



Trisha Boetto

As I write this my friend lies dying, a tenuous thread still holding her in this physical world. *'I am still in this realm'* she told me yesterday. This morning, she was too weak to lift her head.

She was a recent member of CEN and despite being unwell attended the monthly zoom gatherings for contemplation when she could. We are holding her in love as she transitions to the eternal 'river place'. She is held in a network of love all over the country as she moves to the other 'realm'.

My friend's gift was 'presence'. She could **see** you, she could **see 'me'**. To be with her was to have the freedom to be oneself. It was a very special gift. It often made me think of the words of James Finley in his podcast on *'Turning to the Mystics'*¹: 'God loves us and knows us better than we know ourselves'. What a wonderful gift!

If she asked you a question, your first answer was never enough. With gentleness she would ask more, ask deeper, not to probe or to pry but to understand. She constantly amazed me with this gentle way she had of drawing me out. You learnt more about yourself, you felt more 'yourself' when you were with her.

We often talk about depth deprivation today with the widespread use of technology that can alienate rather than bring us to a deeper understanding of each other. Polarization and outrage 'sells' more than dialogue and understanding.

Our friend was a person of deep spirituality and profound intellect who trod gently on the earth. She could sense the energy of things, especially in the movement of the body. She was a scientist but also a gifted dance therapist who used movement as a healing modality.

During a retreat two years ago, she danced a poem for us: *In this Body, in this town of Spirit* from the Chandogya Upanishad².

¹ James Finley, 'Turning to the Mystics', <https://cac.org/podcast/turning-to-the-mystics>

² Chandogya Upanishad Ch.1

As she knelt and bowed, she positioned her body so that her heart could touch the ground.

I have never forgotten that moment. Her body became prayer.



At her Celebration of Life, a week before she died, she gifted this poem to all who attended. She was too weak to dance it or to perform the hand mudras, but it was her written gift to us before she left this earthly realm.

In this Body, in this Town of Spirit

*In this body, in this town of spirit
there is a little house shaped like a lotus,
and in that little house there is a space:
one should know what is there.*

What is there? And why is it so important?

*There is as much within that little space within the heart
as in the whole world.*

heaven, earth,

winds, fire,

sun, moon.

lightning, stars

whatever is, and whatever is not, everything is here.²

The Upanishads are ancient Sanskrit texts that contain profound knowledge of the nature of reality, self and the divine. This ancient text supports the 'Universe Story' - the narrative that has emerged from modern day scientific discoveries. In this story David Bohm asserts that '*There is one energy that is the basis of all reality*³.

My friend's Celebration of Life was about giving thanks. She understood the importance of the 'field' and the connection to one another and to all of life. Her connection with nature, with animals and with all those around her was part of who she was and how she lived her life. She lived with love and with a consciousness of connection.

³ Judy Cannato, *Field of Compassion*, how the new cosmology is transforming spiritual life (Sorin books, Notre Dame, IN, 2010) p19

As I reflect on life and death in these days since her death I am drawn to the words of Judy Cannato:

*[Jesus] engaged death with every bit of consciousness and freedom that were his, and what we all discovered as a result is that **death—while inevitable, while altering our dreams and causing us to let go of everything—does not have the final word. There is always—always—resurrection.** And what is resurrection for us, in the context of the new universe story? It is a transformation in consciousness, an experience of transcendence in which we live out of the connectedness that is our truth. As we continue to evolve in consciousness, continue to emerge as more and more capable lovers, we share in the resurrection of Christ. **We not only walk in the Light, we become light for others. Even little resurrections that come after choosing to die to fear and egocentricity release the Spirit.** When we engage in a lifetime of death and resurrections as Jesus did, we become ever more empowered to do the work God asks us to do.⁴*



The words that take hold of me in this are the ones that speak about death and resurrection as something that can be experienced every day, to not linger in the failings of ego or fear or outrage but to transform this too. As Judy Cannato says further, 'Life and death are a single mystery'.⁵

To know our beloved friend was to stand on sacred ground. Her legacy is one of presence and connection.

In this time of Lent, may we be 'presence' for those around us. May we SEE BEYOND SEEING – as she saw. May we see that there is light in darkness. May we be 'sacred ground' as we cultivate this field of awareness, of kindness and of love that goes beyond and beyond, where we can all dance together in the great Cosmic Dance of all life.

⁴ Judy Cannato, *Radical Amazement: Contemplative Lessons from Black Holes, Supernovas, and Other Wonders of the Universe* (Sorin Books, Notre Dame, IN, 2006) p 122

⁵ *ibid*