once every thirty days to check on us. It was going to cost him extra money and he was livid at the cost.

Frank hardly looked at his child. When our plane landed at Majuro he took us to a run-down crowded house filled with feces and filth, swarming with flies. For the next three months Susan and I lived in a tiny room,

existing mostly on tuna covered with so many roaches it looked as if it was moving; gray, moldy bread and bloody chicken. Frank did fly in once a month, forcing me to have sex with him. He berated me for losing weight and for Susie and me always being ill.

We escaped because a kind Marshallese neighbor contacted a visiting doctor who was making tours of the atolls. Frank was warned back on Kwajalein to send us back to the States. Furious, he complied and provided airfare for Susan and me. We staggered off the plane into the waiting arms of relatives. Susan was covered with lice and open sores. I weighed seventy pounds. But we were alive, we were together, and he could not hurt us anymore.

My sister and her husband moved us into their home. The first few weeks passed in an exhausted haze. Susan had a fever that would not come down. I did call an attorney and told him I wanted to file for divorce. Meanwhile, my sister took my daughter to her family doctor, who stated Susan would need extensive and expensive tests to determine what kind of parasites had infected her. We had no medical insurance card. I had no money, no job, and was in no condition to search for one. My sister and her husband could not afford to have my daughter treated. My sister told me we could still have Frank pay for the tests. Though we were separated, he was legally responsible for her care until we were divorced. I was stunned when she further told me that Frank had quit his job, flown home and was now living in a neighboring state. He had called to tell her that he was sorry that everything had gone so wrong.

Sick in body, broken in spirit, I called him. I pleaded with him to send me the medical card I needed to have tests done for Susan. He stipulated if I wanted the card, I would have to meet him where he lived. My sister was giving Susan a bath when I slipped out of

the house and took a bus to meet with Frank. Once in the city I boarded the El and finally arrived at the meeting place. I saw him waiting in his car and moved slowly toward it, praying, praying that he would just give me the card and let me leave in peace.

My stomach and face hurt from the blows that Frank delivered the second I entered the car. My head reeled from the filthy words he screamed at me. Empty-handed and without the card I needed for Susan, I had yanked open the door and lurched down the steaming hot, dirty, deserted city street. From behind, I heard the screech of his tires as he sped away.

I moved closer to the brick wall of an abandoned factory building, its windows and doors boarded up. The sky overhead had suddenly darkened with threatening storm clouds.

I began to shiver. I felt so alone. There had been times of such hunger and fatigue on the island, yet I had always felt God was with me and that Susan and I would survive. But now, all I could feel was emptiness. I didn't know what to do. How was I going to provide for my daughter, support her and myself? Oh, God, I was so tired. Was there no way to end this cycle of darkness, no way to escape all this pain?

From inside of me there came a thought so sharp and loud that I had to stop walking. My husband had life insurance policies on my daughter and me. I had already begun proceedings for the divorce and I had custody of our

daughter. I wasn't certain, but the fact we were divorcing could mean that if I died, my life insurance money would go to my daughter. Frank's treatment of us, especially the condition that Susan and I were in after our stay on Majuro, would prove his neglect and cruelty. Surely, he would never be granted custody of her. With my life insurance money my sister could afford to give Susan everything she needed. Yes, this was the way out. My death would secure the lifestyle Susan deserved.

I began to hurry, staggering as I went. The El platform was ahead. I would jump from the platform onto the tracks. It was nearing rush hour, the trains would be packed with people, and no one would notice me.

"Carol." What was that? Where was that voice coming from? I tried to move faster through the thick, humid air. I had to do this before I lost my nerve.

"Carol." I turned and saw a man keeping pace with my steps. He looked like a common, everyday worker dressed in a green plaid shirt and light brown chinos. He was looking right at me. His facial features were fine but not delicate. He had an aquiline nose and a strong chin. His hair was medium length and soft brown. His eyes startled me. They were so beautiful, dark brown and so clear, filled with compassion. I felt strange and trembled inside. No one had ever looked at me this way. I could feel warmth flowing from him toward me.

"How do you know my name?" I



*Ink drawing by Marcella Beaty who writes, "In my experience, angels aren't always beaming with radiance; they have been quiet, basically mute, yet solid...like stone...like statuary"*

stammered. What did he want? Where did he come from? He had appeared out of nowhere. Whoever he was, he was keeping me from concentrating on what I had to do. I had no time for this.

