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Number 71

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*

Creativity and Mysticism

My Experience With Creative Inspiration

Dan Mudd

Until about twenty years ago I never considered myself a creative person. The urge was there but it had never been nurtured. In some instances it was squelched. That all changed one autumn evening.

I was walking my dog when I came upon a tree whose leaves had turned golden. It was aglow because it had grown around a street light. Rushing home I asked my wife if her 35mm camera had film in it. It did. She gave me some quick instructions and I returned to photograph the tree. Excitement spiked—a photograph actually turned out as I hoped it would. That was the beginning of many hours of serious photography culminating in having Photoshop on my computer and a black-and-white darkroom in the basement.

Then something strange and beautiful began to happen. Seemingly from nowhere poems came to me. I would write them on scraps of paper, paper towels, napkins, anything that was handy when the inspiration struck. Soon I was carrying a notebook with me. The poems were accumulating. Often I would write several in one day. This astonished me. For the first time in my life I felt I had a natural talent.

Soon I was writing prose. Less-than-happy memories of school returned. Once in grade school and another time in high school I remember working on writing projects when I was in the zone. Both times I was told that I could not have written the material I turned in. So I did not write—not until the poems began flowing from an inner spring.

As pleased as I was with this new creative outlet I was also perplexed. Why the sudden surge in creativity? Was this a result of meditation? Was the church I was attending having an impact on me? Searching for answers took me inward. My soul was beginning to claim its place in my life.

One day while perusing an online list of literary happenings in my region I came across the Religious Writers' Colloquium sponsored by Earlham School of Religion. It was

within driving distance so I went. While there I experienced for the first time Quaker worship in the silence. It felt very natural to me. A year or so passed and I moved to Tucson, Arizona. A year later I was sitting in a Meeting for Worship at Pima Monthly Meeting. Now I am a member.

There are two practices that have become central to my life—meditation and lay dream work. Both are practices that can be done individually or within a group. For me a benefit of both, and almost a third practice, is an increased awareness of synchronicity. There is Something that is other than me, yet is me. That same Something that I experience

From the Editor:

Once I was setting aside a book to carry later on a trip and I got a message, "Read it Now!" For once I obeyed and I was moved to write the first draft of an article for Quaker Eco-Bulletin (issue 6:4 in 2006). I sent it to the rest of that editorial team, all of whom contributed. We all experienced a sense of Presence as this developed. When it was finished, I had a marvelous sense of inner peace, one of the tests of a true leading.

In this WCTS we present wonderful stories of the mysterious process of creativity—poetry, watercolor painting, line drawing, writing. Our readers/writers share their experiences of bringing out their creativity as a form of worship. We hope all are inspired.

Judy Lumb

is within all. Sometimes I wonder if it is not all. That Something inspires me.

For me inspiration can be challenging. What do I do with what has come to me? At first it felt like I had something special to give to the world. Now, later, I feel those early poems were meant for me, a kind of welcome to middle age celebration. The journey from Catholicism to Alcoholics Anonymous, to New Thought, to writing, to lay dream work, to Jungian study, to moving to the southwest, to becoming Quaker has had one common thread. There has always been a sense of the Divine, present and approachable. I must add that I have not always been attentive to this relationship and have suffered by my negligence.

How do I describe this relationship? I cannot. I know it changes, but not at my direction. I am slowly learning that it helps if I can release preconceived ideas of what the outcome should look like. Along those lines, it also helps when I am open to new ways for Spirit to act. I am not responsible for everything, just my part. There are others in this world who are also inspired and contributing their piece to the puzzle that will eventually be the world that today we call "tomorrow" but then will be called "now."

There is only You

*And all along I thought it was me.
That is the way You wanted it
So I could discover You then me
then You.*

We created this world

To be a place of discovery.

*All the Yous and mes spreading
out over the globe*

*Knocking around until I discover
You then me then You.*

Dan Mudd is a member of Pima Monthly Meeting in Tucson, Arizona. His spiritual practices revolve around meditation, dream work, writing, and sometimes paying attention. He considers inner work to be a form of activism and facilitates a lay dream work group.

