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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*

## *Grief*

### *A Year to Grieve*

*Earl Smith*

**W**hen the editors of *What Canst Thou Say?* chose “Grief” as a topic, we could not imagine the events of 2020. Our economy had expanded faster in 2019 than expected, although some sectors of the economy were weakening. Yet everything seemed normal. Then ... it happened!

Reports began to come from China about a new virus that came to be known as Coronavirus 19 or COVID-19, a highly contagious and deadly virus that was first reported by China as a mysterious pneumonia. The first death in the US occurred in Kirkland, Washington, with dozens more soon following. By the first week of April 2020, 95 percent of Americans were under lockdown. Commerce stopped; the stock markets crashed.

Obotero.com noted that “2020 was such a bad, terrible, no good year that even complaining about it got old.” Ben Pring of cognizant.com called 2020 the year the internet came of age. He also wrote, “2020 was proof that although it was not the end times, the world has gone a little nuts—lost a sense of perspective, confidence in its ability to cope.”

On July 30, 2020, the *NPR Morning Edition* included the report that between March and May the United States economy declined more than at any time in modern American history. Unemployment increased so fast that state websites were overwhelmed for months.

Yet throughout the year, there were scores of Americans who refused to believe this silent enemy existed which caused severe grief to many family members. Some who denied the existence of the virus did so because they did not know anyone who had been

stricken. The complication was that many people had COVID-19 without having symptoms. They were like the legendary Typhoid Mary of an earlier era who infected dozens of people despite never having Typhoid Fever symptoms.

Denial is the time when a person is dealing with a sudden change of situation in which loss occurs and they feel a loss of control.

Psychologist Dennis Proffitt has written that we naturally have the tendency to see what we want to see. Sometimes the result is that a mythical situation is created to reinforce a view of reality that we can deal with and feel able to function. This can lead to rationalism, a means to create a defense mechanism whereby a person can justify unacceptable behavior such as not wearing a face covering in a crowd. It is a way to deal with reality and defend against anxiety and lack of control.

### ***From the Editor:***

*We have more wonderful submissions than would fit in this print version. We address grief from several viewpoints, each with its own poignant message: such as dementia, loss of a family member or pet (which is often viewed as a family member), and grief caused by changes in relationships. Our Supplement edition <[whatcanstthousay.org](http://whatcanstthousay.org)> has more essays as well as poems, a book review, and lots of beautiful art in color!*

*Earl Smith*

**What Canst Thou Say? (WCTS)** is an independent publication co-operatively produced by Friends with an interest in mystical experience and contemplative practice. It is published in February, May, August, and November. The editorial and production team is Muriel Dimock, Lissa Field, Mariellen Gilpin, George Hebben, Lieselotte Heil, Judy Lumb, Grayce Mesner, Mike Resman, Earl Smith, Eleanor Warnock, and Rhonda Ashurst.

Tell us your stories! **WCTS** is a worship-sharing group in print. We hope to help Friends be tender and open to the Spirit. Articles that communicate best to our readers focus on specific events and are written in the first person.

Although there are themes announced for most issues, we accept any expressions of mystical experiences or contemplative practice at any time.

We welcome submissions of articles less than 1500 words and 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.

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We sometimes face loss of attachments through relocation, loss of family members through a divorce, loss of position through corporate changes, or loss of loved ones through illness or natural circumstances. However, the year 2020 will stand out as historic a year as 1812, or 1918 because all of these losses happened in 2020. The average life expectancy of an American dropped more than it had since the 1940s. More Americans died in 2020 than during World War I, World War II, and the Korean War combined! COVID-19 also came on the heels of another epidemic of drug overdose when a record number of deaths occurred. So there has been an overwhelming amount of grief in the last year.

*Earl Smith is a member of Stillwater Meeting (Ohio Yearly Meeting Conservative) near Barnesville, Ohio. He has served the Meeting in many capacities including legislative advocate and minister.*

## The Stages of Grief

James Miller

As a mental health professional, I was introduced to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's work very early; in fact I was assigned to teach local hospital staff in Long-Term Care about it. Over the ensuing 40 years of doing therapy and teaching in public settings, I put my own interpretations on it.

