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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*

## Cultivating the Mystical

### *Inbetweenness: Cultivating the Mystical*

Judith Favor

In exploring how I cultivate the mystical, I recognized an off-again, on-again pattern in my relationship with the Source of Love. I notice how I move along the spectrum of biblical prayer, from times of self-distancing like what Adam and Eve did in Genesis to moments of exuberant expectancy like what John expressed in the Book of Revelation. I puzzle over this odd pattern. One moment I savor dancing cheek-to-cheek with the Beloved, then off I go into some sort of solo improvisation.

When the holy connection is off, I quickly find myself feeling off-center. Confused. Lonely. Cranky. When the connection is on, I feel clear-minded and open-hearted, grateful to be rooted and grounded in Love. Once I notice myself feeling restless and impatient, it dawns on me that I have distanced myself from God in the hustle of daily tasks and commitments. Irritability is a clear signal that my internal tuner has once again lost the frequency of the divine channel.

One sure way to reset the holy connection is to respond to God's searching query in Genesis. Where are you? I hear the Creator's first question to the first couple (and me) as an invitation to relationship rather than an attempt to get information. I'm quick to respond each time I hear "Where are you?" Right here, God. Here I am. The Beloved is ready and waiting; I'm the one who wandered off. Quick arrow-prayers refocus my attention and strengthen my intention: Sorry. Mercy. Thanks. Prayer requests follow: I want to be here now, with you. Help restore our lost connection. Help me focus on your priorities. What's next?

Early most mornings, before my ego reports for duty, I write a Godalogue in my journal. Godalogues consistently open my perceptions and widen my perspectives. Partnering with the Beloved also expands Julia Cameron's practice of Morning Pages that are "three pages of ... stream-of-consciousness writing ... provoke, clarify, comfort, cajole, prioritize and synchronize the day at hand," as she wrote in *The Artist's Way*. I agree. On July 21, 2021, I wrote the following:

*Beloved, I miss you. I feel lost and lonely. Once again, I have forgotten to seek your presence. I yearn for communion with you. Help me restore the unitive oneness we shared during my Lenten fasting retreat."*

### **From the Editor:**

*As this issue was in production, a wonderful article, "Mystical Experience" by Donald W. McCormick appeared in Friends Journal. Our WCTS Editorial Team sent Friends Journal a Letter to the Editor calling attention to WCTS. Author Donald McCormick said he knew about WCTS and had ordered a set of WCTS back issues as he was preparing this Friends Journal article. Thanks, Donald McCormick! In this issue you will find much wisdom and direction on how to cultivate the mystical in your own lives. The web edition includes much additional wisdom and direction, as well as art in color and musical notation <whatcanstthousay.org> (See news of the November 2021 WCTS)*

Judy Lumb

**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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*Christ asks: What gets in the way of closeness with me today?*

*Over-responsibility. Work first, then prayer. Fun last. I feel that I must complete a bunch of pressing tasks before giving myself the pleasure of spiritual dessert.*

*What do you hear yourself saying?*

*During my recent vacation, I gave myself fully to communion with Creation and with you. Now back home, I feel pressure to get back to work.*

*Feel familiar?*

*Forgot you again as I just previewed today's list of tasks and deadlines.*

*In Christ you live and move and have your being. You are one with me now as you were present to loved ones in the Northwest, as you were present to the forests and beaches of the Pacific Coast. Those were days of grace, lit with love. Re-root and re-ground in me, dear one, so my love at work in you can do abundantly far more than you can ask or imagine.*

*Your mercy feels out of reach. I'm drowning in a high tide of responsibilities.*

*Start with lectio divina. Re-read your notes from yesterday's Fetzer Sacred Space conference. Act as if reading a Psalm. Shower and shampoo. Eat breakfast. Then return to me. I'll be waiting.*

So this is how cultivating mystical union works in my life, and in my leadership. Off-again, on-again attention to the Mercy, the Something More, the Beloved One. When preparing to guide a group or meet someone for a soul-care session, I may center myself with God's query from Genesis, or read a Psalm from the Bible's epic collection of Godalogues. Sometimes I pray to Abba, as Jesus did, or invoke *en Christo* alongside Paul. I may simply visualize an infinity loop of loving light enfolding all who stand in need of prayer. Always I practice contemplative listening. Appreciative inquiry. Spontaneous writing. For me, the soul of mysticism is faithfully noticing and naming what I hear from the Source of Love.

