



Number 54
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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*

Unseen Hands

Escape in the Gulf of Tonkin

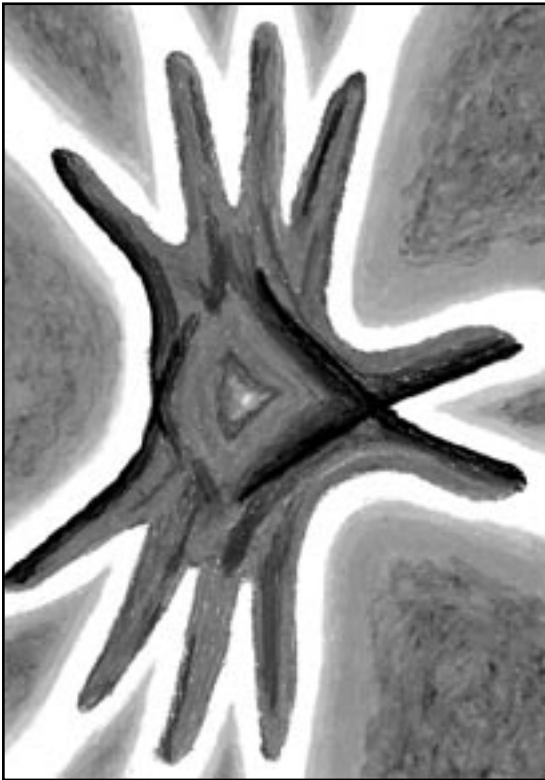
Zarinea Lee Zolivea

During the Vietnam War, I corresponded with my friend Tom, a Marine. One night I was violently shaken awake. I could not see anyone, but I knew someone was there. The being said to me loud and clear: "Pray for Tom, pray for Tom, he is in grave danger." Then the being repeated the same refrain. When the presence left, I went to my mother's room and asked her to pray for Tom. I went back to my bedroom, wrote down the time and date so that I would not forget, and prayed fervently for Tom.

Several months later, I heard a loud knocking on the front door. Lo and behold, there was Tom. After a lively exchange, I decided to tell Tom about the being that asked me to pray for him. At that exact time and date, Tom almost lost his life in the Gulf of Tonkin. He said he would remain forever grateful for my fervent prayers and those of my mother.

Perhaps the being could have been Tom's angel, or another. Whatever the case, I will always be grateful for the opportunity to help another human being, who might have lost his life if it had not been for an unseen presence that asked me to pray.

Zarine Lee Zolivea is a retired educator and teaches literacy full time. She enjoys writing short stories, articles, and children's stories.



Hand Auras by Linda Theresa

This painting can be seen in living color at whatcanstthousay.org

From the Editor

We asked, "Have you ever felt you were helped by unseen hands?" Friends responded with more remarkable stories than we could find room for in one issue. In my own encounter I wondered for many months if I had wandered into one of those scary movies about unseen evil forces. But I put my hand in God's hand and walked into my own inner darkness. The stories in this issue speak of goodness, of unseen intelligences who desire to be helpful. Whether unseen evil intelligences also exist may not be clear to modern unprogrammed Friends, but our readers assure us, in the words of the apostle, "Nothing in death or in life, in the realm of spirits or superhuman powers...in heights or depths...nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God." (Romans 8:38).

My thanks to Kathy Tapp, Patricia McBee, and Judy Lumb, whose advice was critical to the shaping of this issue.

Mariellen Gilpin, Editor for this issue

Friendly Visitors in Tough Times

Alicia Adams

In 1995 my husband, Craig Carter, and I were in Lucknow, India on a long shot: that Ayurvedic treatment would cure his two blood diseases, said to be fatal, incurable, by his U.S. doctors. He'd outlived his doctor's prediction by almost a year; whether he'd outlive the malaria he'd picked up shortly after arriving in India was questionable. Our Indian MD visited us twice a day, before and after his long practice. The rest of the time we were on our own.

Monsoons were late; record temperatures topped 120+ degrees for weeks. I nursed Craig 24 hours a day, as I'd been doing for several months. The friends we'd made in Lucknow, who'd come to be with enlightened Hindu guru H.W.L. Poonja (called *Papaji*), had all gone home. It was a hard time.