What Canst Thou Say?

Hot Coal

Helen Weaver Horn

*When I am carrying in me
an inkling of a poem,
my other tasks are leafless
as the trees I dart between
along the trail to Shelter Rock.*

*Heart Mother has sent me.
In the air she saw three
travelers huddled there
without a fire, and wind
soon veering to the north.*

*I am young, bent forward,
given. I grip the handle
of the iron pot that holds
a hot coal glowing under ash.
I hasten, soberly aware*

*I bear something alive
but cooling, not forever.
She has trusted me. I feel
her hands still urgent
on my shoulders, blessing.*

*Now the wind is bitter.
Solitary, setting each foot down*

*with care, I clamber over roots
and dodge the whipping twigs.
I pray I will not fall.*

*I feel the coal I carry
burning in my belly, searing.
See the clearing through the
trees.*

*See shapes against the rock,
see faces, see my very own*

*grown gaunt and toothless,
see it womanly and pale and
new again as a wee babe.
I bolt ahead, tears blurring
as I hold them close.*

*We tremble gathering sticks
together, kindle flame.*

Helen Weaver Horn is a member of Athens Friends Meeting, Ohio. She has woven her way through teaching, counseling, peace activism, family life and the givenness of writing poems for some 55 years. She communes monthly with a Quaker Writers and Artists Group.

What Canst Thou Say? is an independent publication by and for Quakers with an interest in mystical experience and contemplative practice. It is published in August, November, February, and May. The editorial and production team is Lissa Field, Mariellen Gilpin, Lieselotte Heil, Richard Himmer, Judy Lumb, Patricia McBee, Grayce Mesner, Mike Resman, and Eleanor Warnock.

Please write for WCTS! Instructions to authors are on page 7. Send editorial correspondence to <mariellen.gilpin@gmail.com> or WCTS, 818 W. Columbia, Champaign, IL 61820. See the WCTS website for a history of WCTS and updated queries for future issues: <whatcanstthousay.org>

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Please write for permission before reprinting excerpts.

Finding God by Learning How to Pray

Barbara Clearbridge

I have an energy work healing practice which includes some spiritual healing. My clients know of my dedication to God, as we, with their permission, do brief prayers before and after treatments.

In the year following the 9/11 attack, many of my clients experienced a breach in their faith. Others, who had felt no need of a spiritual or religious practice before then, began to search for one. They asked me what to do. I invented exercises for them and searched for a good book, which I couldn't find. So I wrote one, *Finding God by Learning How to Pray* (excerpts on the right).

The process of writing the book felt like I was simply transcribing what someone else told me to write. It flowed fast and easily, and covered many aspects of prayer practice. Some pages were teachings, some were exercises assigned, some were poetry, some lyrical prose. I peppered it with quotes, prayers, and practices from varied traditions around the world.

Since then, I've found the book useful for myself: I am amazed at its wisdom; I certainly could never have written such a thing from my own thoughts and experiences.

In the process of gathering material I ended up with left-overs, and I have continued to gather more, for a second volume relevant to people further along in the practice of prayer. However, I have not begun to write. I don't feel that inner urge which turns to compulsion if I ignore it. I don't hear Spirit whispering into my ear. I don't see the words already on the page, the book materializing in my hand. So I wait.

The act of praying doesn't mean that something called God hears you and obeys by granting your request (or demand).

In an act of prayer, you reach out of your usual rather-small self. You consciously link to the astoundingly-large creative force; you resonate in harmony with it. You commune. You access the common power. You touch God.

This changes you.

The situation you are in may not change. Often Godpower surges through you into the situation and it does change. Often, it doesn't matter whether it changes or not, because it will feel different to you because you have changed.

.....

Prayer on First Going Outside

*The sun rises
and as it does,
I feel the hope rise
within me.*

*Thank You
for once again
making all things possible.*

.....