First of all, I see the five steps as a multilayered process moving back and forth from Mental to Emotional processes.

In seventh grade, as I got off the school bus one hot Spring day, there was a crowd of men in the middle of the road that went past our house; my dad was one of them. I went over and on the ground was an elderly man with his hand shading his eyes from the bright sun. Then I noticed that his right leg was turned around. He lost it due to the severe damage from being hit by a car. Yet, he appeared to be in no distress. Later I would learn about Shock, the body's ability to cope with overwhelming pain.

Denial serves the mind in the same way; it blocks the intense pain that it perceives as fatal. It blunts it to save us. It is the first step in the grieving process.

We call it a process because it must proceed to healing, in the same way our bodies heal from trauma like an injury or surgery. When one does not proceed, one is stuck and eventually living in the time prior to the loss, which is a break with Reality. We call this Psychosis. I worked with a woman once who, years after her son's death, set a place for him at the dinner table every night.

By talking about the details of the loss over a period of time, one moves into Anger. A difficult stage to cope with as we put such negative connotations on it. The main expression of it is, "Why me?" It is not really a question, but a statement of Anger. We see this in the News all the time when an insensitive newsperson shoves a microphone in the face of a friend or family member of a crime or accident victim, and asks, "How do you feel about \_\_\_\_\_?"

The real statement is, “This hurts too much and someone has to pay.” “It is unfair!” Another way to get stuck here is to Blame. We blame the driver, the government as too many have been killed on this stretch of road, or ourselves. It is not a question, because there is not an answer good enough to make it OK. It will never be OK.

Now back to mental work, Bargaining. Here one attempts to set conditions; “If only \_\_\_\_.” As if we can undo it in our desperation to have control. In Kübler-Ross’s work, her patients were terminally ill and in Bargaining they would vow to stick around till a special day when child graduates or gets married or.... Amazingly, it often did buy them some time through sheer determination of will.

Again, there is the failure to move through this one, and it’s a difficult one for us, as we like control and believe things would be fine “if only we could get our way.” The recent attack on the National Capitol is an example. Reality keeps slapping us in the face, until we accept it or separate from it in delusional thinking.

Then comes Depression, the most intense step for most and misunderstood. We view Depression as weakness because we feel so vulnerable. We are experiencing the pain of the loss and the resulting Sadness. We have worked hard to avoid it and to get through it. We cry easily at memories, anniversaries like birthdays and holidays or familiar places.

We need to be reassured that, “Indeed it hurts, but will get manageable.” It is not chronic

organic depression that is in some’s DNA. It is situational; we can and will survive and actually grow. Being stuck here looks like Chronic Depression and we can make it so.

Moving on to Acceptance is to move back to a mental perspective of, “It happened. It was terrible, but I made it through and am stronger because of the work of dealing with my emotions and self-image/self-esteem. I learned many lessons. I can now assist others with their process. And I still miss them.”

Acceptance is not forgetting, but remembering fondly with less pain and sadness. I was recently talking to my son about a dear friend who is in decline and will transition soon. Tears choked my voice as I shared and then I shared the experiences of being with my father in 2001 as he was dying. Again, there were tears but not so much pain. More tenderness for his and our journey together. I have been blessed to be with both of my parents as they were slipping away and witnessing the surprising courage on both their parts, to see the decline of physical and mental capacities.

Then there is the Spiritual/Mystical stage. Many years ago a dear man mentored me and many others as we were in a small group together. He suffered painfully from bone cancer and then passed away. I was on vacation and while falling asleep he visited me on his way to Peace. It was the very night he died and I knew so from his spirit’s stopover.

*James Miller is a member of Camas (Washington) Friends Church. He is retired from a career as a mental health therapist in a youth center, day and residential treatment centers, and private practice.*

## A Bittersweet Good-bye

Donna Eder

I grieved the loss of my dad twice. The first time was in many ways harder as my dad was still alive—just not available to me. By the time he died we had reunited so now I was grieving a father I actually had.