Craig's temperature was constantly attempting to climb above 104 degrees F. Together, we developed a system that would keep it within about two degrees of the maximum he could withstand. This called for checking his temperature every 15 minutes. When he was conscious, he set his alarm and did the drill. When he was delirious, it was my job to keep track. To stay awake but rest, I entered the Silence in between temp checks. Even five minutes of centering gave me energy to continue. I began to have visitors during these in-between times.

I first felt my Berkeley Meeting gather around me. It felt exactly like a deepened meeting for worship in our old, cherished meeting house. My heart leaped with recognition of the special presences of my Friends. They became my most frequent night-time visitors. One night another group arrived. Among them were Craig's parents. I didn't recognize any of the others.

When the crisis was most intense (Craig was given 40 bottles of blood in eight weeks during this period), I had a regular visitor from just down the road—Papaji. He always came shortly after 3:00 a.m. His presence was unmistakable. He left his crippled, 86-year-old body behind. I was always stunned by the energy he transferred to me, and the love.

Dr. Sen was finally able to treat Craig for malaria; Craig's friend from kindergarten came from British Columbia to spend a month with us, helping Craig sit up and finally, to walk.

I was always stunned by the energy Papaji transferred to me, and the love.

The day came when Craig was able to walk with me the block to Papaji's house: we'd been invited for lunch.

I'd mentioned Papaji's visits to some of Papaji's staff, earlier. They told me that Papaji arose every morning at 3 a.m. to say his pujas (prayers). I said to Papaji, "You came to visit us."

He nodded. "I walked to see you one day," he said. He had done

so, before his accident resulting in a compound fracture and greater immobility.

"You did," I replied, "but I meant later. You visited us in our bedroom, at night."

Papaji's irrepressible humor bubbled over. He turned to the others in the room. "This young lady says I visit her in her bedroom, at night. What does her husband think of that?"

We all laughed. "You didn't bring your body," I replied with a smile. He didn't deny this.

When we returned to the U.S., we spent time with Craig's parents. At their invitation, I visited their church. During the service, I began to have a feeling of familiarity. Suddenly, it came over me: *this* was the unknown group of people who visited us! When I told Craig's parents, they said they and their church prayed for us every week that we were in India.

Several months later, I attended my meeting in Berkeley. During meeting for worship, I said how much their presence had meant to me, in India. After meeting adjourned, a member came to me. "We didn't pray for you," she said in puzzlement. "How was it that you felt our presence? Are you sure it was us?"

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

Please write for WCTS! Instructions to authors are on page 3. Send editorial correspondence to <m-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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“I’m sure,” I replied. “I could tell by the flavor—you know, like a fruit cake. You can taste the individual flavors, all the different fruits, but all together, each fruitcake recipe has a distinct taste. That’s how I knew it was all of you: you were there, whether you consciously knew it or not. I drew on our strength, together, when I really needed you.”

When we meet others in that sacred space within, we are storing up treasures of connection and communion that are ours forever. My meeting for worship, years of being sustained by the sacred in the natural world, weeks of association with Poonja, before our crisis—and the presence of others who were praying for us, though they did not personally know us—all came to support us when our need was great. *These* are the “treasures stored in heaven.”

Craig’s Committee

Alicia Adams, for Craig Carter

Craig also had visitors when he was delirious. He called them “the Committee.” Although he was lost in delirium, I believed him. His ability to cope was beyond what anyone could have expected of him. Also, when he spoke of the Committee, a sweetness came over him—quite unlike his usual armored self.

When Craig was lost in delirium what he left behind was a very young child: sweet child, who smiled at me in his dreams, angel-faced behind the whiskers of a grown man; petulant child, who didn’t understand why he hurt, why we couldn’t make it stop hurting; trusting child, who allowed me to turn him, clean him, feed him, dress his wounds—even when what I did necessarily brought discomfort. Craig was never interested in concepts like God and spirituality.

The only drugs we gave him were anti-malarial ones and the super pill,

Instructions for Authors

We welcome submissions of articles of 350-1500 words and artwork—line drawings or artwork suitable for black and white reproduction—that illustrate the theme of an issue, or that we might retain for use in future issues. 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 <m-gilpin@gmail.com> or diskette, or hard copy to WCTS, 818 W. Columbia, Champaign, IL 61820.