How do I begin?

The usual way is to open the lines of communication by developing a spiritual practice wherein you pay attention to God every day.

Some people do this by speaking to God, and some by listening for God.

Many days pass and you continue to speak or to listen. This action, and your devotion to doing it, and your yearning—your lust for God—open your perception and you make contact.

Or sometimes a prayer is answered, and that brings certainty; you increase your practice, and that brings more blessings and thus more certainty.

Over time your connection becomes sure and nourishing and splendid.

Or sometimes you are the blessed recipient of a miracle—God touches your shoulder, or perhaps kisses you—your eyes are opened and you see. You are the mystic.

Reach up, up—pray through the top of your head!

.....

*my soul sings quietly today
as i do daily things
driving, washing, planning, talking
i hear my soul
bubbling joyfully underneath
i smile*

*people ask me why i'm cheerful
with the state of the world the way it is
i do grieve for the state of the world
but the state of my soul
is singing*

Barbara Clearbridge, known to F/ friends as shulamith eagle, is part of Middlebury Meeting, Vermont, and Lake Forest Meeting, Illinois. She is the author of Finding God by Learning How to Pray, available through her website <FeelingMuchBetter.org>.

A Community Easter Pageant

Mariellen Gilpin

My home town, Pendleton, Indiana, put on an Easter pageant when I was growing up. The total town population was 2000; there were 300 of us who made the pageant happen. School kids, the butcher, farmers, the real estate broker, a cross-section of the community. My mother wrote the script and directed the rehearsals and performances; my brother was the narrator; I was his understudy (because he was in college and could only come home for Easter weekend). I started my acting career as a little angel at the Ascension; became a woman in the marketplace sharing prophecies of a Messiah to be born in Bethlehem; was Simon Peter's wife, as he tells his story of betraying Jesus.

The part I loved to play the most took place right after the horror of the crucifixion scene; the stage was dark and silent. Another woman, the soloist, and I stepped quietly in front of the curtain from opposite ends of the stage. We were silent as we walked toward each other. I began the conversation by grieving the loss of our Master, and the way the crowds who cried "Hosanna" when he entered Jerusalem later howled for his condemnation to death. The other woman said, "Yet, not all deserted him. A few have loved and served him."

I mentioned Jesus' promises, and the other woman said sadly, even hopelessly, "Promises. Our master lies there dead, and you speak of promises."

I responded, turning toward the audience and speaking firmly but also as if I am searching for each word as I speak: "Yes, Jesus made promises. Our master made promises, and his promises *will be* fulfilled...in some time...in some way..." (yearning, yet certainty in my voice). I looked to the dim horizon behind the audience,

Sunrise on Easter Morning, 2011

Jennifer Elam

*New Life amongst
The daffodils and tulips.
New Life, new calves
In my Dad's fields.
New Life, lightning flashes,
thunder roars,
Winds rip apart all in sight;
tornadoes changing everything
they touch.
New life, the fires of grief burn
my soul's forests;
The old is burned and the ground
made ready for New Life
emerging.
Tornadoes rip; the tulips just wave
and pay no mind.
Resurrection...elusive in
moments...
Yet,
I feel the seedlings,
Struggling to find the water,
Struggling to find their
nourishment;
I hear: stop the busy-ness;
pay attention to the seedlings.
I feel the abundance, just a
Heartbeat away – so many
sources*

*So much nourishment,
so many springs—
Ready to wash over me;
Stopped only by my saying—
not enough YES,
Not enough YES to the water that
gushes,
Not enough YES to the Love that
pours forth,
Not enough YES today,
to the abundance of...it All.*

*New Life, mine is about learning
To nourish the seedlings—
More YES, to the wells springing
forth and gushing engaged
love and Love.*

*How much YES is possible to the
Ultimate Love Story?
How much YES is possible to the
Abundance just waiting?*

Jennifer Elam is a member of Berea meeting, Kentucky, but presently attends Swarthmore meeting, Pennsylvania. She is the author of *Dancing with God through The Storm: Mysticism and Mental Illness*. A psychologist who works with children, she is looking forward to guest editing an issue of *WCTS* on Children's Mystical Spirituality.

turned, and quietly, prayerfully, left the stage...whereupon the soloist began her song.