"Oh, we know your name. We know what you are intending to do. We know about Susan also."

Absolute shock coursed through my body. I stopped my onward thrust toward the El. I faced him and cried out, "How do you know her name? How do you know my daughter's name?"

"We know everything," he replied. "Don't do it, Carol. Don't do it."

I shrank back from him. My heart was pounding, pounding. I began to walk again, trying to get away from him. Angrily, I cried, "I have to do this! You don't understand! I am not a good mother. I can't give Susan anything she needs. Leave me alone. I have to do this!"

"No, you do not. Susan has everything that she needs in the love you feel for her. The two of you will be fine."

Oh, his voice. It covered me,

WCTS Editor Mariellen Gilpin was interviewed about the book listed below on "Keepin' the Faith" November 25, 2007. You can listen to it at: [will.uiuc.edu/am/ktf](http://will.uiuc.edu/am/ktf)

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spreading warmth and love through me. He continued to speak, each word deliberate, steady. *“Your life is important, Carol. Each life has great purpose and meaning. There is work ahead for you to do. Don’t do this. Go home to Susan. She’s waiting for you.”*

Shame filled me. I looked away from him. I could not bear to look into his eyes, so filled with a beautiful inner light. Total love and acceptance came from this stranger. Oh, God, what had I been thinking of! I turned to tell him I had changed my mind. I would go back to my daughter and do my best to give her the life she deserved.

He was gone! He had not passed by me. How had he left so quickly? The air was suddenly still and it had changed. It felt cleaner, sweeter, and I could breathe easier. I reached the El station. I purchased my token and joined the other people ready to board the train. I felt as though I were moving in a cocoon of peace, protected from all harm.

As I settled into my seat on the train, I stared down at the street. Only moments before the stranger appeared, it had seemed to be so ugly, dark, and cold. But now the sun was streaming and the streets bustled with people moving about in the Light. With renewed strength and determination, I rode the train back to the daughter that I had almost left behind.

I write this so others can know that we are loved with a Love that has no limits, that knows all of our faults and accepts us just as we are. As you stagger in the darkness, as you search for meaning in a life that seems cold and empty, know this: you are never alone. There is one who walks alongside of you, who is waiting to speak with you. Believe this: Our Names Are Known.

*Carol Roth* formerly served on the WCTS editorial team and resigned due to chronic health problems. She wrote this story in between doctor appointments and plans for further surgeries.

## As Real as Friendship

Barbara Clearbridge  
(Shulamith Eagle)

This is a story about a time which was a mere five seconds in duration. I had just moved to Seattle and knew only two people. I had a bit of savings, so I decided to volunteer for the World Peace Event, a series of events happening around the world on New Year’s Eve, 1986. I worked in the Seattle office full time for three months, helping to arrange our very large event at the King Dome (a football stadium). It was

### Worship

Mike Resman

*Closing my eyes*

*I rest in the arms of the Lord.*

*Quiet settles*

*stirred by the rustling of angels.*

*Expectant silence*

*waits to hear again the word of God.*

*In community*

*celebrating*

*this taste of heaven.*

Mike Resman recently retired because he felt called to a new career—praying. He spends hours each day in prayer activities: silent prayer, walking in parks, and cross stitching children’s clothing for a homeless shelter. In order to leave adequate time for prayer, he has avoided taking on other tasks. He continues to follow a long-term call to write. He is Clerk of Rochester, Minnesota, Friends Meeting.

a huge effort by dozens of volunteers and only three paid staff people. According to the Director, I was in charge of the spirits of the volunteers. I kept things light and harmonious and moving along well, helped solve problems, and pitched in wherever there was a need.

The worldwide Peace Events would culminate with a period of silence when we would all pray for or meditate about peace, simultaneously, all over the Earth. Because this silent time turned out to be at 4:00 A.M. Seattle time, we scheduled four hours of entertainment starting at midnight. I was on quite a high from the exciting week before the event through the night itself. Our event drew several thousand people and went off quite well.

The impact on me of the whole experience was massive. I got sick the day afterwards with extreme fatigue and a high fever. It was a mighty physical and emotional crash, probably from the loss of the intense, intimate camaraderie and the adrenaline on which I’d been living. I felt alone again—no one called me or seemed to care.