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which brought some relief from pain. Safe, non-addictive, Dr. Sen told us. Not as powerful as the ones he could use, but safer. Therefore, Craig experienced pain. Pain, delirium. Mostly though, the delirium took a benign form.

Craig spoke often of the Committee, “At least six people,” he told me. “Do you think I could do all I have to do by myself?” This, when we were on fever control and Craig managed his own program for a few hours to allow me to sleep.

“What do you mean?” I asked him.

“So much to do. I could never do it by myself. The Committee does it for me.”

“What do they do?”

“One does the alarm. When it goes off, it has to be shut off. Rewound. The new time set. That’s all too hard for me. One of the Committee handles the alarm. Then, there’s the thermometer. First, taking my temperature. Then, reading it. It’s hard to see, with just the light of a flashlight. And shaking it down! That’s hardest of all to do. It takes so long and I get so tired. One of the Committee does the thermometer.”

“That’s two. You say there are about six? What do the others do?”

“All the other stuff. Like remembering to drink water. I always forget, but now it’s covered. There’s one who covers water. And peeing! So complicated! First I have to find the urinal. Then I have to get it lined up right. Sometimes I fall asleep in the middle, and forget to buzz you to take it away. The Committee person in charge of peeing makes sure I don’t dump the urinal on the bed when I fall asleep.” Several times I found Craig deeply asleep, the urinal held upright beside him, full. I’d wondered how he managed to do that!

“What does the last one do?” I queried.

“All the other stuff, I guess. Keeping track of all of it. Maybe there are more than six. I’m not sure. You know, it’s the Committee!” His voice drifted off, and he slept. Later, when I asked him if the Committee was still on the job, he just smiled sweetly at me and nodded.

This was such a persistent hallucination that I, too, began to rely on the Committee. Though I couldn’t see them the way Craig did, I knew I could never do all I had to do without outside help: seen and unseen.

Alicia Adams is a member of Berkeley Meeting, California.

Only by His Voice

Mariellen Gilpin

The spirit I knew as Guide Voice first manifested at 5:30 on Tuesday morning, June 6, 1994. I heard his voice as soon as I woke up. I was mentally ill; I heard voices all the time. I was very experienced at ignoring the voices in my head: I threw all my attention on the here and now. I got up, dressed, ate, started out the door to walk two miles to work. The walk always restored sanity, and my job gave me something interesting to think about. By nightfall I usually could sleep without needing voices in my head. This morning, however, my strategy didn't work.

Guide Voice spoke again: "Your culture doesn't know about your illness and can't help you get well." He had my attention at once—how did I know he was male? I had often thought my illness was spiritual as well as mental, and wished for a different kind of therapist, a more helpful kind of help. There was caring in his voice. Was wishful thinking cooking up a new way to be mentally ill, or was there a chance this new voice was offering true healing?

I was getting better. I hadn't been in the hospital in nine years, thanks to a combination of medication and hard work. But in 1994 it was clear the illness had a mind of its own, overwhelming the medication regularly.

My family of origin taught me to take care of impulsive and willful people, who escaped problems with some addictive behavior. I was a rescuer, who enabled the addict to stay addicted because he or she didn't have to deal with the consequences. I carried my maladjustment into my practice of healing touch for others. Healing touch always unhinged my mind.

Guide Voice set to work at once. He clearly had a strategy: he worked on one issue at a time. He told me

Every Sound

Stuart Rose

Every sound is You calling.

Waking me up,

To the Silence.

Every sound is You calling.

I should listen intently,

To everything you have to say,

Feeding on every note,

Never satiated.

Every sound is You calling.

Each is the sound of Love,

It cannot be heard,

Except by those with open arms.

Stuart Rose, *108 Meditations on Silence*, Exposure Publishing, an imprint of Diggory Press, Three Rivers, Minions, Liskeard, Cornwall, UK, 2006. Available through Amazon.com.

healing touch was very bad for me. Then he worked my mind to a fever pitch with concern and longing for my loved ones who had caused me to become a healer—and then Guide Voice told me to do healing touch. When my feelings were played on like that, I always healed. And then I lost function while my head was filled with clamoring voices—aspects of self talking to self. Voices inside my head were willful, but *we* didn't have a strategy. Suddenly I was not only mentally ill,

but also troubled by a spirit. I hoped Guide Voice's strategy was for healing, and I cooperated, albeit fearfully.