That scene and that declaration, have been with me my whole life. They have helped to shape my personal definition of faith: "Doing the right-est thing in spite of pain and fear." That's what Jesus was about; that's what his first followers tried to emulate: his life-choice. The Easter Pageant is still part of me; maybe the central lesson I learned was that the

people who loved Jesus and the people who slew him were just like the ones in my home town: the fact that we knew his story and how it came out in the end made us no better and no worse. The Easter story is the human story for me. It's a legacy I cherish.

Mariellen Gilpin is an editor of WCTS. Born on a small farm near a small town in Indiana, those early memories of land, people, and the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) helped to foster her natural mysticism.

Exploration in Art: The Journey of a Mother and Daughter

Judith Bender and Anneke Bender

Ed: The following are excerpts from the book of the same name.

The inspiration for this book was to explore our unique and common creative processes as mother and daughter. We have always been interested in each other's creative journeys and encouraged each other through the years. ...

One thing you will find common in our work is a love of nature and the way in which our human lives are interwoven within its larger fabric. An awareness of the rhythms of the natural world allows for a deeper understanding of loss and the passage of time, the basic surrender that all creatures are inextricably bound to. A sense of peace and hope arises naturally for both of us in the exploration of this oneness, and has, in turn, arisen as the central theme of our book.

Personal Approach to Painting by Judith Bender

Like most painters, I try to express my personal worldview in my work. The first painting of the book, "Bountiful Earth" (*right*) summarizes my thoughts, feelings, and defining beliefs about the caring Earth, particularly its oneness, its endless giving and the infusion of energy from some mysterious source. In this painting, the new birth embryo emerges from the body of Earth and is sustained in the ocean by branches that reach out from the trees.

My underlying belief, which gives artistic structure to the idea of oneness, is that Earth itself has its own gestalt consciousness. Thus, the plant and animal kingdoms of Earth are not so separate, as I had once assumed, but actually possess a certain kind of consciousness—a presence and awareness of their beautiful and gracious cooperation.

Writing Poetry by Anneke Bender

My relationship with writing has changed through the years into a process that is more about listening than talking. I remember on one particular vacation, I sat on the beach and decided just to write without any urge to form a coherent sentence—to allow whatever popped into my head onto the page. What followed was something altogether different and taught me that words carry meaning not only in their definition, but in their very sound and structure. It can be surprisingly pleasing to let words swing, lift, fall, tumble and land, then look at what you have. This unconscious throwing together often forms a structure and meaning more complex than one I could have planned.

This seems to be exactly the process my mom works with in her painting. ... We both take the greatest pleasure from our art when it is surprising us, when we are following, waiting, trying to discern the hidden image. ...

It's possible all art forms take you there, to the same pool, and the end result is just your momentary translation of what you find swimming there.

Judith Bender took up watercolor painting after she retired from an academic career as a microbiologist. *Anneke Bender* is a physical therapist and loves to travel. Both are part of the Atlanta (Georgia) Friends Meeting community. Their book, *Exploration in Art: The Journey of a Mother and Daughter* is available from Quakerbooks.org.



Bountiful Earth by Judith Bender, 17x21" brush-painted with dyes on cotton fabric.

Crumbs

Anneke Bender

One still moment:

*A drop of rain rolling down a cold window,
A bead of sweat dropping from an eyelash,
a piece,*

a crumb,

of time.

*God holds a hand full of crumbs—
sweat and the cell of a bee,*

a creature's crawl,

on its wing a shining pinhole of sun

God holds a hand full of crumbs—

how we all want something

*how we all stretch to touch the red hole
the dazzling circle,*

the wild flame,

how we all reach open mouthed,

new birds for a mother's tongue.