I have recently adopted Richard Rohr's definition of contemplation as "full-access knowing – prerational, nonrational, rational and transrational all at once." I'm beginning to explore what happens when I open all those levels of consciousness to the Inner Guide. Indoors, I commune with the Holy primarily through contemplative listening while doing chores, and several periods of writing throughout the day. Outdoors, I relish the divine gaze in the aircscape, the lightscape, the soundscape and all the sightsapes around me. Often, despite my shortcomings, I feel a reflection of the divine gaze. Cultivating the mystical is about communing fully with whatever and whoever is in front of me.

*Judith Favor, author, great-grandmother and convinced Friend, is at home in southern California's Claremont Monthly Meeting. Pendle Hill Pamphlets recently released her testimony to Friending Rosie on Death Row. Learn more at <[JudithFavor.com](http://JudithFavor.com)>.*

# Cultivating Mysticism

David Blair

For a gardener, cultivation is a way of preparing the soil to receive the seed. I favor light cultivation to loosen and aerate the top layer. Building a new bed can be hard labor and deep digging. Here in New Hampshire this means wrestling out rocks and perhaps breaking up a clay hardpan. But once the bed is made, gentle cultivation and constant attention do the trick.

I've found a similar progression in my mystical journey. My crisis of the dark night required deep digging and hard labor, without the assurance that the garden bed would ever be complete. This meant therapy, sticking with a meditation practice that seemed to yield no fruit at first, long walks, the discovery of animal guides, seeking out friends, reading many books and filling their margins with notes, audiotapes from the channel Lazaris, attending retreats, a dream journal and morning devotional readings from Meister Eckhart and Catherine of Siena. And more: some of the "more" makes me laugh or cringe today. I was ready to try anything.

Through this time I experienced moments of grace, when I felt touched by light and love, when I asked for guidance and received it, or perhaps an insight came unbidden. I learned to trust these moments, without any need to explain them. I recognized that I had had these moments in the past, at important junctures in

my life, and had trusted those moments too without knowing or caring where they came from. This muscle of trust grew stronger, and those moments more frequent and stronger. They might arrive as a powerful physical release, a flood of tears or a quiet yet huge "Aha" moment.

I did not control this process. What I brought to it was openness, the willingness to go into an experience rather than close it off. It was hard and sometimes scary. My guides—human, animal, ethereal—all taught me to trust rather than fear. I learned not to expect the experience to arrive in a way I might expect or to lead somewhere I might anticipate. This process did require strenuous work and discipline, yet it also demanded letting go of (the illusion of) control.

Many moments of awakening led to my re-birthday in July 1998. I can liken this to the climax of a symphony. Today the intensity is far less, the volume has dropped down, yet the music continues. The "strenuous care and discipline" have diminished. They have become a part of my fabric so that I don't have to work so hard at it any more. I ask to remain open to possibility and alert for complacency. Practice looks different than it once did but it must still be tended.

Meister Eckhart writes: "You must learn to look deeply into things and discover God there; you must plant a firm impression of

God in your mind and hold it there constantly. It is like acquiring any art such as learning to write. You must practice constantly whether you want to or not, whether it is easy or not. Through faithful practice you learn to write and acquire the art of penmanship. With time you will learn to write fluently and with style. The accomplished scribe does not have to be constantly conscious of her skill, and so she creates her art by means of it. So you should shimmer with the divine presence without having to work at it."

Shall we shimmer together?