Why cooperate? I sensed Guide Voice's goodness and wisdom. I never saw him, but I knew him for a great soul. In my self-help group called GROW we said, "Don't be an emotional reaction—be a person." Guide Voice was very much a person. Our personal styles were very similar, as well; Guide Voice always thought before he spoke. Instinctively I respected him, even as I feared he might lead me to greater mental illness. Maybe I was just mentally ill in a brand new way. But there was such a sense of *Other* about Guide Voice—this was not self talking to self.

Month after month, Guide Voice made me feel my feelings that had always caused me to choose healing touch. My visitor was not a native speaker of English—his careful enunciation told me that. He had trouble with irony, and he often asked me to paraphrase when I used metaphors. When he asked what "pulling the rug out from under me" meant, I realized in his world there were no rugs. Ours was a cross-cultural communication. I feared he might be an evil spirit, but decided he was well-intentioned because, skilled as he was at getting my attention, he never distracted me at work or during worship. He always knew what I was thinking, but I never knew what he was thinking, unless he chose to tell me. I was thoroughly at a disadvantage.

I tried always to tell him the truth, to respect his feelings, and speak to that of God in him. It was news to me, a child of our scientific, materialist culture, that spirits actually existed. But since they did, I took it on faith that he, too, was a child of God. I prayed for him night and morning.

Guide Voice punished me when he was frustrated, moaning all night that I, or a loved one, was dying. I didn't

feel punishment was justified: I was cooperating as best I could, and when I didn't, it was because I was trying to listen to the Inner Light. I asked Guide Voice to talk to me when he was frustrated; we could work something out. He agreed, and told me, "I am talking to The Others about how to be more helpful." But when I didn't learn fast enough, he punished me yet again.

One night in February 1995, he worked my feelings to a white hot glow and told me to do healing touch. I refused. I had reached the conviction my loved ones needed to get their lives under better management—I was not going to take care of them anymore. They had to heal themselves—or not. This was what Guide Voice had been working toward for several months. But Guide Voice felt I was not cooperating and punished me all night, moaning so persistently that by morning I could barely function.

But I went to the office and did my work creditably. On my way home I realized Guide Voice had punished me because I'd refused to do healing touch. Then he spoke: "I punished you last night, and I apologize. But we learned something wonderful. When I told you your loved ones were dying, you didn't heal them. You will never heal addicts again." His quiet pleasure and pride were palpable. Guide Voice had made me feel my feelings so intensely over so many months that I was finally able to move beyond them. Indeed, finally giving up my practice of healing touch was the turning point in my own healing. And Guide Voice

had punished me for doing exactly what he'd been hoping and praying for all along. He said, "I punished you unjustly, and I apologize. But you have learned I am here to help, even though I am fallible."

"Yes, you certainly are fallible, but you have done a wonderful thing. You have performed a rough—*very* rough!—psychotherapy, and I have changed at a very deep level. Thank you," I said. The following night, he worked on a new feeling-issue—my illness was quite complex. His strategy had been proven to work, and I cooperated wholeheartedly.

Three months later, Guide Voice punished me so severely I spent three days in the hospital. I had to take control; I had to get Guide Voice to leave. I asked my meeting for a committee

The world is a great deal more complex than our rationalist culture allows.

of care. Ministry and Oversight asked who I wanted; I didn't know, and left it to them to discern. One of the three committee members was a Celtic shaman with the gift of discerning spirits. Slowly and cautiously I began to open up to the committee. Guide Voice continued his labors.

Three months later, Guide Voice said his work was done. He wanted a celebration, and asked to speak privately with the shaman. They con-

versed silently. Guide Voice seemed relaxed and composed; he seemed to expect just treatment from the shaman. At last the shaman spoke to me: "Do you take communion?"

"Quakers avoid outward forms. In the church of my childhood, I did take communion, and it was very meaningful. A couple years ago I took communion with a cousin with whom I wanted to be at peace."