The Relevance of Art

Anne Comiskey

Oftentimes in the past, I have fallen into the belief that creativity was not as important as more practical pursuits, such as working in a soup kitchen or helping the homeless. The belief was always disappointing to me, because of how drawn I was to works of art and how uplifted I felt when looking upon those works. In the last few years I have begun to discover that there are many ways to do Godde's* work, and that creating things, such as art, music, dance, humor, story, and poetry can also be doing the work of Godde. I have come to believe this type of work is just as important as the practical things we ordinarily do.

When I was in eighth grade, my class went on a field trip to the Art Institute in Chicago. I remember the experience evoked feelings of freedom and joy within me and now, when I look back on that, I see that this experience enlarged my heart. There was an unfettered joy that the art brought forth. Back then, I wouldn't have explained the experience the way I have just done, but something happened inside me. In my early twenties I began collecting art prints—abstract and surreal being my favorites. The works of art allowed me to experience color, forms, and patterns. I liked the freedom of not having anything defined. It gave me the feeling of exploring whole different worlds just by looking at a work of art.

I have often wondered what it is about surreal and abstract art that speaks to me. In April of 2007, I wrote

*I learned the spelling of "Godde" from a book by Edwina Gately called *A Warm Moist Salty God*. She found out that a group of nuns from New Zealand used this spelling to illustrate that the Higher Power is not limited to either male or female gender.

in my journal that "abstract art in all of its forms seems to speak about origin in its patterns and colors. It seems very Zen like and free because of that lack of definition. It is the stuff of chaos, the cauldron of creativity." In another journal entry in 2005, I wrote that abstract art is "contemplative; it invites one to stand back and look, reflect; to breathe in the colors, the forms, the expressions, the stillness, the movement, the patterns, the mood, and the energy."

Over the last several years I have become more and more convinced that creative endeavors, such as art,

[T]he experience evoked feelings of freedom and joy within me ... enlarged my heart. There was an unfettered joy that the art brought forth.

humor, story, poems, music, and dance, carry more weight than most people understand. There is much about communication that is nonverbal. Thinking about the tone or volume of our voice when we speak, our facial expressions and body language, the color of road signs, or garments we wear when at a funeral demonstrates this. Creative endeavors have carried rich spiritual nutrients that I would not have been able to receive in other ways.

I have struggled and prayed over what it is for me to do Godde's work and the following quotes among other spiritual writings have been the answers to some of my questions. Brennan Manning in the book *Ruthless Trust: The Ragamuffin's Path to God* writes: "This unlikely trio of artists, mystics, and clowns serves the ministry of the Word by expanding our understanding of the kabōd** of Yahweh through their original and

startling insights; they deepen our trust by reminding us to submerge the enormous difficulty of suffering and evil in the borderless sea of infinite wisdom and absolute love." (p. 71)

"Send in the artists, mystics and clowns. Their fertile imagination pours the new wine of the gospel into fresh wineskins (Luke 5:38). With fresh language, poetic vision, and striking symbols they express God's inexpressible Word in artistic forms that are charged with the power of God, engaging our minds and stirring our hearts as they flare and flame." (p. 74)

Brennan Manning's book helped me to see that in a world where oftentimes we are measured only by what we can do, creativity can give us permission simply to be, to celebrate and enjoy the bounty that is given to us by Life. Enjoying and engaging in these pursuits can be a way of glorifying Godde.

Sister Joyce Rupp in her book *Dear Heart Come Home: The Path of Midlife Spirituality* wrote this about our imagination:

"Images are like ships traveling between two worlds of ours, the conscious and the unconscious, the concrete and the intangible, carrying messages from one to another. Images can help to convey the meaning of our lives in areas that are difficult to name and comprehend." (p. 20)

I want to share how Godde spoke to me on one occasion, using art. In May of 2005 I was struggling with a decision to let go of a relationship with my partner and allow us the opportunity to be simply friends. I didn't know

**The word kabōd refers to the Hebrew word for "glory" (p. 49 in the book *Ruthless Trust: The Ragamuffin's Path to God* by Brennan Manning).