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

## Check out the Web Edition

You will find a "thank you" to Mariellen Gilpin, as well as more wisdom and direction plus art in full color <whatcanstthousay.org> (See news of the November 2021 WCTS).

# The Importance of Mystical Experience

Robert A. Lowe

For me, the “mystical side” of Quakerism revolves around the more contemplative side, the more meditative side, the more prayerful side, the more centering downside (that of going into the reflective side) of my direct worship experience.

For me, evangelism is the contrasting opposite of mysticism. It is a more outward focused, “community outreach” side of the religious experience (i.e., working in soup kitchens, food banks, cold-weather shelters, speaking out against war and violence within society).

One of my many part ministers/pastors basically said to the congregation during one sermon, that religion is based on a two-way street of both mysticism and evangelism. It is like breathing: we cannot just exhale; we cannot just inhale; we must do both, or we will not have a “living,” “breathing” church!! And I found that quite interesting. It is the mystical side, though, that I wish to delve into at the present time.

I was drawn into the Religious Society of Friends, over 14 years ago; it was a “spirit-led conviction” and one that spoke to me on a very “mystical” level. And, just like George Fox, the other religious affiliations (of the time) those that I had once attended, no longer “spoke to my condition.” I needed something else. Something different. And, then a small voice spoke to me saying: “Quaker.” My immediate response was: “Excuse me?” For I only knew of the “historical” Quakers and knew absolutely nothing of present-day Quakers. Thus, my religious searching continued.

One thing led to another, and after much research on the subject matter, and reading copious amounts of literature on the topic, I ended up speaking with Friends in Barnesville, Ohio. This is where I met Bill and Frances Taber. They knew that I seemed both inquisitive and sincere in my search, by my asking many questions regarding Quakerism and the Religious Society of Friends.

Certainly one thing that we did speak about was the Meeting for Worship, and the personal experiences of (and importance in) attending such a worship. However, it was soon afterwards that I ended up moving to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. This was in 2003.

It was here that I began attending Meeting for Worship on a regular basis. I tended to gravitate to the 8:00 am service. It was unprogrammed, silent, and very, very contemplative, meditative, and prayerful. Sitting in group silence, with the expectant waiting for that “still small voice” was very interesting from the beginning!! I found myself wanting to go back for more and more; each time receiving and attaining differing outcomes. It was during many of these times that I began writing a lot, journaling, and recording various messages and thoughts that came my way, down onto paper. I found myself being drawn back, again and again. I can only suppose it was the mystical side of corporate group worship that appealed to me.

Beyond that, was the reading of several books on Quakerism, and especially books by Rufus Jones. Of the many authors on Quakerism, Rufus Jones captivated me; he was very interesting, informative (never boring), instructive, and spoke to me on a personal level. Many of his writings are, indeed, mystical in their recorded materials (*Spiritual Energies in Daily Life, The Inner Life, Testimony of the Soul, and Studies in Mystical Religions*, just to name a few). I would always go back, again and again, and re-read many of his texts. Surely, of all modern-day Quakers, he was the most “mystical.”

Evangelism is more of a group experience because the group itself is the primary level in which outward evangelism takes place. While the mystical side is more of an “individual” pursuit. It takes special effort on the part of the individual to reach into the mystical side of religion. For each person, mystical religious experiences are based on individual differences in personality and individual psychology. I would venture to say that Jesus’ mystical religious experience was different from that of Saul’s/Paul’s, of George Fox, of Rufus Jones, of me, personally speaking! Perceptions on what to expect also differ from person to person, but their “group” identity remains the same; that they are trying to reach that “Holy Other,” that “Still Small Voice,” that “Inward Light” in each of them.

Where evangelism is pretty much the same throughout the history of the church or religion itself, mysticism varies greatly in the myriad of outcomes in such a pursuit. Outcomes differ greatly from one person to another. My experience may be totally different from your experience of the mystical. But, they are all mystical.