I can’t say exactly when I felt my dad became unavailable since it occurred over a period of years. As a child I enjoyed riding on the tractor with him and sitting next to him in the big green Ford as he took sacks of feed home from the feed mill. But I also feared his sudden outbursts of anger. I learned to keep still around him and avoid him entirely on days when his unhappiness about the farm life he never chose took over.

By college our relationship was quickly disappearing. He was now drinking more and his angry outbursts had a darker tone. While I talked on the phone to my mom occasionally, attempts to include my dad in a three-way conversation always felt awkward.

When I was in my forties, I took a workshop on family dynamics. For one exercise we all walked around a large room, each of us holding a conversation with our fathers. I noticed that everyone around me seemed to have a lot to say, but all I could come up with was: “Where have you been? I have no father.” I spent the entire thirty minutes repeating this over and over, realizing just how deep my grief was. Only then did I realize

that I lacked something that others had—a relationship with a father.

At my lowest point, I went two years without seeing either parent. Later I tried to see them on “neutral ground” where our family patterns were less entrenched. My daughter and I would camp with them at nearby state parks, enjoying hikes together. But it wasn’t until my mom became ill with ALS that my dad and I found a bridge across the chasm between us.

I taught at Indiana University at the time but would visit them in Tucson during every break from my job. On one spring break I came to the realization that the suffering that Mom, Dad and I were feeling was unavoidable:

From my journal of April 21, 1993, “I have so long felt like I had experienced much suffering that could have been avoided had we more understanding of family dynamics, addictive behavior, gender dynamics. I’d come to think of suffering as something we could work to eliminate. But now I’m not sure it’s meant to be completely eliminated and with some acceptance of suffering, I find other types of acceptance easier as well.”

On these visits, my dad and I began to grow closer. It meant a lot to him that I was able to get Mom into hospice care on that spring visit. He told me that many days he and my mom didn’t know what to do and could have used some help. Near the end of her illness he told me that sometimes people you love are in pain and there is nothing you can do about it. I began to see a different side of my father through

this sharing of feelings. At the same time, I became more accepting of all the patterns that had caused so much pain in the past along with accepting our current suffering.

In August that year I made arrangements to visit them on my own while my daughter was with her father. By now, Mom was allowing the world to love her. It brought all of us much closer together—me, her nurse, the hospice chaplain, her neighbors, and of course, my dad. As the week came to an end, I changed my travel plans so I could stay longer.

From my journal, August 13, 1993, “I decided to stay longer, in part so I can be here to support Mom’s frequent low moods, often just by being myself... Also, because it is the best visit I’ve ever had with Dad which will strengthen our relationship for years to come and simply because there are miracles happening here and it’s hard to walk away any sooner than I have to. I realize that some people who don’t see the miracles actually pity us.”

This was the visit that really transformed my relationship with my dad. I could see how vulnerable he had become and how much his heart had been opened by all that he and Mom had been through. There were some very tender moments when he failed to give her the support she needed and hoped she still loved him. There were other moments when he would do a small favor for me like clean off my hiking shoes just to show his gratitude for my presence.

In this time of openness we ended up talking about our

emotions and our need to repress them as children:

From my journal of August 15, 1993, “We talked about feelings in childhood at dinner with my cousins, Mary and Janet. All said they weren’t allowed to express their feelings as children. Mary and Janet were given no explanation and now think it was just that their dad didn’t like the feelings they had. Mom had been told “crying won’t help.” Dad said kids couldn’t express feelings but adults could.”

Even though Mom and Dad were talking about their childhoods, they had conveyed these same attitudes to me.

The realization I could now share feelings with others in my family changed me for the rest of my life. Two weeks after Mom died, I wrote about this transformation:

From my journal of September 19, 1993, “I think the most valuable gift we can give each other is to live fully in the moment—to be in touch with our feelings and especially our sense of joy and humor for what there is to celebrate or to laugh over. Also, to be as fully with the other person as possible—whether they be happy, sad, despairing, angry, or sick. Just to share that moment with them.”