if I had the courage to do what I felt I needed to do. I decided one afternoon that I would pray in St. Thomas Church in Peoria Heights. The next day I wrote in my journal:

“Yesterday I was at St. Thomas church and I was looking at the stained glass window of the flame of the Holy Spirit and I felt the stirring of Pentecost and I felt Godde say something to the effect that the Holy Spirit gave the disciples the power to overcome their weaknesses and that we all can be empowered that way. It wasn’t just Godde speaking in words, She was speaking through the stained glass windows and the arches in the church, the white walls, the sunlight through the windows, the feelings that were stirring in me, the quiet inside of me, the surge of hope in my chest, the sense of freedom and calm within me. Godde spoke not just with words but with light, color, feeling, the art in the stained glass and in the architecture.”

These experiences and more have shown me what a vital and essential link creativity can be in communicating what is spiritual, and that the vehicles in which Godde can speak can be in the form of art, story, music, dance, and more. The vehicles in which Godde speaks are infinite!

Anne Comiskey was brought up Catholic and became Quaker in 2001. She is also a member of the Native American Fellowship Dayspring Church and lives in Peoria Heights, Illinois.



Winter Lace

Angeline Reeks

It's Spring, it's Spring, or so says the calendar;

But not out my window. There the reality is snow and cold.

If I look past this fleeting moment, I see,

Daffodils poking through the snow

and buds unfurling on the shrubs.

What is this picture telling me?

Ah, yes, Mother Nature has graced us

By dressing all in winter lace.

Angeline Reeks is a member of Upper Fox Valley Meeting, McHenry, Illinois, and a former member of Illinois Yearly Meeting Ministry and Advancement Committee. Writing poetry is a form of worship for her.

Tell Us Your Stories!

What Canst Thou Say is a worship-sharing group in print. We welcome submissions of articles of 350-1500 words and artwork—line drawings or artwork suitable for black and white reproduction. Please send your text submissions in Word or generic text format and artwork in high resolution jpeg files. Photocopied art and typed submissions are also accepted. Send via email to <mariellen.gilpin@gmail.com>, or diskette or hard copy to **WCTS, 818 W. Columbia, Champaign, IL 61820.**

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The Beloved Disciple

God is love (1 John 4:8)

William H. Mueller

These six meditations follow on each of the scriptural passages of the Beloved Disciple. The synoptic gospels tell Jesus' story, but John's gospel, often referred to as "the Quaker gospel," tells God's story through the figure of the man Jesus. In John's gospel Jesus loved a man, the Beloved Disciple. This figure represents Love precedent over Authority (represented by the disciple Peter) in the redemptive life of the Christian (*New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 1990, F. J. Moloney "Johannine Theology," pp. 1417-1426 and P. Perkins "The Gospel According to John", pp. 942-985).

*In secret he goes with Andrew, unnamed
To follow the Lamb of God.
He, like Andrew, lacks a place to live,
The Rabbi invites the two to come and see*.
(John 1:37)*

*Mary Magdala flees the empty tomb,
and tells Authority and Love the Lord is gone.
Love outdistances Authority and looks in the cave,
Authority comes and steps in, helping Love to see.*
(John 20:1)*

*At table, one will deceive the others,
Threatening community.
Authority lacks confidence to ask "Who is it?"
Love leans intimately close to God's heart and
does it for him. (John 13:23)*

*Fishing on the Sea of Galilee with no hope of catch,
A stranger suggests they look to starboard.
There abundance of fish is found,
Love helps Authority to see* it is the Lord.
(John 21:7)*

*There below the dying Christ,
Stands the mother and his friend.
He commends Love to his mother,
She in turn supports Love's grief.
(John 19:26)*

*While the Rabbi and Authority go on,
Love stays behind.
(This Authority cannot understand.)
It is love that endures, when authority is dead.
(John 21:20)*

William H. Mueller is a member of St. Lawrence Valley Friends Meeting (Potsdam, New York), an allowed meeting under the care of Ottawa Monthly Meeting where he is involved in a local prison ministry. He edits a monthly prison newsletter "The Inlook-Outlook Letter".

