

EARTH CARE & SPIRITUALITY MONTHLY REFLECTION

Each month the Earth Care & Spirituality Resource Team (ECSRT) will post a Spiritual Reflection to the Maine Conference Webpage and the ECSRT Facebook page.

Reflections will be based upon a spiritual experience writers of the reflections have had concerning the natural world, usually in an outdoor setting. They may be in prose or poetry form.

Gathering and sharing of spiritual reflections is in the ancient Christian tradition of seeking or discovering Divine Presence in wilderness, by rivers and the sea, and in high places; and holding in awe the gift of the flora and fauna of the world.

If you are interested in participating as a writer please contact Stephen Hastings at shastings@fairpoint.net. He will let Doug Dunlap know, who created and is organizing this program. The ECSRT thanks Doug for his effort and devotion to this cause.

Here is the first reflection:

Poem by an Aging Tree Climber by Stephen Hastings

... more or less true in the poetic sense of it and with allusions to a few passages from the Bible.

I climbed a tree.

Not really sure why.

Went up on a whim

Of a sacramental kind.

Decked in green leaves,

Solid straight trunk,

Ladder-like limbs

Enticed me, step up, settle in.

Come back, really, was the heart of the matter.

I mean, I had been there before.

Curious children! Up we go. I remember.

With grandfather encouraging me from below.

Not my grandfather but now my own children
Cheered me on! Watched me re-ascend.
Aging tree climber returning in need of relearning
Some lessons learned long ago.

I clung closely to the trunk and slowly made my way up,
Lest mid-life vertigo misdirect the upper hand
And reaching for a branch grab a frail twig instead.
It happened once before, as children. That lesson at least not yet forgotten.

I found a place to set for a while,
Somewhere neither too low nor high.
Back again, home and alive
In a house of bird nests, bugs, and views from above.

Looking through spaces between the leafiness
I saw a cornfield and varieties of trees.
And in my soul St. Hildegard was singing
Behold Nature's all verdant greening.

Looking down: the ground of wellness and being
For me and all creatures of Earth.
All embraced as one as I gazed
From this tree's slightly high panorama.

Looking up between branches and beyond leafy cover,
Blue sky. No surprise. But consider:
What if, to the enlightened seer,
It's a peek into Heaven preciously paved in sapphire.

Let the Earth rejoice. Let the Heavens be glad.

Let Heaven and Nature sing.
Written by psalmists and sung of in songs,
But spoken quite clearly by trees.

Then I came down, or did I awaken?
To hear in a dream, to see in a vision
Sacred Wisdom from a tree I'd been visiting, saying
Earth: Heaven's Creative Word in Her Nature resounding.

And so, Holy Tree, when I return,
For I seek to do this again,
Then, I just might, if you will let me,
Dare to go out on a limb.