



## Creative Wordshops

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## Writing Newsletter

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re-story, re-create  
and re-imagine your  
life and work

this letter is in

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In these days of online, see ongoing opportunities and 'what's on'  
lettertime. (via mail chimp)

Dear seeker of words and images

*I could be bound in a nutshell and count myself the king of infinite space  
(Hamlet)*

Shakespeare could have been writing in a lockdown phase when Hamlet pronounces and Macbeth laments 'I am cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in to saucy doubts and fears.' In this Spring letter I return to the primacy of the imagination. I suggest while we are inside a room, perhaps alone or zoom-screen bound, say on a writing retreat, we can enter the reaches of the imagination to bring the outside world in and inside world out. In the gnostic gospel of St Thomas we read 'when you make the outside the inside and inside the outside then you will inherit the Kingdom (Queendom.)'

My friend, Igno van Niekerk, photographer and author and I have been experimenting with zoomagine- three of many ways of opening up and out the zoom experience. - being in nature, entering memory and entertaining the imagination. These images are courtes of Igno. We leave the screen and move physically from the flat image of each other into the multi-sensed garden. We stand in the presence of a tree. We begin to describe it and see what images arise.



We might read a poem in the presence of this tree, a poem which celebrates another continent, climate and season - such as this one (part of Robert Frost's *Birches*):

When I see birches bend to left and right  
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,  
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.  
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay  
As ice-storms do. Often you must have seen them  
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning  
After a rain. They click upon themselves  
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored  
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.  
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells  
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—  
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away  
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.



We wait in the presence of a flower and perhaps become aware of the 17<sup>th</sup> century mystic Angeles Silesius' definition of sin - failure to notice a flower grow. Or letting Mary Oliver's *Poppies* accompany our looking. Here are parts of her poem:

Of course nothing stops the cold,  
black, curved blade  
from hooking forward—  
of course  
loss is the great lesson....  
  
touched by their rough and spongy gold,  
I am washed and washed  
in the river  
of earthly delight—  
  
and what are you going to do—  
what can you do  
about it—  
deep, blue night?

Then we return to zoomland, as the hymn suggests 'ransomed, healed restored forgiven' We bring our enlivened eyes and ears back to the zoom group.

Beyond this physical alteration of space and time, we can enter also the fertile land of memory and of inner movies that have landscaped our

experience. Poets have written of the recollection of joy amidst turbulence, for the body, medical and miraculous, does not distinguish between an imagined and an actual experience. We revisit and re-sense a mountain or forest walk, a river swim, an elephant in the bush. We come alive in the memory. Or lying supine, asleep in the small hours, our bodies dream-tumbling through space. These dream scenarios speed up the blood beat, crawl across the skin.



It is no wonder (or all wonder) that Coleridge writes 'The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am. '

And Jungian, James Hillman, offers one of my all-time quote of quotes - 'The first task is re-storying the adult... in order to restore the imagination to its primary place in consciousness in each of us regardless of age.... My interest in story is as something lived in and lived through, a way in which the soul finds its life.'

Here is another zoomagine possibility. A Ray Bradbury poem begins:

I do not write -  
The other me  
demands emergence constantly.

Imagine that while one of us is present in zoon, a twin , another us, roams beyond the screen. The twin idea might express the desire to live more than one life. A way of imagining the untrod path. Carl Jung suggests 'Within each one of us there is another whom we do not know. He speaks to us in dreams and tells us how differently he sees us from how we see ourselves'. The poet, Juan Radon Jiminez, offers these words:

I am not I .

I am the one

Walking beside me whom I do not see.

....

The one who remains silent when I talk

The one who takes a walk when I am indoors

The one who will remain standing when I die.

]

Twins feature in creation myths throughout the world. A Roman story deals with Romulus and Remus, suckled by a wolf. In Papua New Guinea there is a story *Totoima and his Secret Daughter*. Totoima, the ogre of Orokaiva, eats his boy child but the mother hides the twin girl in the garden. Later a young man, a sorcerer, restores her twin brother to life. Using combined twin-power the young man kills Totoima in battle. The people of Orokaiva roast and eat the ogre. The young hero marries the woman twin.



The novelist Alice Walker (*The Colour Purple*) dances with her dreams. 'That night I dream I am dancing to Stevie Wonder.... as I dance, whirling and joyous, ...another bright-eyed dancer joins me. The other dancer has

obviously come through it all right, as I have done. She is beautiful, whole and free, And she is also me.'

So here's to bringing to zoom the alive outside and inside through engagement with nature, memory and imagination. And so animate and magnify our zoomlife with creatures and creation.

Dorian