

# Healing Poetry and Readings

May 9, 2020

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## *Let It Rain*

— by Joe Jencks

One moment of mercy was all that it took  
To drive me clean out of my head  
A piece of my heart had been sleeping so long  
I had given it for dead  
Better than I have traveled this journey  
And none have returned here unchanged  
But the lilac's in bloom and the thunderhead looms  
And my lonely heart prays for the rain

## *Chorus*

Let it rain, oh let it rain  
Let the waters of love wash away all the pain  
Let the hope of redemption be all that remains  
Let it rain, let it rain, let it rain

When the ancients and mariners looked toward the heavens at night  
Did they hearken for the day  
Or were they transfixed by the wonders they saw  
In the lights that guided their way  
I need to believe that there is no sadness so great  
That it cannot heal  
But sometimes the longing inside, it consumes me so much  
Well it's all that I feel

I stand on the ledge  
And I cling to the edge for dear life  
Afraid to let go  
What if love's call pulls me into a free fall  
What then  
Oh tell me what then

Somewhere way out there, beyond right and wrong  
There's a place that I long to see  
If I don't return, I'll be wishing you well  
From wherever I happen to be

## ***Lockdown***

— by Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM (written during the 2020 pandemic)

Yes, there is fear.

Yes, there is isolation.

Yes, there is panic buying.

Yes, there is sickness.

Yes, there is even death.

But

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise

You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet

The sky is no longer thick with fumes

But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi

People are singing to each other

across the empty squares,

keeping their windows open

so that those who are alone

may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland

Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know

is busy spreading flyers with her number

through the neighborhood

So that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples

are preparing to welcome

and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting

All over the world people are looking at their neighbors in a new way

All over the world people are waking up to a new reality

To how big we really are.

To how little control we really have.

To what really matters.

To Love.

So we pray and we remember that

Yes, there is fear.

But there does not have to be hate.

Yes, there is isolation.

But there does not have to be loneliness.

Yes, there is panic buying.

But there does not have to be meanness.

Yes, there is sickness.

But there does not have to be disease of the soul

Yes, there is even death.

But there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.

Today, breathe.

Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic

→ The birds are singing again.  
The sky is clearing.  
Spring is coming.  
And we are always encompassed by love.  
Open the windows of your soul.  
And though you may not be able  
to touch across the empty square,  
Sing.

***Prayer for Healers***

— by Rabbi Ayelet S. Cohen (written during the 2020 Pandemic)

May the One who blessed our ancestors  
Bless all those who put themselves at risk to care for the sick  
Physicians and nurses and orderlies  
Technicians and home health aides  
EMTs and pharmacists  
And bless especially / *an individual or other categories of health workers/*  
Who navigate the unfolding dangers of the world each day,  
To tend to those they have sworn to help.

Bless them in their coming home and bless them in their going out.  
Ease their fear. Sustain them.  
Source of all breath, healer of all beings,  
Protect them and restore their hope.  
Strengthen them, that they may bring strength;  
Keep them in health, that they may bring healing.  
Help them know again a time when they can breathe without fear.  
Bless the sacred work of their hands.  
May this plague pass from among us, speedily and in our days.

***Kol Ha'Olam Kulo  
Geshar Tsar Me'od***

Kol Ha'olam kulo  
Geshar Tsar me'od  
Geshar Tsar me'od  
Geshar Tsar me'od –

Kol Ha'olam kulo  
Geshar Tsar me'od  
Geshar Tsar me'od –

Veha'ikar – veha'ikar  
Lo lefached  
Lo lefached klal

Veha'ikar – veha'ikar  
Lo lefached  
Klal

***All of This World  
Is a Very Narrow Bridge***

All of this world  
Is a very narrow bridge,  
A very narrow bridge,  
A very narrow bridge.

All of this world  
Is a very narrow bridge,  
A very narrow bridge.

And above all, above all,  
Is not to be afraid,  
Not to be afraid at all.

And above all, above all,  
Is not to be afraid  
At all.