During the next nine years I developed a very close connection with my dad, talking with him on the phone every Saturday morning. We looked to each other for support and advice like any two close friends might do. After listening deeply to my problems, he often gracefully changed to a new topic so I could leave our conversation feeling lighter as

*“Grief is a visitor that keeps returning.”*

*— Desirée Rumbaugh,  
midlife Yoga teacher*

well as heard. He told others in the family that if they were having a rough time, they should call me, as he always felt better after one of our talks.

About a year after my Mom died, my dad stopped drinking at his doctor’s advice due to other health concerns. He stayed healthy until he was diagnosed with lung cancer eight years later. For support, I turned to a Quaker elder in my Meeting who was in her 80’s at the time and today is over 100. She told me that most fear is related to the loss of something or someone. She also said that if we focus on change rather than on loss, we can see the new things in our life as well as what we’re losing.

This is exactly what happened to Dad and me when Mom died. We could have focused on all that we were losing, but instead tried to focus on our growing friendship. With him, as with others, I also appreciated my new ability to be more fully present, open to all our feelings. I now hoped to keep a similar focus on new things as I began to let go of my dad.

When Dad died, my siblings and I were with him, along with my step-mother. That night I wrote this in my journal:

From my journal of May 1, 2002, “Our family was probably the most connected it has ever been at this moment. We just built on where we left off with Mom’s death—all sharing as equal people. It felt good to see our family take this next step toward closer bonds. The relief at having Dad’s suffering end was our strongest bond. We all loved him so much that his suffering was quite unbearable. I have been filled with Spirit ever since Dad failed on Monday.”

Bruce, our hospice chaplain when Mom died, came to pray with our family after Dad died and conducted the memorial service, even though he no longer worked for Hospice. He told us that he saw our family as one that grew closer through the experiences of Mom’s and Dad’s illnesses—a model of the power of love and forgiveness. When I said goodbye to my father at the service, it was as sweet as it was bitter, as this time I was grieving a father who had become one of my closest friends.

*Donna Eder*

## *Grief, Love, and Lessons Learned*

*Nil Wilkins*

*—And God said... Let us send them without wings so none suspect they are angels.*

**W**e grieve because we love. If we did not love, there would be no pain felt on another’s passing. It has been said that one way we encounter God, His mystery, and lessons we need to learn is through paradox. Experiencing grief because we love appears obvious to us when we are not in a state of grief. My experience, however, is that for many of us, we forget this connection, this seeming paradox, in the depths of our grief’s pain. And pain is definitely there—deep, searing, heartbreaking, gut wrenching—as well as a feeling of such emptiness, as though a hole has been ripped in our very being, leaving a void within us that nothing will ever fill. When we are in the depths of such pain, we can feel lost and hopeless. We long for our loved one’s presence just one more time—to hug and kiss them, to tell them how much they are loved; and to thank them for their presence in our lives.

While I have grieved the loss of people I love, my sharing today involves the grief we feel with the loss of our beloved family pets. Make no mistake, for many of us our pets are family, and often viewed as our children. I recently retired after almost 38 years as a practicing veterinarian, the last six years providing in-home hospice and end-of-life care for family pets. Several colleagues would often ask me “How can you do only that? It’s

so sad.” Those six years were the most rewarding of my veterinary career, which has included private practice and shelter medicine. Through this work, I met families who gave their pets wonderful lives, doing all they could to keep them happy and healthy. But when the time comes when our medicine can no longer help and we do not want our loved one to suffer, to provide a peaceful passing in the comfort of the pet’s home, with their loved ones by their side, is to me the final loving gift. And it’s not just family members who were present during these visits. There were family friends, neighbors, ministers, and at one the UPS man! Some family and friends attended virtually; at one visit, a friend in the UK attended via Skype. Clearly our pets touch so many lives beyond our own.

I believe the unconditional love our pets give us is one way we experience the love of God. Their love is a piece of God’s unconditional love for all His creation. I’ve heard pets called angels on earth, reminders of God’s presence and promise that we are not alone, that He is with us always.