It is this mystical side of Quakerism that keeps drawing me back, again and again, to the act of corporate, silent, meditative group worship, every chance I get.

However, this has come to a screeching halt, due to the COVID scare of 2020! Mystical group experiences can only happen during Meeting for Worship in our Meeting Houses. It is fraudulent and inconceivable to think that it can be done virtually or through some dumb Zoom meeting!! In that respect, I am spiritually adrift, and forever isolated. I will never lower my standards in this respect. It won't be until humans have come to their senses and get back to some sort of state of normalcy that I may continue my mystical pursuit within the Religious Society of Friends.

I would like to remind Friends of these scriptural passages that speak to this modern-day condition:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”  
Romans 8:35

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God, that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”  
Romans 8:38-39.

“Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink.” Matthew 6:25

“Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Matthew 6:34

Is it just me or do we practice and engage these religious edicts only in times of “good” and ignore them when times are “bad”? Good Question!!

*Although he is not involved in a Friends meeting now, **Robert Lowe** is very, very Quaker and that will not change. He is working on a manuscript tentatively titled “Re-evaluating George Fox: Reviewing his Words and Works.”*

## Uncentering

*Eric E. Sabelman*

As usual, I had trouble centering at the beginning of Meeting for Worship.

Then I realized that centering is not what I need to do.

I am plenty centered: I am the center of my universe, as you are the center of yours. I am surrounded by concentric circles of obligations, relationships, interests, things to do. I try to keep them tight, neatly organized, not too big or cluttered, and I stay in the center like a spider in her web.

What do I need to truly enter into worship is to escape from the web? ... to be uncentered.

How do you uncenter yourself?

There is the way of deep meditation: let your self dissolve into the All.

This is the way of mystics who practice for years, learning to unbuild the circular walls that confine the soul. It sounds hard to do. Is there another way? Since I am enclosed in small circles, why not make them larger?

First, I will invite you in, you who are here with me learning how to worship: come inside my inner circle. Welcome! Make yourselves at home. Stay as long as you like.

Then, invite the distractions we try to ignore: the restless dogs, the child crying somewhere outside, the baa---ing sheep at Ohlone School, the motorcycle rider going too fast on the freeway, the pilot of the airplane overhead. Welcome to you all!

Invite all those who suffer, and all who laugh. How can the inner circle not stretch with so many inside?

Invite every green leaf on every tree, and every breath of wind that stirs the leaves. Invite the birds and butterflies, and yes, the spiders. Invite every ray of sunlight, and every shadow.

Every one who accepts your invitation brings its spark of holiness. How will these pieces of the puzzle fit together? Not very likely a neat circle.

When you have invited in the whole of Creation, your inner circle will be so large there is no way to find the center.

You have uncentered yourself.

**(See the web version for more from Eric Sabelman <[whatcanstthousay.org](http://whatcanstthousay.org)>.)**

# Cultivating the Mystical in Meeting for Business

Elizabeth Meyer

When I served Baltimore Yearly Meeting as its presiding clerk, I stood before the gathered body at annual session and felt the Divine Presence in the Midst rising from the assembly. The Holy was palpable. To attend business meeting was to have a mystical experience.

What cultivates the mystical in Quaker business meetings? As clerk, I did my part by prayerfully preparing the agenda, but I knew that the clerk had only a small role in inviting the Divine Source to be felt among us. I was in awe of how hard Friends worked to find unity, how patiently they labored with one another,

how deeply they listened. Friends' business meetings become mystical experiences when those present faithfully adhere to Quaker process. Quaker business process is a group spiritual discipline that cultivates the mystical among us.

Our spiritual ancestors developed our business process by noticing which practices helped the meeting to encounter the Holy and to discern the Divine Will. Thus, we forsake the adversarial ways of the secular world. We are all on the same side—the side of Truth. We may come to the meeting with opinions, but we hold those loosely,

listening to others and open to new insights. When we speak, we always speak with kindness, avoiding personal attacks. Our practices foster love among us, and love facilitates unity. The Divine works among us when we are faithful.