*In Hebrew mythology the verb "to see" denotes the human-God encounter

Discovering God as Companion: Real Life Stories from What Canst Thou Say?

Mariellen Gilpin, Editor

"DISCOVERING GOD AS COMPANION underlines the power of 'we' sustained by the Religious Society of Friends for more than 350 years. Contributing Friends and companions of God have drawn so close to the Source of Love that Light streams through their written words into the world. Through the testimonies of these writers, readers can glimpse contemplative witness as one mark of the whole Quaker community."
—Judith Favor's review in *Friends Journal*

Retail \$15.34, 172 pages Available from <Quakerbooks.org> (800) 966-4556

Communication with God, with Spirit

Anne Scherer



This drawing was my Christmas card last year (*above*). It was a spiritual experience to create, as happens whenever I sit down before a blank sheet of paper, whether it is to write, draw, or paint. Whenever I go outside with my camera, I look not only with my eyes but with a sense of something far more great—a Presence.

Is that presence a communication with God, with Spirit? Is it mystical? Perhaps, I do not know. All I know is that it is there and it is very real.

I know this because when I cannot do my artwork for whatever reason, whether it be writer's block or just not making or taking the time, I feel a distinct difference in myself and in my soul. Because that Presence that I feel when I am creating is deeply felt, deep within.

Anne Scherer is an artist, poet and writer. She attends Rochester Friends Meeting in Rochester, Minnesota.

WCTS Needs a New Treasurer

The WCTS team is grateful for the loyal and reliable service of Joan Johnston for the past few years, but since she has to move on to other involvements in her life, we need a new Treasurer.

The responsibilities of the Treasurer are to make deposits, write checks to cover the expenses of producing and mailing *What Canst Thou Say*, and make periodic reports to the other volunteer WCTS staff. It is not a very big job because there is only a little activity, but this labor of love undergirds all that WCTS does.

If you are led to volunteer for these tasks and interested in joining the WCTS team, please send a letter expressing your interest and qualifications for the volunteer position as Treasurer of WCTS, along with a recommendation from your Monthly Meeting, by snail mail to WCTS c/o Richard Himmer, 1035 Hereford Drive, Blue Bell PA 19422-1925, or by email <info@whatcanstthousay.org>.

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Please write for *What Canst Thou Say?*

(See instructions for authors on page 7)



November 2011

Death and Dying

Editor: Mike Resman

Death be not proud (John Donne). Facing our own death or that of a loved one is challenging. What spiritual lessons have helped you? What have you experienced while supporting loved ones who were dying? Have you participated in a planned death? What are your reflections on that experience? How do you view your own death? What experiences have led you to that view? How have your loved ones responded to your plans and attitudes toward dying?

Deadline: August 15, 2011

February 2012

Shame

Guest Editor: Lois Pomeroy with Mariellen Gilpin

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame... (Shakespeare, Sonnet 129). Some of us ate shame for breakfast when we were very little, and have spent a lifetime learning to invest our spirit in healthier ways. Can you remember a time before you were shamed? How has baby-shame manifested in adulthood? How did you realize shame crippled you? What made you decide to change? What spiritual practices have helped you let go of ancient shame? Has Spirit helped you move beyond it? Share your story of healing from inappropriate shame.

Deadline: November 15, 2011

May 2012

Disability

Guest Editor: Faith Paulsen with Mike Resman

Has your spiritual journey been affected by having a disability or loving someone who has a disability? Have your struggles and pain altered your relationship with God? Have you sought healing? In your experience, have you seen a difference between healing and curing? What has been necessary for healing? How do you see Divine love being expressed through your experiences? Do you resent what you've lost and/or are you grateful for what you've gained? What would you like to share that might help others?

Deadline: February 15, 2012

What Canst Thou Say?

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