I know there are some who do not see how one can view pets as family. I do not expect them to understand as God speaks, reveals Himself, and blesses us in myriad ways to best fit each one of us: the flaming bush, the still small voice, laughter, the beauty of nature, or the wonder on a child’s face.

I have seen grief manifested in many different ways during these visits—through prayers and whispers, in anger with shouting and cursing, with quiet tears as well

*“This is not the life you pictured but here you are. You can still make something beautiful. Grieve. Breathe. Begin again.”*

*—Thema Bryant-Davis*

sobs that wrack the entire body, with the support of religious faiths and rituals, through a celebration of life ceremony.

There are times of laughter as families share stories of their loved ones. And for some, there is silence, the only thing able to hold their overwhelming pain, as echoed in these lines from Jeanne Lohmann’s poem *On Suffering*: “Sometimes, looking back remembering pain, silence becomes my first language.” It is especially at these latter times that I hold all in the Light, praying they know they are not alone, that they will not be alone, and that time and memories will help with their grief—the memories becoming a blessing, reminding them that their loved one was a part of their life.

I feel this work helped me to grow spiritually and imparted many lessons, two of which arose as messages during Meeting for Worship. I have recounted them below to the best of my memory:

1) In spite of religious differences, differences in creed and ritual, during times of shared grief, all those things fall away and what

we are left with is the core truth—that we are all God’s children and we are all on the same journey. And how much easier that journey is if we are loving and kind to one another.

2) While we can be divided by such things as wealth, possessions, politics—things early Friends referred to as earthly concerns/things of this world—we are united in the reason we gather at each home, and that is to say goodbye to a beloved family pet. Because our Quaker faith tells us there is that of God in everyone, our practice must be to reach out and touch that of God in everyone. More and more my understanding of that of God centers around love, a love that runs throughout creation, so that when we touch that of God in others, we strengthen that love. And that love in turn strengthens us. And it will be together, united in love, that we will build the Peaceable Kingdom here on earth.

*Nil Wilkins is a member of Tampa Monthly Meeting. She lives in Tampa, FL with her husband Kevin and their six cats.*

# Grief and Transformation

David Blair

**G**rief can open the door to transformation when it is shared with God.

My wife Linda died on June 20, 2007. We had been separated for 18 months and would have divorced had she not succumbed to cancer. My grief was underlaid with regret, remorse and shame.

Linda's death rippled out in many directions, and it wasn't until late August that I felt free to take time for myself. I returned to Skogadalsbøen, a "tourist hut" in the Jotunheim, a mountain fastness north of the Oslo-Bergen rail line. Skogadalsbøen is a place sacred to me, going back to my first visit in 1968 and later trips in 1969 and 1978. It is a place I have gone to heal and to touch the bones of the earth.

I hiked down to Skogadalsbøen from the road above, arriving in the late afternoon in time for dinner and a sound sleep. The next morning I was tempted to join a group leaving for a hut high on Glittertind, the snow-covered mountain across the valley. They would see the sun rise the following day and continue on one of the many trails that connect the mountain huts.

However, something told me to stay put. After breakfast I walked up the valley, following the stream rushing down from above. It was a sunny day and I stopped to sit on a rock in the middle of the stream. With the water flowing around the rock, I settled in to meditate and was soon overwhelmed with grief and regret. I began to sob, telling Linda how much I loved her, how sorry I

was for the ways I had let her down. I felt unable to handle this flood of grief, so I cried to God and asked for help. The grief slowly subsided, I felt at peace and held in love. I walked back down the valley to the hut.

That evening at dinner, I met Ingrid and her walking companion. We enjoyed our meal together, laughed a lot, Ingrid produced a small bottle of schnapps which we shared. The next day I found them at the head of the valley. They were making tea as they prepared to climb the ridge on the way to the next hut. I joined them for the rest of the hike and for dinner. The following day we walked out together to the road and parted ways. Ingrid and I knew we wanted to stay in touch. My heart had opened to the possibility of loving again. I had created a time and space to feel my grief so strongly that I had to ask God for help, and a gift came to me.