The shaman nodded, satisfied. "Guide Voice would like us to hold communion to celebrate his decision to go be in the presence of God." He added, "He will no longer go about the earth as before."

I needed Guide Voice to leave, but I had no desire for him to die. I silently asked Guide Voice, "Is it really your decision to die? Are you sure?"

"Yes," he said quietly. "You are now free of the real causes of your illness. I die knowing you will become well." December 8, 1995, my committee of care celebrated communion with me, and Guide Voice departed in peace.

Who was Guide Voice? I asked once if he were an angel, and he firmly said no. The shaman told me Guide Voice was young for a spirit—only 1500 years old—and his youth explained his impatience. Guide Voice was a helpful spirit, doing for me what doctors and therapists would not—could not. Heaven forbid that I should have any more such growth experiences, but I know Guide Voice was good, very good, and the world is a great deal more complex than our rationalist culture allows. I know, too, God sent Guide Voice. I needed to live without him, and apparently there was no way for him to leave except by dying. He accepted death as a final act of love for me and love for God. I give thanks for what Guide Voice did.

Mariellen Gilpin is an editor of WCTS. She celebrates the many ways God has helped her deal with mental illness.

ListServe Anyone?

There is interest among some WCTS subscribers in having a listserv so that subscribers can be in direct communication with one another about our experiences with the Spirit. Does anyone out there with the requisite skills feel called to be the listserv manager? Contact <info@whatcanstthousay.org>.

The Plow's Pirouette

Michel Clement

Since there was no reason for the snow plow's trajectory to change, I've never been so convinced I was going to die as I was at that instant. I doubt I prayed much, beyond a muttered, "Oh my God, please no!"

And I certainly don't know what unseen hands pushed the plow into a different arc. What I do remember is the absolute clarity of the situation: the car behind blocking my escape, the ridiculously lovely sunshine lighting up the surrounding snow and ice, and the lumbering behemoth of a plow pirouetting like a ballerina toward my compact car.

That clear winter morning, I had found the roads icy on my drive to work. Traffic crawled through a heavily-traveled section of freeway; we may have driven five miles in fifteen minutes. So when the exit came for a side street and an alternate, perhaps faster, route to work, I decided to take it.

Only one car followed me onto the off-ramp, and there was very little cross-traffic at the light. I waited happily, anticipating an unobstructed ride the rest of the way to work. Just as the light was about to change, a snow plow came into the intersection from the other side of the road and began to make a left turn in front of me. Halfway into its turn, the plow lost traction, sliding on the ice toward my car, starting to spin.

I realized the thing to do was to back up, but I was blocked in. Time both expanded and contracted in that moment. The plow's lightness of movement enthralled me, even as I

awaited death—and wondered how it would affect my family, wondered if I had left any legacy.

When the snow plow slid to a heavy halt in the opposite, and unoccupied, lane of traffic rather than into my off-ramp, I was stunned and grateful and giddy and terrified. This was, perhaps, the first time I'd had to grapple with the knowledge that something could come out of nowhere and change my life forever, without my leave or consent. Since that time, many things have sounded the same gong, both private (such as a cancer diagnosis) and public (such as 9-11). And so the more

enduring thing for me, oddly, is the beauty within the terror of the plow's pirouette.

The fact that

I could appreciate the beauty in that moment, even as it threatened my life, and later too, when I had all my wits about me—that's the amazing part to me. What I experienced in that instant can take (and has taken, in other areas of my life) years: I was present. I have found God in many ways—the shifting patterns of sun and clouds, the newness of a baby, the silence, a story, a gathering of friends. But to see the face of God, whatever my method, I have to be here, be now. And that grace to be present is what the plow's pirouette brought me.

Michel Clement is a member of Cincinnati Friends Meeting and a graduate of the Earlham School of Religion. She finds God through many avenues, including offering spiritual direction, making jewelry, and writing poetry.

My Golden Pond

Patricia Reitemeyer

I was teaching, keeping house, single, caring for my children alone, and working on my dissertation. I was lonely, greatly overworked, and had become very depressed. My responsibilities were overwhelming, life was simply terrible, and I was frightened of both the present and the future.