**Elizabeth (“Betsy”) Meyer**, a member of Concord (New Hampshire) Monthly Meeting, is a former clerk of Baltimore Yearly Meeting and the author of *Pendle Hill Pamphlet 453 (2018)*, *A Practical Mysticism: How Quaker Process Opens Us to the Promptings of the Divine*. “I actually wrote the pamphlet because I thought that Friends give the clerk too much credit when a business meeting goes well (and perhaps too much blame when it does not). I wanted to emphasize the importance of all Friends engaging in this mystical experience.”

## Slowing Down and Opening Up to the Light

Sally Campbell

I have found it almost impossible to open a door when I think it is locked, but once I know it isn't locked, opening it is easy. Reading Thomas Kelly's *Testament of Devotion* and being with Quakers at Friends General Conference in 1982 made me understand that not only is the door to the Dear One unlocked; it is well worth opening.

Recently I was at a Pendle Hill discussion of Howard Thurman's pamphlet *Mysticism and the Experience of Love* (Pendle Hill #115) and was struck by the story he told of being in Rochester, New York, late at night and hearing a sound like the rushing of water. He had no idea what it was but found out the next day that indeed there was a river under the city's streets. One could never hear it in the daytime because there was so much noise

and so much going on. He saw this as an exact parallel to one's needing to be still to be able to hear God's voice within.

In the breakout room, one of the other participants mentioned she kept hearing in her head the Simon and Garfunkel song “Slow down, you move too fast”. Well, I have two songs about slowing down that came to me in the silence years ago and now I'm finally beginning to take their sage advice.

1) *Slow down*  
*Open your heart*  
*Rest in the Light*  
*S. l. o. w. D. o. w. n* (Notation below)

2) *Go down, slow down, go down low*  
*To a place that is real*  
*To a love you can feel*  
*In which you can rest*  
*And know you are blessed*  
*Go down, slow down, go down low*  
*And listen*  
*And breathe*  
*And listen...* (Notation in web edition <whatcanstthousay.org>.)

**Slow Down**

Slow down. O- pen your heart. Rest in the Light. Slow down.

**Sally Campbell** is a singer/songwriter, a member of Morningside Meeting (NYC), retired librarian and a Friendly personal organizer. Many of her songs are on YouTube under “Sally Quaker Campbell” <[youtube.com/user/scampfriend/videos](https://youtube.com/user/scampfriend/videos)>.

# The Cool Green of “Our” Lake

Veronika

## Word Past

From the time I read *Walden* in high school and then again at UW-Madison, I have known my own mysticism is not linked to the “Heavenly Beyond” of Rufus Jones. Rather, what anchors me is the dark brown peat of the cranberry bogs I grew up on, the cool green of “our” lake, the pink and ivory blossoms of the woods and swamps of my childhood.

The intricate and sentient connectedness of tree root to mycorrhizal zones of the Earth are Mystery embodied—whether we are scientific or visionary seekers. And I am in sync with Henry David Thoreau in defining the mysticism of the Primordial, in the sacredness of Green, before the emergence of humans. Thoreau suggests “Perhaps on that spring morning when Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden, Walden Pond was already in existence and even then breaking up in a gentle spring rain....”

But with an imaginative leap Thoreau describes the water of Walden Pond as perhaps the “iris” of Creation’s eye: “a vitreous greenish blue....” Hot Damn!! Creation’s eye, not God’s eye, pre-creator anthropomorphism. (To be honest though, the Black Madonna icon of my Polish grandma does reach down to me too.)

## Past Words

Henry David’s words and life legitimized my quest as a student, but I am embodied as Woman. From womb-knowledge I knew the thrill of love-making and the fierce

contractions of childbirth, where Nature and her rhythms make my wishes infinitesimal. I bonded with whale mothers and gorilla mothers and the need to suckle my baby. I have no fear of returning to Mother Earth to become mushroom or tree or “weed”.

