

Winter Solstice 2008

5:30 AM, 21 December 2008

*A meditation that began with Kathleen Glennon's winter solstice ritual
(Heartbeat of the Seasons: Earth Rituals for the Celtic Year', The Columba Press, Dublin, 2005, p 30f.)*

Preparation : no preparation : the time has simply come.

Materials : no materials : only the hour glass, this desk, this pencil, this notebook, the view of the night lit by streetlamps from the front bedroom window – the usual things of a night meditation.

*Chants : no chants at this hour, in this place
no hymn, no dance – but maybe the silent yogic movement for the Our Father learnt from Peter Bowe.*

THE RITUAL

Opening

We...

“We?”
just myself here
pausing
pausing at this moment
pausing at this nadir of the seasons
at this ending of the year

just myself
but recalling good friends
friends who know this season better than I
friends who celebrate it together
at Pairc a' Tobair
at Bru na Cruinne
in Donegal
in Cork
in Antrim
in Portumna
in Dublin
near the Broken Bridge
in Sligo
in Castleblaney

so not just myself
I think of them with love
wish myself with them
hope that they have me and Anne in their hearts

not just myself and friends I know
there are others I do not know
 who have travelled
 who have gathered
 who have come to greet the dawn this special day
 at Avebury
 at Newgrange
 at Stonehenge

and there are other lone souls
 who remember this time
 who celebrate this moment
 overwhelmed by a forgetting culture
 its outward manifestation at this time
 an orgy of meaningless Xmas glitz

but I hold in my heart these others who are wiser
 who celebrate this earth season
 who rejoice in a birth to a destitute mother
 the birth of one who came to be known as
 G[od]rescued or *Rescuer*
 [Jesus has this double meaning in Aramaic]
 for he found hope and gave hope to desperate persons
 he found a way and a confidence
 for himself and for others to embrace life and to share all

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At one with these friends and with those I do not know
 who gather at this time
 or who pause alone
I bring to mind our human ancestors who have gone before
 thankful especially for the ones I knew
 and who contributed directly to my wellbeing
 parents who brought me to birth and who nurtured me
 teachers who taught me
 friends of my childhood and young adulthood

and I bring to mind the myriad of ancestors I never knew
 without whom I would not be here
their contributions to who I am now are gifts in the truest sense :
 gifts received unwittingly
 gifts never ever precisely identifiable
 gifts never ever fathomable
 gifts from donors I will never meet to thank
 from donors I will never properly appreciate

and this is a time to bring to mind our larger ancestry
the wider mystery of giving
the work of the predominant more-than-human
that have brought us to this moment today

this now is a moment for silence
this place so ordinary, is a sacred place
this point a namasté point

my breathing in a gift from all the ancestors
my breathing out my blessing on all who live now

my breathing in a communion with all the living
my breathing out my gifting of all who are

my breathing in a receiving of gifts from all who were
my breathing out my giving to all who will be

this now is a moment for Gaia consciousness
I was born at her breast
I am borne in her embrace
She the mother of the ten thousand things
on whom I depend ineluctably

breathing in I show my dependence
breathing out I share myself
breathing in and out
I show interdependency and experience interdependency

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this now is the moment of my responsibility
if the air I breath in is polluted, I suffer
if the air I breath out is polluted, others suffer
the air I breath is gift received
gift given

what I am able to do is a result of gifts received
what I actually do is gift given – for good or ill – to others

thankfulness to ancestors cannot be expressed to them in words
for they cannot hear what we wish to say
for their ears are long gone
thankfulness to ancestors can be expressed in the things we do now
with silence
with consciousness
for what we do now is our gift for those coming after
for we will be ancestors to those who follow
for our living now and the effects of our living now
accumulate into our ancestral gifting to Gaia