

The Cyclical Horizon

As the Lenten season begins to dwell in the light
of the landscape;
as our vision strengthens in length,
breadth and depth;
as we see the augmented detail of light,
dark and shade;
we look forward and backward
through our spiritual year
for that deeper, inner light.

In a Medieval Cistercian monastery,
Christ lit the center of time.
His death and resurrection thus became
the center
of the canonical year.
Everything before built up
to the moment of his return;
everything after drifted through
a Pentecostal departure
from the coast of our belonging.

The year is a voyage,
and we travel in language
from light to space.
Sometimes referred to as the windows of the soul,
the eyes,
according to William Blake,
also serve as the “doors of perception”
and not only inform us of the location
of our source of light, but also draw us into
the warmth of our sense of being.

We may serenely and metaphorically
let the light shine and reflect inside,
but as we do
our other senses awaken.
Through the warmth within,
we smell the floral fragrances
and recall the foreign nutty acidity
whose memories foam unharnessed;
and then we hear the crack and whistle of the wind
as the weather sharply snaps us shut
and pulls our forearms toward the earth.



We long for the familiar
with the return of the ritual of spring,
but the newness of life inevitably pops open
a fresh new gift, calling our attention to the presents
that the newborn baby Jesus
left in our boots during solstice -
perhaps expecting, perhaps waiting
for our return.
And there is never anything like it.

Spring is always remarkable
because the light sprouts forth
with sudden blooms;
the startling appearance of awakened pear trees
and the new coats of maple leaves
begin with abstract color impressions
and then quickly overtake the edges
of sunsets,
which begin to linger well into the late evening,
until the rosy fingertips of dawn
tickle our feet to awaken our response
in the light and comfort of each new morning.

We are not alone in sensing the extension of light.
The pluffy round robins
make their evening carousals and show off
their soft winter down
with pillowed bellies;
the cardinals return with other earthen chordata
and extend their love-laced throaty whistles
deep into the evening;
the sun dances of the woodcock and timberdoodle
sway up and down caressing the wind
and remind us that everything in our midst
creates infinitely
everything in our midst.

After these Lenten reflections,
it becomes apparent that we do not house the spirit,
but rather,
the spirit lives, breathes, and returns through us.
Just as the earthworms, grubs, and slugs,
that burrow and plow our soil
to weave their way out of their holes in the ground
and present themselves for the first time,
we realize in the company of creation



that we are neither one, nor are we alone,
after all;
and the soft touches of light that grace our memories
with the first hints of a distant powerful source,
at the same time grace our senses
and hallow our inner candescence
with the fragrant glow of newfound warmth.

Life re-emerges with the re-emergence of light
assuring us that
we are not alone as we travel in prayer.
When we breath deep within,
we go to an internal metaphor of place
that is often sacred and dear to us
because we feel the presence of a home
we never left.
We silently go on a journey to
a place that we know it isn't a place after all -
one that serves more like a cradle
holding a deeper longing.
We may find transcendence in the hearth of our awareness.
In spring, we walk, see, and feel the sacred presence of belonging
as it extends endlessly. We realize in the departure
of each recurring year
that the breath of life
breathes always within us.