In February and March of 2008, I returned to Vietnam and the Philippines to visit the people whom Linda and I had worked most closely with. I joined a group of friends to travel back to the Philippine Refugee Processing Center, where we had all lived and worked in the late 1980s. We arrived on a Saturday and toured the camp. The forest had swallowed most of the area where we remembered thousands of Southeast Asian refugees living. The Buddhist temples were still there, but slowly falling apart.

On Sunday morning my friends went to church in the town below and invited me to come. I was

tempted, but something told me to stay behind. I walked up to the Buddhist temple at the top of the camp and found a niche by a Cambodian statue where I could sit and meditate.

And again, I was overwhelmed by grief and remorse and called to God for help. Once more, my sobs subsided. I felt at peace and after a while walked down to rejoin my friends.

The next day I traveled north to the mountain city of Baguio with Lina, my family's very best friend who had visited us several times in NH after we left the camp in 1989. On the eight-hour ride to Baguio, I talked almost all the way, sharing my life with Lina. On the way back down, I remember her doing the same. By the time I left the Philippines a few days later, I realized that I was falling in love with Lina. Several weeks and many long distance calls later, I proposed to her. She agreed to marry me, came to the US in 2009 and here we still are.

In 2015, we traveled to Norway and visited Ingrid, now a friend to us both!

What allowed for these openings of my heart to new possibility? It was the grief that cracked me open, and the God who is love who entered in.

*David Blair has lived and worked in China, the Philippines, and Vietnam. His inner journey has taken him to even more amazing places. David co-founded the Mariposa Museum and World Culture Center in Peterborough, New Hampshire, <mariposamuseum.org>. He is now a student at the Boston University School of Theology.*

# *The Moderation of Fear and Anger in Grief*

Jay Misra

Grief is more than a simple price tag on Love.  
it is the call for stillness from high above.  
Yet, rest on its own, healing does not make,  
and to sleep forever—a restless state.  
How strange it is to me that from grief we often wake;  
by streams of fire, harsh words and thoughts,  
filled to the brim with hate.  
Bottled up, any body becomes a lake—  
and filled with either fire or ice—one that burns.  
So to leave a precious one in the depths of either potion,  
is a matter of great concern.  
A living body be a temple of flame,  
and a dead one be an empty urn.  
One requires visitation,  
The other to be interred.  
So let the temple doors be opened,  
and at the late hour, let us fan the flame.  
Let us sing praises for heat and light,  
though standing only as close as the door's bay.  
May the warmth and light let pilgrims know  
to where they are on their way,  
May the warmth and light burn through the night until night,  
as it always does, gives way to day.

It was the fall of 2017. I was driving north from Kansas City to Omaha where I lived at the time. Looking to my right I saw a black cloud rising up from the timber along the rolling hills that ran along the two lane highway I was on. At first the cloud drifted up as I would expect, but then it took form as if a dark floating river and began to run towards the horizon; which was aglow with the yellows and oranges of the setting sun. As a young Boy Scout attempting to sit around a campfire on a humid night will, I learned that smoke generally disperses rather than concentrates. To my best guess they were starlings, and I've never seen so many take flight in such a

fashion before or since having this experience. I'm not superstitious, but I do believe in omens, further I believe the words of *Psalms 19*: That "the heavens declare the glory of God."

Not long after and all in a single week, my grandfather (the last of my grandparents) would pass, the woman I was head over heels for would call our relationship to an end (and made sure to remind me of all my flaws on her way out as they were the reasons why), and my work life would fall apart. So I went to the funeral, joined two dating services (and a new gym) and applied for three jobs in the following week. While I had decided to be done with grief. It wasn't

done with me and no success of the three listed endeavors or any of the ones that followed would give me respite from the ensuing depression. It was a sleep from which I could not, more accurately would not, wake.

In step with *Psalms 19*, our bodies are "made in the image and likeness of God" and when studied can reveal spiritual lessons as valuable as their physical ones. Two such lessons are pertinent to my situation.