For years I’d had a spiritual guide—not a human being but someone who existed on what I can only describe as an energetic level. I communicated with him by listening or writing. Now, on my fourth day in bed, all his kind words were wasted on me. I told him I wanted comfort from someone with a body. I needed to be held, to be hugged. I lay in bed, miserable, listening to his silence. Then I was hugged. Somehow I got a loving embrace from my invisible guide. Talk about unseen hands! It scared me so badly I didn’t communicate with him for months! Who was it who’d told me to be careful what I asked for because I might get it?!

It’s difficult to describe what the hug was like, because as soon as I actually felt something, I freaked! It felt exactly like a human person, a warm,

sympathetic, dear old friend, putting his arms, filled with love, around me. I had no sense of the rest of his body—just his arms and his gargantuan, enfolding love, that carried with it feelings of respect for me and my own worthiness. I became more fully aware later—after I was over the shock of discovering that the other world I only thought I believed in was real as nails. No, better: as real as friendship.

I treasured the memory of that moment. I eventually ended up teaching workshops on how to find one's guide, and I included a way to be touched in the exercises we did. Nearly always someone has had a breakthrough and the spiritual world, once again, proves itself real.

Within a few years of this experience, I grew into a healer and medical intuitive. When I had—or have, even now—a client beyond my skills, I can borrow, so to speak, my guide's eyes. Then my vision expands until I can see what needs to be done. Sometimes, if I'm not able to provide what's needed, my guide will work through my hands. The energies I feel at those times are distinctive—different frequencies and far more powerful than what I can gather or generate. (In fact, they are so distinctive that a perceptive, long-standing client could tell when my guide began to help me.) My body could barely tolerate these energies at first, and after only a few minutes I would break out in a sweat, get dizzy, and have to let go of him. Over the years, as I've grown stronger and more skilled and grounded, he's taught me more and more and I need him much less often. Still, he always shows up when I call. At the start of sessions I always ask for help from the guides of my clients, too. Sometimes their presence and help is palpable.

People have suggested it's really some part of me that I'm accessing, but it isn't. When I've asked for proof, my guide has provided it. He's proved

it again on many occasions when my students call on him without my knowing, to help them. And then there is that hug!

*Barbara Clearbridge (Shulamith Eagle) has recently moved to Vermont and now attends Burlington Friends Meeting.*



## Shishey

Wendy Clarissa Geiger

My mother, Julia, told me that the first meaningful word I uttered at six months was “Shishey”, the name of my early childhood imaginary friend—the lead one among others. Shishey was often present at play and meals and the subject of long stories I'd tell my mother or grandmother. Though I didn't see her with my eyes, I felt her with my heart-mind. My family let her and me be without derision.

Within the first two years of formal schooling, Shishey's presence and my memories of her diminished. At age eleven, I understood that children's imaginary friends are what adults call angels. That made perfect sense to me. Several years later I had a vision of the group of about eight angels that have “charge over” me. Its memory still brings comfort, love and gratitude (and gleeful amazement that it takes

that many angels to tend to me—for this lifetime, at least). Shishey is Chinese and the only child (about age ten) among them. Three others are clear to me (except for their faces): a tall Black African woman wearing a long robe; a Caucasian man named Bob wearing a modern gray business suit; and a Caucasian woman named Donna who appeared briefly to me once “in the flesh” wearing a short black skirt and simple silver blouse with silver sparkles at her face.

When I was in my early 20's, I was invited to attend a special service at a Spiritual Baptist Church in Jacksonville. At one point, my friend's father asked me if I knew a little Chinese girl named Sing Chi who he could see standing near me. Ah-ha! So that's Shishey's “real” name, I thought. Not long thereafter, I asked a server in a Chinese restaurant what the name Sing Chi meant in Chinese. She responded, “It means lady with much personality.”

I sense Shishey/Sing Chi is the name of my soul and that I lived a life in this place of existence as Sing Chi, where my image of her comes. One angel, a Caucasian named Caleb, was present for a few years in my 20's until I no longer needed his help and until he chose to be born to human friends

### **Tell Us Your Stories!**

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of mine to learn more lessons. Now named Genevieve, she just graduated from college! I sense that some angels are with me for lifetimes and some of my interests, tastes, and hobbies are really those of the angels I've adopted.