When I was forty, I side-stepped from my path of religious practice. It was after the time when my mother led a crew of Native women and German immigrant neighbors, hand weeding on our cranberry marsh (and it was before my youngest brother had devised ways to control plant succession on the beds). I walked along “wiping” a liquid chemical on the leaves hundreds of tiny red maples. After several weeks I had a dream.

The loons on our lake are starving. Their heads are enshrouded in caul so that they are unable to yodel or eat. The loons are straggling by the shore and I attempt to feed them with moldy peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, to no avail.

The dream haunted me. I worked on the dream with a fellow graduate student in Hypnosis class. As I re-entered the Loon Dream, tears dripped down the left side of my face. I faced that my herbicide use violated tree-beings and sacred water.

I told my brother I would no longer use chemicals on the marsh, but I wanted to continue to work the harvest. Our women’s crew would still rescue frogs and snakes from the cranberry hopper and eagerly fork grass from the resting cranberry vines in late October to help them breathe.

Not by words but by grace, I was blessed by a sacred dream some ten years after the cautionary dream.

I see a young birch, catkins hanging from her twigs like jewelry, vibrant and silent. I shift my gaze and now a red maple appears. Wearing the spring colors before she turns green, delicate shades in her leaves and exquisite buds opening to flower. The image dissolves.

At last a chokecherry tree emerges, purple to black fruit in clusters. Complete silence: a shimmering vision of Life.

## Old Age Immersion

Now in my 70s, I return to our lake with my daughter to swim. When she crosses the beach, an owl flies out in front of her and lands in a pine. As I wade into the lake, I miss the schools of baby bullheads we used to swim with. Going deeper, I swim under the homemade raft to hear my echo. A huge black spider rests in the crevice between planks. Empty dragonfly chrysalises dangle from the diving board. We stay all afternoon. As we leave the water, I hear the call of a kingfisher. I am pleased to see him dart out from the old birch tree.

As we depart, I am moved to see the dark-eyed barred owl is still there peering at us from the pine. Looking into her eyes, she looks human to me.

When *Veronika* (a pseudonym to protect the lake described) first sat with Quakers, her daughter chose to jump around with a toy outside. Neither of them remembers her response when one of the Elders asked; “Don’t you like to be quiet?”

## Obituary: Saying Good-bye to Linda Caldwell Lee

*Linda Caldwell Lee was on the What Canst Thou Say (WCTS) editorial team from 1999 through 2004. I remember that an article of hers was the first time WCTS editors used our website to publish a longer article than we had space for in our 10-page printed journal. Mariellen Gilpin received that long submission from Linda Lee, but was concerned that we didn't have space for the whole thing, so we decided to publish it on our website. Even Linda's obituary includes mysticism! Thanks to Amy Perry for sharing Linda's obituary with us. I added a bit of her writing. —Judy Lumb*

Linda Caldwell Lee was a poet, author, sister, mother, lover, friend, aunt, grandmother, great-grandmother, steward of the written word, Quaker, conveyor of positive energy, inventor, and leader. She was born in Philadelphia, PA July 21, 1939 and passed away peacefully, surrounded by family and friends, on Friday, June 25, 2021. ...

Linda grew up in Philadelphia and demonstrated a love of books, writing and learning that lasted a lifetime. She attended Ursinus College where she majored in English literature and met the father of her sons, her first husband, Rusty Leeds. She also obtained a Master of Library Science at the University of Michigan and in 1969 moved with her family to Indianapolis, where she worked as a reference and research librarian at the Indianapolis Public Library, Butler University Library, and Indiana Chamber Of Commerce.

She spoke fondly of her work with children and adults as an outreach speaker for the Indianapolis Public Library. She also worked with collegiate and legal books, and as a bookstore manager with Baker and Taylor, Commerce Clearing House, and a downtown bookstore.