Point 1: Waking up (alertness) is not always a simple matter of alarm clocks or catecholamines. Take the activation and deactivation of the autonomic nervous system when presented with a danger stimulus (like a hungry bear). Most people know this better as the "fight or flight" response. What about when you can't "fight" or "flight"? Fewer people know what the animal body does then: it freezes. What wakes it from freeze is the fight or flight response itself. Unlike the stages of grief, here there is no skipping before returning to rest and digest.

Point 2: Similarly healing is not always a simple matter of clocks. What happens between ticks matters. As you may have guessed by this point my profession is as a healer. More specifically I am a tissue healer and most often of muscle. Many of my patients are surprised when I tell them that for normal tissue healing when injured they NEED inflammation. What about all those "anti-inflammatories" at the pharmacy counter—Advil, Tylenol, Aleve and on and on? Don't they heal? Well, it turns out in addition to inflammation we



NEED it in MODERATION, and our pain is the indicator of how much inflammation we can handle at once. In reference to the body I learned this quickly, ached my exams on it and made it part of my practice in tissue healing. I did not take the lessons it held for my emotions so quickly.

“Control your anger or it will control you”; “Be a man, suck it up”; “Don’t get angry, get even” ... Growing up, anger was considered a failure. What it really meant at its root was that you were undisciplined. That you were too lazy to learn about why things were as they were, and then too weak of will to change them to be the way you wanted. What the lessons of my upbringing prohibited was a mandatory intermediary stage that lies between depression and wellness. What my prolonged stay in depression taught me was that time does not heal, but holds for us the space to participate in the (often terrifying) human

connection that does. A prolonged depression will cull your number of friends relatively quickly. Before long the only ones you have (if any) are the ones who know how to listen. That is, those who know how to give what is essential to you—their precious attention. Those who know that the anger you express given space and the permission to, is not about them. They are the ones whose own crucibles have prepared them for the heat of the furnace you have become. It is enfolded in their wings you may be correctly called Shadrach, Meshach, or Abednego. It is the presence of the angels of which I speak that helped the most.

So the end of the story is really the beginning. It is the beginning of my joining the ranks of these few uncullable friends of anger. To my experience, what a friend that is to have.

*Jay Misra recently started attending Rochester (MN) Friends Meeting. There he met Michael Resman who told him about What Canst Thou Say?*

## An Embarrassment of Riches

The WCTS Team finds themselves in the happy financial situation of a significant balance. We propose to reduce the print subscription back to \$10 for one year and \$18 for two years, which it was before the increase came in May of 2017 to \$12 for one year and \$20 for two years. We will also grant a free year, that is, extend the subscription of all subscribers for one year. Thanks to all our subscribers that keep WCTS in print!

—WCTS Team

*Feel free to contribute to our “Afterthoughts” section*

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*August 2021*  
**Approaching the End of Life**  
*Editor: Rhonda Ashurst*

As the vessels that hold our Life Light dissolve, we are poured into the Ocean of Light from which we came. For most of us, this is a slow process that happens over decades. As you approach death, what is falling away? What are you learning about who you really are? How are you preparing for death? What advice would you give younger people about living life fully?

Deadline: May 15, 2021

*November 2021*  
**Cultivating the Mystical**  
*Editor: Judy Lumb*

Rufus Jones wrote "The mystic ... is not a peculiarly favored mortal who by a lucky chance has received into his life a windfall from some heavenly Bread-fruit tree, while he lay dreaming of iridescent rainbows. He is, rather, a person who has cultivated, with more strenuous care and discipline than others have done, the native homing passion of the soul for the Beyond." How do you cultivate the mystical and what has been your experience?

Deadline: August 15, 2021

*Feb 2022*  
**Empowerment**  
*Editor: Earl Smith*

"You must never be fearful about what you are doing when it is right." —Rosa Parks. What gives you courage to stand in your truth and speak with integrity? How do you encourage and support those who are disempowered to make a stand? Tell us your stories of empowerment.

Deadline: Nov. 15, 2021

### ***What Canst Thou Say?***

c/o George Hebben  
2811 West B Avenue  
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***Grief***