Once while washing dishes at the kitchen sink, I thought to my angels, "Do all angels have wings?" Immediately, within me, yet also from nearby, I heard the answer: "*If you need them.*" Another time, I heard-felt the Voice (I call God or Spokesangel) say, "*In this society, it is socially acceptable to believe in angels but not to know them intimately.*"

In and out of Quaker meeting for worship, I listen and sense with my heart-mind for guidance and messages from my angels. I constantly work on being sensitive to my angels and acknowledge their presence, even though I don't see them with my physical eyes.

*Wendy Clarissa Geiger, 44, is a Caucasian woman who attends Jacksonville, Florida, Friends Meeting and helps tend the work of Worship and Ministry Committee of Southeastern Yearly Meeting.*



## My Guardian Angel?

Verna Neidigh

Early on the day of the Blizzard of 1978, when I left my home to keep an appointment less than an hour's drive away, I fully expected to be home by noon, long before the predicted snowstorm. Instead, by 11:00 AM I was struggling past ditched cars, trying to drive from Knox, Indiana, through heavy snow to reach US 30, a distance of about seven miles. After an hour I finally turned east onto US 30 into a white-out of blinding snow. Nevertheless, as long as I could follow the faint red tail-lights of the semi-truck ahead, I felt somewhat safe.

However, when the red lights disappeared, so did the safe feeling. Not knowing what else to do, I kept on driving, creeping along in the zero visibility. Fearful questions popped into my mind. Would my car be rear-ended? Would a truck hit the car? Was I even on the highway? Where was I, anyway? What should I do? No answers came until from deep inside me, a silent voice commanded, *Stop!* I stopped the car.

Before I could bundle up in my emergency blanket and otherwise prepare for what might be a long wait, a youngish, bearded man appeared at my window. Although the man startled me, I wasn't frightened, perhaps because he reminded me of my younger son John, beard and all. Even his pickup truck was similar to John's. Therefore, when the man couldn't make himself heard through my window, and I wasn't about to lower the window to the blizzard's fury, I motioned for him to come around the front and into the car.

As we sat beside each other, he told me where we were: on the left shoulder of the eastbound lanes. He also explained that the Grovertown Truck Stop was just north of us, across

the median and two westbound lanes. Furthermore, he knew where we could safely cross the median and westbound lanes.

I'm not sure which of us drove my car across to the truck stop. However, I do recall soon entering the truck stop's dining room, staring around at the roomful of men. With great relief I saw a lone lady anxiously beckoning to me from a booth. Delighted to join her, I learned that she'd already been stranded there for two hours. When by evening all of us were still stranded, I asked for a room for the night. Only one was available, with a double bed for us two ladies. In the morning the way was clear for us both to drive to our respective homes.

What about my youngish benefactor? All I know is that after we reached the truck stop, I saw him no more. At the time, I thought it wonderfully strange that he'd known where we were and that he'd helped me to my truck stop haven. In recent years, I've come to believe he was one of God's messengers, an angel. I'm at peace and in awe with that belief.

Note: In 1998 I contacted the truck stop for the names and phone numbers of any employees who were there that

## We Are All Fallen Angels

Carmen Bruce

*I've never thought of myself as having angels. Or, I've never named the Other in those encounters as such. But, suffice it to say, my celestial exchanges are continuous, sometimes enormous, sometimes subtle, always a surprise, and often humbling.*

*One of the reasons I love books and any place I find them—libraries, bookstores, meeting houses—is because they call to me (direct me, lead me, challenge me, inspire me, befriend me). Today, it happened again at the new book section of McCabe Library on the Swarthmore campus. I picked up the book *Fallen Angels* by Harold Bloom, looked at the back and found the statement that we are all fallen angels. The beauty of that small yet compelling book is that it named me today, and for the first time, I didn't feel guilty, ashamed, or bad about myself. In fact, I found it rather humorous and affirming, and thought not only do I have lots of company but I am in good company. Isn't life a hoot?*

# Letters to the Editor

day and night. I was given one waitress, Vi Hanselman. According to Vi, she and the other employees on duty then were stranded for three days, without relief, except to take turns sleeping. As of January of 2008, Vi was still employed at the Grovertown Truck Stop.