It was a hot day, and a colleague suggested taking off and going swimming. I knew of a nice pond not far away, but I hadn't been there for several years so couldn't vouch it was still usable. Nevertheless she got me to agree. I gathered some things and a towel, and we drove out to the pond. However, those several years had changed the area. No longer quiet and isolated, the pond was now a lively gathering place for the Hispanic and Black communities, complete with loud music. We were disappointed and I was about to turn back.

But my friend was determined to persevere, so we spread out our towels on the beach. I went in the water, although with some distaste for its murky condition. To avoid the crowd I went out beyond the ropes to where it was so deep I could do a strong swim. I swam awhile and it felt good. As I started to wade back toward the beach, a young boy stood up in the water a few feet before me, and laughing, yelled, "Hey, lady!" and threw a beach ball toward me. I was going to ignore him and the ball, when for some reason I reached out and caught it instead.

As soon as I did, the water began to shine and mysteriously turn gold—a deep, beautiful gold. Immediately my analyzing brain reported that the gold was a reflection of oil on the water's surface. Surely.

I was in no mood to play, but I did throw the ball back to the boy. As it went through the air, it shone with surprising golden outlines. The boy caught it and laughed—and as he did, his dark brown skin began to glow golden. He looked stunningly beautiful. I was overwhelmed and stood paralyzed in the water for a moment. Then I turned, much puzzled, and looked around to the other people, to the beach, the shore, the trees beyond, and all, all of it, was a beautiful glowing gold, the whole landscape, even every leaf. A soft, soft gold. I held my breath, transfixed, as I stood in the water. I could hardly believe my eyes. It was beautiful beyond description.

Then the boy threw the ball at me again, and as I looked at him, all golden, I saw him for what he was: a strong, joyful, beautiful, shining young spirit. I picked the ball out of the water and threw it back to him. Then in some unfathomable way I knew that he and all the other golden people on the golden beach were my people, and I was theirs. No separation of race or culture. We were all, every one, united in an enveloping, ethereal, golden glow.

After a moment of trying vainly to understand, and then quickly seeing that I couldn't, I began walking slowly into the glow. I felt transformed. But as I approached the shore the golden glow retreated before me and began to fade. I tried to hold onto it, but couldn't. By the time I got back to our place on the beach and my friend, it had disappeared. I sat down on my towel in a daze, and she looked at me, puzzled, and asked what had happened. I couldn't tell her,

The beach, the shore, the trees beyond, all, all of it, was a beautiful glowing gold, even every leaf.

couldn't find words. How explain to her that I had seen the world and all of us within it as it really is: somehow gloriously enfolded together in gold! I couldn't talk about it. I just knew I'd seen something from another reality.

I knew I had been graced with a vision.

After a few minutes, for no logical reason, I saw that my miserable life was not only actu-

ally okay but in reality was very, very good. The heavy depression that had plagued me for months was gone! I felt protected, reassured, even loved.

Invitation for Guest Editors

Is there a topic dear to your heart that you would like to see in WCTS? Would you like to be part of the WCTS editorial team?

The WCTS team is looking for help with at least one issue per year. For health reasons Kathy Tapp has had to pull back from helping edit May issues. That leaves a hole in our rotation. One of you reading this issue might be just the person to bring your interests and talents to WCTS. (It doesn't have to be the May issue you work on, if you need another timing.)

Guest editors help in different ways, depending on their gifts. A guest editor usually proposes a theme for his or her issue, may help write the query soliciting articles, help sometimes to recruit writers, draft an editorial statement, help read the articles as they come in, help with deciding which articles will appear and in what order. The editorial team is always happy to help you learn how. Proofreading is always welcome, as are layout skills, but neither is required in order to add to the liveliness of WCTS.

WCTS is an all-volunteer operation, from soliciting manuscripts to sticking the address label and stamp on your copy. Won't you join us in keeping WCTS vital?

For more information, email Mariellen Gilpin at m-gilpin@gmail.com.

The depression came back a little as the days wore on, but I held on to the fact that the reality we live in isn't limited by our three-dimensional world, that there is another dimension entirely that interpenetrates, in which all is well, all is golden, all people are connected and glow with the Spirit within. I had literally seen it. There was no need for worry. None at all.

