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“Reflection on Possibility”

Impossibly possible I would describe the gifts of the season—serenity, resilience, hope, wonder, gratitude, peace, even a baby of whom we hear “no crying he makes!” I would worry about a baby who doesn’t cry, BUT I wonder as we reside on the threshold of that parity of darkness and light and as we light the third candle of Advent, if might we reverse the crescendo of cacophony in this season of holidays and holy days. Might we **de** crescendo? Might we **de**-celerate? I am preaching very much to me. If it applies to you, so much the better.

Is it possible to go shopping, for gifts or groceries, without being lambasted by high decibel carols rendered in rock star voices in jarring rhythms at a volume suggesting earplugs? Is it possible to plan gifts for children or grandchildren without the demands for bigger and more? Is it possible to resist a culture selling bigger and more? Is it possible to move through a day and not freak out if we lose our to-do lists? In this faith that is Unitarian Universalism, is it possible to speak or sing of a long-ago baby in a long-ago barn under a long-ago star without risking being too...Christian? And in the heart of ‘tis the season, is it possible to...breathe?

Let’s do it. Let’s breathe. Close your eyes and take a deep breath in... Hold it... Let it go... Take another deep breath in... Hold it... Let it go.

Letting go is possible—letting go of self-imposed culturally reinforced demands to do and be in ways that we have commonly done and been.

Of all these holidays and holy days, Christmas is hands down my favorite. Yet, it’s tough being a minister and completing the to do lists that I’ve compiled over the years for church happenings, meaningful worship, gift giving, cookie baking, menu planning, and somehow facilitating a silent night, holy night rather than enabling a blustery “Deck the Halls” (my least favorite carol, by the way). Somehow, I don’t think I’m preaching to the choir this morning. One of my personal requests to Santa is a choir to preach to.

In the meantime, WE are the choir. We are the choir to whom the grace and beauty of the season are looking for songs that inspire, for carols that calm, for music that evokes reverie, for stories that touch our hearts, for suspending disbelief on behalf of the legends of the season, and for gracefully hovering in the magic and mystery of now.

Impossibly possible? Not necessarily.

Just days away is our longest night. It holds the promise of a full moon. It’s December’s full moon, the Full Cold Moon as it’s called, and happens to fall this year on the Winter Solstice, peaking the next day. No second chance, unless you plan to be around in 2094. I look forward to stepping outside this coming Friday night, looking up, and holding my gaze in wonder and awe.

Might we breathe in the winter air, behold the moon, and, in the spirit of Mark Strand, watch the gathering of stars and let the dreams pour into our pillows.

Might we turn out the lights amid the busyness of our homes and light a candle, hold silence, and simply be...if only for a few moments? If we're alone, might we know the grace of solitude. If we are in the company of others, might we dare to invite them into a time of silence and reverie and the glow of candlelight.

Might we at this very moment dim the lights and simply be...
[Lights dimmed.]

Breathe in this now, this precious never-before never-again now.
[Pause]

Breathe out the then that haunts, hurts, and intrudes. Breathe it out. Let it go.
[Pause]

Breathe in the silence—music that is noteless, wordless.
[Pause]

Breathe out the babel sounds vying for your attention already fractured.
[Pause]

Breathe in the darkness, winter's air, solstice breath.
[Pause]

Breathe out the glare, the sun's hold on one last leaf.
[Pause]

Breathe in the grace, the letting go,
the dance in winter's wind,
the peace of falling snow.
[Pause]

Breathe out the doubt that dulls the soul.
[Pause]

Breathe in the now that holds the dream of being whole.

Amen

Sources:

Mark Strand, "The Coming of Light," from *New Selected Poems*. © Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.