The other day, as Bob and I rode past the truck stop, we couldn't help but notice the access road my angel and I possibly took to cross the median. However, I cannot imagine my driving across the median anywhere, obliterated as it was by the blizzard. Neither would it have been practical for my angel to have exchanged seats with me to do the driving. I do know I ended up in the truck stop with my car in the parking lot, leaving my benefactor there, with his pickup truck on the other side of the highway. Ah, sweet mysteries of God! I also noticed that the road curved up ahead. If I'd continued driving without seeing at all where I was going...well, I'm so thankful for that stop command!

*Verna (Marty) Neidigh is a member of South Bend, Indiana, Friend Meeting. Hard of hearing, she works to improve services for other hard of hearing people.*

Thank you for the latest issue of *What Canst Thou Say?* on telepathy. As always, WCTS moved me, but this time it moves me to write what I see as an encouraging note of support from science for telepathic leadings.

Recent brain research, as reported in Marco Iacoboni's *Mirroring People* (2008, Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, New York, \$25), reveals that our brains replicate the firing of neurons that comes with the acts and emotions we observe in other people and animals. We usually don't accompany this neuronal activity by performing the action or activity that we observe, but the duplication of others' brain activity. This can explain empathy, imitation, and all of the acts and attitudes that come from them. So at a mostly unconscious level, we are engaging in telepathy all the time. We are connected far more than we realize.

These "mirror neurons," and the limbic resonance that comes from them, are vital to the physical, emotional, and cognitive development of

infants, who can read the complex emotions on their caregivers' faces as soon as they can see them. Researchers now are working on studies that associate autism with a deficit of mirror neuron activity. Our mirror neurons continue to work as long as we live.

I believe that the synchronicities and leadings described in your telepathy issue are connected somehow to this imitative neuronal activity. When we allow ourselves to listen/see/feel within, the unconscious communication can become conscious, and we are led beyond our "normal" capacities. Anyway, it's something to celebrate and welcome when it happens.

John Surr

I am manic-depressive. In the early nineties I suffered greatly with the illness. During that time I almost died 4 times: twice from being suicidal; twice from crazy things I did while manic. But from each of those experiences I *learned a great deal*. One of the things I learned is that God was *determined* to lead me to the Light. For that I am infinitely grateful. I look back and I realize that I was touched by Grace. And once Grace touches you, you are never the same. You can never go back.

By the way. You could not have possibly chosen a better name for your publication. When I first heard Fox's query (I got the full story from the Friends Meeting in London -- they have a site on the web), it penetrated. Of all the queries we see in the various Faith and Practice publications, this one is the ultimate one.

Dimitri Mihalas

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# Please write for *What Canst Thou Say?*

(See instructions for authors on page 7)



**February 2009**

## **Gratefulness**

**Editor: Patricia McBee**

*If your only prayer is "thank you" it is enough.* (Meister Eckhart). Do you have a story of the spiritual breakthrough of a spontaneous upwelling of gratitude? Or perhaps you have a story of the grace that comes from a daily discipline of gratefulness, come what may. What have you discovered about gratitude in the face of suffering? How have you found God's grace to be the source or the result of gratefulness?

Deadline: November 15, 2008

**May 2009**

## **Strangers**

**Guest Editors: Agnes Miyo Moriuchi and Lois Pomeroy with Mariellen Gilpin**

*I am a stranger and afraid in a world I never made* (A.E. Housman). What stranger did you fear? What kept you from a hospitable spirit? Was Jesus' promise, *I will be with you always*, inaccessible? How have you practiced Jesus' radical hospitality across lines drawn in the sand, so that no one is a stranger? What opened your heart to transform *them to us*? How have you changed? Was the change laborious, or pure grace? Has the strange become familiar, or the familiar strange?

Deadline: February 15, 2009

**August 2009**

## **Body Prayer**

**Guest Editor: Amy Perry with Mariellen Gilpin**

*David danced before the Lord* (2 Samuel, 6:14). All of our being belongs to God—our body as well as our soul. How do you use your body to come closer to God? What is your experience of God using your body as an instrument or vessel during prayer? How has a movement or a movement practice helped you spiritually? When have you felt that moving your body was prayer? Tell us about your body prayer.

Deadline: May 15, 2008

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