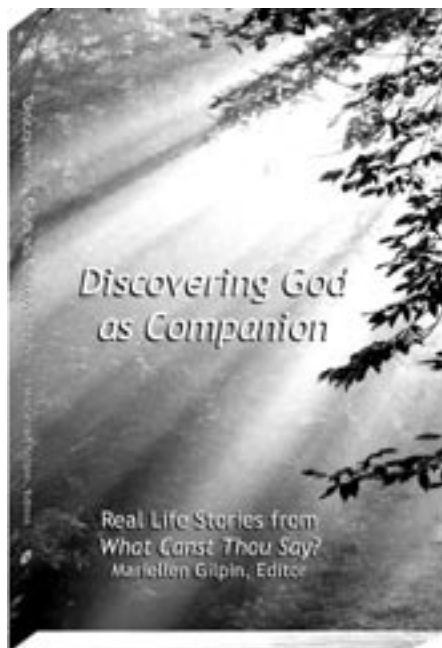
Patricia Reitemeyer has studied metaphysics for 40 years, and practiced religions east and west. "There is so much more to consciousness than we can ever hope to know or, indeed, experience—but I keep trying." She attends Bloomington Friends Meeting, Indiana.

It is here!!!
**Discovering God as Companion:
Real Life Stories from What Canst Thou Say?**

Mariellen Gilpin, Editor

Sixty-five *WCTS?* authors share their stories of spiritual openings and of God's grace in their lives. These stories tell of finding Divine presence and guidance in situations as ordinary as brushing teeth, as awe inspiring as a desert sunset, or as frightening as critical illness or sexual abuse. Share the joy of discovery with these authors, all of them ordinary people who have had extraordinary experiences. To read these stories is to see a world of wondrous possibility.

The authors are: Kate Ahmadi, Stephen L. Angell, James Baker, Diane Barounis, Ray Bentman, David Blair, Heidi Blocher, Carmen Bruce, Marlou Carlson, Carol Cober, Elspeth Colwell, Jennifer Elam, Sabrina Sigal Falls, Jennifer Faulkner, Alvin Joaquín Figueroa, Jennifer Frick, Mariellen Gilpin, Kathryn Gordon, Kat Griffith, Steven Gross, Hazel Jonjak, Lauren Leach, Linda Lee, Connie Lezenby, Alison Lohans, Judy Lumb, Dorothy Mack, Keith Maddock, Marcelle Martin, Marti Matthews, Patricia McBee, Elizabeth Meyer, Dimitri Mihalas, Jay Mittenthal, Terri Mittenthal, Peg Morton, Dorothy Neumann, Christine O'Brien, Amy Perry, Maurine Pyle, Allison Randall, Mike Resman, Jean Roberts, Dalton Roberts, Carol Roth, Scott Russell Sanders, Lynda Schaller, Brad Sheeks, William R. Stimson, Wayne Swanger, Bill Taber, Kathy Tapp, Ken Tapp, Linda Theresa, Carolyn Smith Treadway, Carolyn Wilbur Treadway, Rita Varley, Mary Waddington, Theodora E. Waring, Demaris Wehr, Judith Weir, Nancy Whitt.



**What do Friends Say
about Discovering God
as Companion?**

“In a context in which an intimate interactive relationship with God is not always highly valued, understood, or actively nurtured, and whose importance as the root of social action is sometimes overlooked, this book witnesses to the action of God in the lives of Friends today, and their response to it. Mysticism at work.”

—Frances Taber, Ohio

“The stories range all over the human condition and encompass such a broad variety of people's experience of God that when one needs to read the words of another human being wrestling with an experience similar to one's own—it is possible to find it among the many stories. All of us have so much of the world in our lives, dragging us away from faith, that this kind of book is what we need.”

—Rita Varley,
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library

“I feel humbled and honored to have my piece included among all the other articles in this anthology. *What Canst Thou Say?* consistently offers readers stimulating, intelligent and spiritually nourishing works. I have deep appreciation for all the writers, for their willingness to allow us to reflect and learn from their experiences.”

—Carol Roth, New Jersey

“*What Canst Thou Say?* is led by the Holy Spirit.”

