

# Listen to the Story

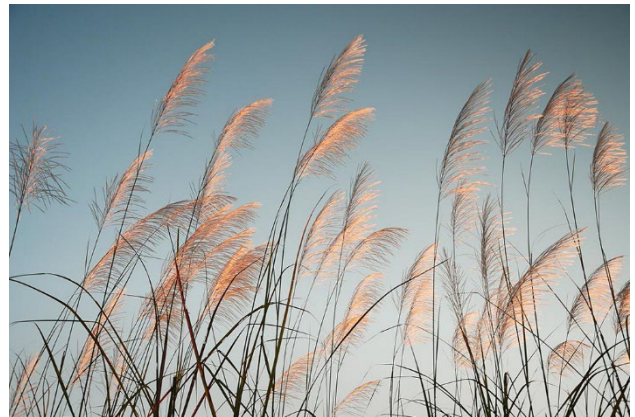
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Sitting here in the early hours of a cold, frosty morning, pondering what more life can hurl at me I find myself choosing firstly to simply breathe. As I breathe, I become aware that within the air entering my body as breath, is a particle of God. This God-particle begins to fill my being with a deep sense of **presence** and calls for **quietness**. The quietness allows the emotions, the feelings, the disquiet and pain, the words swirling in the back of the consciousness to settle down and fall away. A felt sense of a *call to listen to the story* that is swirling around within is perceived.

*Listen to the story told by the reed,  
of being separated.  
"Since I was cut from the reedbed,  
I have made this crying sound.  
Anyone apart from someone s/he loves  
understands what I say.  
Anyone pulled from a source,  
longs to go back."*

Rumi<sup>1</sup>



Oh, how that "crying sound" makes itself known! It pounds within the body! It is almost primitive, primordial and everlasting! There seems to be no beginning to this story and almost, no ending. And yet, the desire to sit within this moment of the story is pulling me into it, asking to be dealt with, to sit with, to come to KNOW what is within.

In the middle of the concluding session of a *Retreat in Daily Life* just completed a couple of days ago the phone rang. It **was** possible to take that call, as the retreatants were participating in a silent, reflective session. It was the news that one of my brothers had not shown up and opened his business for work. He was found beside his open vehicle in a paddock on his farm, having been there during the night in minus 4 degrees. He was eventually airlifted to a major hospital on life support. His adult children lived in a different state. They were contacted and immediately found themselves on a flight to be present with their father.

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<sup>1</sup> Rumi: 30.9.1207-17.12. 1273 13<sup>th</sup> Century Persian Poet; *The Song of the Reed*

**Listen to the story** – this story has many off-shoots! A number spreading their tentacles back to childhood and early adult life, as well as present day living. All the memories flood in; what to do with these? How **should** I feel, how **do** I respond? What do I do with all these memories being flung my way in the space of such a short time? Again, all I can do is breathe! My body aches, my heart weeps, my emotions are overwhelmed! So, sitting in silence and breathing, awareness dawns that God is saying “I am here and not going anywhere. I am here for the duration.”

It is now that my being moves into the soul space and begins to see things through this perspective. “...when love touches suffering, the suffering turns love into mercy”<sup>2</sup> James Finley tells us. Now to make this a reality! We know all the answers in our head, but have they travelled the distance to the heart of our being? Is this what Rumi means when he invites us to “listen to the story”, even when that story is unpleasant? Is this what Rumi also means when he says: “listen to this tale, the marrow of our inward state.”<sup>3</sup> Life certainly touches us in the marrow of our being.

...the marrow of our inward state... simply be here...listen to the story from this space...from the soul perspective and somehow it changes. There is nothing to be done except hold in love, stay in love, and remain in love. It is easier to say those words aloud, than to make them practical, active, and true. It simply means breathing them in, breathing them out and sitting within them. What Noel Davis says begins to ring true within my own being:



*My body is being cleansed  
my spirit released  
of the persistent and controlling ways of ego  
long lodged in my every cell  
and stifling my living.*

*I'm being called to be active  
in the cleansing of all the waste,  
unwanted, rubbish and repressed,  
the anxiety and worries of a life time  
all that's clogging and cluttering up  
my body and way of living  
'til all that remains of me  
is what is grounded in love.<sup>4</sup>*

Life seems to soften, to take on a different feel, and deeper insight begins to rise. It becomes possible to begin to live from *the marrow of our inward state...our soul perspective!* Breathing takes on a new depth that carries life and love within it, that allows us to hold lovingly and in mercy, what life throws at us in our daily lives. Is this not what we desire as we join intentionally together in our contemplative space, through CEN, where we hold the suffering

<sup>2</sup> 2023 James Finley; *The Healing Path: A Memoir and an Invitation*; Orbis Books NY page 144

<sup>3</sup> Rumi: 30.9.1207-17.12. 1273 13<sup>th</sup> Century Persian Poet; *The Song of the Reed*.

<sup>4</sup> 2022; Noel Davis, *The Joy of Living Our Heart's Knowing and Imagining*; Bennetts Printing Katoomba NSW; p 89

and hurt of our world, caressing it with love and mercy? From this space we realise that we are fulfilling Jesus' desire for us:

*What Jesus wants is not our admiration, nor simply imitation ...  
What Jesus wants of us is that we undergo his presence  
so as to enter into a community of life and celebration with him.  
Jesus...is not a law to be obeyed or a model to be imitated,  
but a presence to be seized and acted upon.<sup>5</sup>*

Therefore, here in the presence of Jesus, breathing in and through me, is the moment to seize, act upon, and *LIVE* into that presence from the marrow of my being. To allow the story to carry me into mercy, where it starts to become flesh.



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<sup>5</sup> 1998,1999, 2014, 2019 Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality*; Image NY; p 74