

LISTENING ALONGSIDE



ECHOING CHRIST

Lenten Devotions 2017

**Sunday,
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What's In The Temple?

By Tom Barrett

Submitted by Anna Anderson

In the quiet spaces of my mind a thought lies still, but ready to spring.

It begs me to open the door so it can walk about.

The poets speak in obscure terms pointing madly at the unsayable.

The sages say nothing, but walk ahead patting their thigh calling for us to follow.

The monk sits pen in hand poised to explain the cloud of unknowing.

The seeker seeks, just around the corner from the truth.

If she stands still it will catch up with her.

Pause with us here a while.

Put your ear to the wall of your heart.

Listen for the whisper of knowing there.

Love will touch you if you are very still.

If I say the word God, people run away.

They've been frightened--sat on 'till the spirit cried "uncle."

Now they play hide and seek with somebody they can't name.

They know he's out there looking for them, and they want to be found,

But there is all this stuff in the way.

I can't talk about God and make any sense,

And I can't not talk about God and make any sense.

So we talk about the weather, and we are talking about God.

I miss the old temples where you could hang out with God.
Still, we have pet pounds where you can feel love draped in warm fur,
And sense the whole tragedy of life and death.
You see there the consequences of carelessness,
And you feel there the yapping urgency of life that wants to be lived.
The only things lacking are the frankincense and myrrh.

We don't build many temples anymore.
Maybe we learned that the sacred can't be contained.
Or maybe it can't be sustained inside a building.
Buildings crumble.
It's the spirit that lives on.

If you had a temple in the secret spaces of your heart,
What would you worship there?
What would you bring to sacrifice?
What would be behind the curtain in the holy of holies?

Go there now.

Prayer

For now, God, just let me sit.
For now, let questions be quiet, let fears fade,
Even my concerns for family and friends and families of friends slip to the sidelines.
For now, God, for this one moment, just let me sit with you
In the way of friends who can tell each other everything
But can sit together without saying anything.
Let me sit with the love that has cradled me, the strength that has sustained me,
The peace that has wrapped me in its warmth, the grace that has picked me up
And put me back on my feet again.
Let me leave behind my laundry list of choices to make, things to do,
Wants and wishes and dreams.
For this moment, God, let me seek only you.

–Peggy Haymes

John 4:23-24

The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

Romans 8:18-27

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.