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—Carmen Bruce, Pennsylvania

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Letters to the Editor

Helene Huber—Back in 1970 or 71 I experienced a reality of human oneness like nothing I heard tell of before or since. I was in the kitchen preparing my lunch. Suddenly without apparent cause or reason my attention turned inward and I stood still in amazement as I focused on what was happening. Simultaneously I experienced an awesome ecstasy and an awareness that “I” am a discrete consciousness while my physical body is indiscrete, indivisibly, boundlessly, dissolved in what I perceived to be the whole stream of humanity. Often I have wondered whether anyone else has experienced the reality of oneness with the stream of humanity. It was many years before I could bring myself to share my story with anyone.

Ruth Krebs—I doubt a change will be forthcoming for the title for *What Canst Thou Say?* And I know George Fox used such language. But I just thought y’all/yous/you’ns ought to know, in case you are younger, of the ‘modern’ terms: The Quaker *thee*, *thy* and *thine* were used frequently in my Chester County Quaker family, and nobody ever used *thou*. How is *thee*? Is this *thine*? Please call *thy* mother...There is a family story of my grandmother being very upset, and thus deciding to invoke a slur upon the transgressor. She fumed, “Thee old... ‘you’...you!”

[Ed.] *Helen Hole explained that in 17th century England, thou meant nominative case and thee meant objective case. Then some Quakers moved to America, and the English language changed. Pretty soon only the Quakers were using thee and thou, and things got messier. In England, thou became both nominative and objective case among Quakers, and in America, thee became both nominative and objective. I’m sure a linguist would have a heyday with this. Thanks for writing.*

Carol Roth—How’s Carol? A little unstrung by the news I have an aneurysm in my brain. I am still assimilating the information. I have headaches all the time. They are so painful. They last for hours, sometimes days. Aneurysms can produce headaches, but whether my headaches are coming from the aneurysm I do not know. All I have been told is to immediately go to the hospital if I have a *severe* headache. They explained to me that it will come on very suddenly, excruciatingly

Constance LaMonte—*Life is just a bowl of queries.*

painful, and oh yes, it can produce death in seconds.

I tell you honestly that I haven’t made sense out of it yet. I know that each of us could be walking around with all kinds of serious medical conditions, undetected and undiagnosed. We go

through each day and night not even wondering if or when something is going to prove to be life-threatening. I much prefer that I did not know. It makes me wonder if the headache I feel coming on is just a headache, or will it be The Headache?

I am depressed and anxious. I need time to assimilate the information, to process it. I have no lessons to give, no advice, nothing but my own uncertainty. It pisses me off that I can’t treat this as just another problem and then get on with my life like a good little soldier, but I can’t. For years I have endured surgery after surgery, all kinds of health problems. What makes this so different? I guess I am just reacting to emotions and maybe I just need to do this until I come to acceptance. I do not think I am near that yet but I will get there.

[Ed.] *Friends, let us pray for our good Friend Carol Roth as she deals with her latest health challenge.*

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November 2007

Feminine Aspects of the Divine

Editor: Judy Lumb

For in wisdom there is a spirit intelligent and holy ... she pervades and permeates all things because she is so pure. Like a fine mist she rises from the power of God, a pure effluence from the glory of the Almighty. (The Apocrypha, Wisdom of Solomon 7:22-5). What is your experience of the feminine in the Divine? Where do we find Her? How does She feed your spiritual life?

Deadline: August 15, 2007

February 2008

Called

Editor: Patricia McBee

The Lord said to Abram, "*Leave your own country, your kinsmen...and go to a country I will show you....I will bless you.*" Sometimes we are called so subtly we hardly notice; other times, like Abram, we are profoundly altered in a moment. How and when and where did you feel a call? How has your mission unfolded in the time since? How do you listen for God's continued guidance for your mission? What supports have you found for discerning and following call? Into what strange lands has your calling led you? How have you been blessed?

Deadline: November 15, 2007

May 2008

Transforming Conflict

Guest Editor: Pam Melick with Mariellen Gilpin

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you (Matthew 5:44). When have you attempted to answer conflict with love? What prepared you to respond this way? What did the Spirit ask of you during this conflict? How did you respond? How did the other person respond to you? What transformations did you experience?

Deadline: February 15, 2007

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