

**FROM A TALK GIVEN BY JOHN FOX, CPT FOR THE SOUTHWEST REGION OF
THE ASSOCIATION FOR CLINICAL PASTORAL CARE EDUCATION**

Listen to the presences inside poems.
Let them take you where they will.

Follow those private hints,
and never leave the premises.

Rumi

translated by Coleman Barks and John Moyn

TO LOOK AT ANYTHING

To look at anything,
If you would know that thing,
You must look at it long:
To look at this green and say
'I have seen spring in these
Woods,' will not do — you must
Be the thing you see:
You must be the dark snakes of
Stems and ferny plumes of leaves.
You must enter in
To the small silences between
The leaves.
You must take your time
And touch the very peace
They issue from.

John Moffett

THE LANGUAGES OF AIR

When people, who, with hearts
and minds engaged take care
with one another and long enough
to pause, to let silence
(and words spoken from the heart)
have a deeper share
of whatever time is given them —
so that breath, mine and yours,
enriched by our listening, touches air.

That element becomes a living presence
that breathes in silence, breathes
in our words, our voice, and then,
when breathing out, opens us up to life,
a sense of grace. As if what we breathe
together in this way is a language of
listening,
a universal quiet wherein we understand
each other and even when we don't,
are aware of how it joins us here.

John Fox

Inside a bubble
There is a sea of petals
And a wind of water

Greta Weiss, 1st grader

STONE

I would go into a stone.
Not to be taken, but to rest.
My smooth sides make friends with others.
No matter where I go, time flies
by and by and away.
Things rub side to side
but I don't mind.
My colors are from the outside.
Things come and go
But I stay right here.
My beautiful sound goes with
the flow of the afternoon river.
I travel the world by hand.
And the world is my great home.

Cody Cunningham, 3rd grader

Pain's terrorwide eye
stares at me unblinking
lidless
as summer noontime sun.

I barely dare to dream
of escape.
The eye might see my pluck
and sear its stare
into my back forever.

Twinkling love-lit star eyes,
motherlove my longing for your gaze
shapes the faceless space
I call my heart, breaks

like fever, aches
into my consciousness mama, mama pain
is for heroes not little girls or grown women
to bear nowhere

my shadeless heart to hide.

Cathy Willkie

WHEN SOMEONE DEEPLY LISTENS TO YOU

When someone deeply listens to you
it is like holding out a dented cup
you've had since childhood
and watching it fill up with
cold, fresh water.

When it balances on top of the brim,
you are understood.

When it overflows and touches your skin,
you are loved.

When someone deeply listens to you,
the room where you stay
starts a new life
and the place where you wrote
your first poem
begins to glow in your mind's eye.
It is as if gold has been discovered!

When someone deeply listens to you,
your bare feet are on the earth
and a beloved land that seemed distant
is now at home within you.

John Fox

Why is a scar on a man a mark of distinction,
on a woman a mark of disfigurement?

I don't know.

Why is it funny when a man loses his hair,
and tragic when a woman loses hers?

I don't know.

What will you tell her
when the x-rays turn the scar
on her breast raw-
hamburger red?

I don't know.

When she's bald, lost the hair
from her eyebrows,
and lies with closed eyes,
with a skeletal look,
will you kiss her
and tell her
she's beautiful?

I don't know.

What do you do
in the bedroom,
when she is thinking
of death,
and she cries?

I hold her hand, and I breathe.

Joe Milosch