Due to extreme chemical sensitivities around 1994 and for a number of years, Linda was forced

to live a much restricted and isolated life. During this challenged time she had a peak mystical experience that had a profound effect on her life. As she strengthened, she travelled the country in a white camper she called Moby. She collected stories of people who had had powerful mystical and spiritual experiences. Published in 2012, these collected stories became her first book, entitled *Mystics, Me, and Moby*.

Linda's experience with mysticism and spirituality led her to the Quakers. She became a member of First Friends Meeting of Indianapolis where she attended both the unprogrammed and the semi-programmed worship. It was at the Wednesday night un-programmed meeting that her bright, charming smile captured the eye of Ed Morris in the spring of 1998. She was a very beloved member of First Friends.

She and Ed created a life together with many adventures and travels, love and laughter. Their RV brought them to numerous national parks during a one-year-long excursion and their visits to family often included exploration to parks and cottages along the way.

Linda continued to write and volunteered at the Indianapolis Writers Center. She had several poems published in various poetry magazines locally and nationally.

*What Happiness Required* was published in 2006 and most recently *Before the Final Fire* was published in 2021. She also taught writing and conducted poetry workshops.

Linda's perseverance, authentic inquiry, strength, courage, and ability to beam her love on all of us was what we saw and felt on a regular basis. That was in spite of the difficult health challenges, struggles with chemical sensitivity, and illness that caused loss of vision in her left eye. Linda refused to view herself as a victim and met each difficulty with a solution for moving forward with love.

She will be remembered by friends and family as a kind and gentle, loving soul who was strong and courageous. A memorial service was held on Saturday July 10th, 2021, at First Friends Quaker Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Linda Lee wrote in *WCTS* August 2006: "As I sat on a stone bench in the garden at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, I opened my eyes and sat quietly. There was a sharp sound and a sudden pain in my heart. 'My heart has cracked open,' I thought. Tears wet my cheeks. I was amazed, awed, and humbled. I thought, 'Something profound has happened. I want to talk to someone about this. But who?' Then I heard a voice that was not mine and was not of my invention: 'Jesus could be your guide.'"



# Afterthoughts

Continuing Conversation from Previous Issues

George Eastburn had submitted his story in July 2020. I told him we would save it for the August 2021 issue on the theme, "Approaching the End of Life." He agreed that it would be published then. But when I sent the proof, he never responded. Judy and I decided, since we had his permission to publish back in July, that we would include it as planned. I'm so glad that we did! I had no idea George was so near the end of his own life. I'm glad that our issue touched his wife enough to send this beautiful thank you note.

--Editor, Rhonda Ashurst

Dear George,

Thank you for the copies of *What Canst Thou Say?* My husband, George passed away in November of last year. Finding his story *The Woods Down Sledding Hill*, and the drawing by my granddaughter, Sharon Maria Eastburn, so touched my heart. I found the words in the latest edition a comfort. Thank you so much.  
Sincerely, Sharon Eastburn

*What themes would you like to see in future WCTS issues?*

*Email us at: <WCTSeditors@gmail.com>*

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## Please write for *What Canst Thou Say?*



*February 2022*

### **The Other Side of the Pandemic**

*Editor: Rhonda Ashurst*

The pandemic has given us time to disengage from our normal patterns and reflect on our lives. As we transition out of our cloistering, our lives may be different from what they were before. How have you changed? What have you learned about yourself? Were there unexpected blessings, unforeseen challenges? How will you hold onto the intentions and practices you want to keep?

Deadline: November 15, 2021

*May 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: February 15, 2022

*August 2022*

### **Truth**

*Editor: Judy Lumb*

Each of us has a particular experience of God and each must find the way to be true to it. We can find truth in other people’s opinions and experiences if we listen patiently. Was there a time when you discovered you had been mistaken about some truth you had long nurtured? How did you confront your error? Was it public or private? Do you respect that of God in everyone though their truth may be different from your own? How do you reach across those differences?

Deadline: May 15, 2022

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

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