***Tikun Olam***

— by Joe Jencks

Tikun Olam

Tikun Olam

Tikun Olam

Bakesh Shalom

(Repair the world and work for peace)

A tale is told of how the world was made in seven days  
Six of them for work and one to rest and pray  
Then God placed the holy light into a vessel made of clay  
But it was shattered by our sin, and the pieces fell away

Why was God so careless as to lose the sacred light  
Now we must gather up the shards to set creation right  
It's a task we may not finish but we each must lend our hands  
As we love through imperfections and we heal our broken lands

And so we tend the garden, picking stones and pulling weeds  
We water with compassion the fragile sacred seed  
We are partners in creation and we let God's true light shine  
When by faith and solidarity we show our love divine



## *Metta May*

— by Susan Freiband (written during the 2020 pandemic)

Invitation comes in the mail  
to practice lovingkindness/metta.  
Surprise gift from Spirit Rock, Buddhist meditation center in Northern California.  
Four alter cards,  
directed first at yourself,  
then to those nearest and dearest;  
to those not known,  
finally to all beings in the world.  
Close the eyes, take long deep breaths;  
feel at ease in the mind, the body, the moment.  
Let words of blessing echo there:  
“May I feel safe. May I feel content. May I feel strong. May I live with ease.”  
Let the sound and sense of their meaning  
instill compassion, loving kindness,  
in body, heart, mind and soul;  
bring relief and healing  
to carry forth  
along a path of insight and mindfulness.  
Interdependence of all life  
becoming ever more clear;  
care for each other ever more certain,  
grounded in the way things are.

## *Lift the Cloud*

— by Herb Levy

Dear God  
Lift the cloud that blocks my sunshine.  
Open my eyes to see the beauty all around me.  
Restore my strength and my power.  
Allow me to feel my feelings,  
Not be frozen by them.  
Remind me that this behavior used to be my protection,  
But now I know you are here.  
Grant me wisdom and courage to face my challenges.  
Lift the cloud that blocks my sunshine

## *Come Healing*

— by Leonard Cohen

O gather up the brokenness  
And bring it to me now  
The fragrance of those promises  
You never dared to vow

The splinters that you carry  
The cross you left behind  
Come healing of the body  
Come healing of the mind

And let the heavens hear it  
The penitential hymn  
Come healing of the spirit  
Come healing of the limb

Behold the gates of mercy  
In arbitrary space  
And none of us deserving  
The cruelty or the grace

O solitude of longing  
Where love has been confined  
Come healing of the body  
Come healing of the mind

O see the darkness yielding  
That tore the light apart  
Come healing of the reason  
Come healing of the heart

O troubled dust concealing  
An undivided love  
The heart beneath is teaching  
To the broken heart above

Let the heavens falter  
Let the earth proclaim  
Come healing...

## *Carry It with Me*

— by *The Touch of 10,000 words* (as modified by Mark Graboyes during the 2020 pandemic)

Somewhere there is a place where I belong  
Where an orchestra might play my favorite song  
Butterflies gather and birds fly high  
To a beautiful place in a sun-lit sky

I wake and wonder in the land of the free  
Where souls dance happy and the shore meets the sea  
Birds chirp their tunes welcoming the day  
And the ALMIGHTY of hope and wisdom is not far away

The place where I belong sits right in my hand  
It lies in oceans blue along with drifts of white sand  
I carry it with me, for my mind's eye to see  
That the place I belong, resides there safely within me.

## ***Flame in the Darkness***

— by Joe Jencks

There's a flame in the darkness  
Burning deep within our hearts  
In the love that grows between us  
This is where the journey starts  
There is hope in the stillness  
There is solace in our friends  
In the love that grows between us  
This is where the isolation ends

Come full circle in a moment  
Hold no shame in what you feel  
This old world will keep on turning  
And our broken hearts will heal

When the rain falls around you  
Like your solitary tear  
In the love that flows between us  
Know that thunder holds no fear

In the struggle you hold sacred  
When the arrows pierce you through  
In the love that flows between us  
May your courage be renewed

## ***Eternal Oneness***

— by Herb Levy

Eternal Oneness guides me.  
All my needs are met by Plenty;  
I give thanks as I lie down in green pastures  
And enjoy the quiet waters.  
My soul lives forever as part of G!d.  
I follow the paths of righteousness blazed by those before me,  
Who were inspired by Holy Oneness.  
Even though I will die,  
I am not afraid.  
Because I am never alone;  
Eternal Unity comforts me.  
I have experienced Abundance  
Even when I feel threatened;  
My needs are not just met,  
My cup overflows.  
Goodness and Mercy surround me all my life.  
I dwell forever as a small piece of G!d.

There is music in each silence  
There is promise in each day  
In the love that holds between us  
May we always find our way

Come full circle in a moment  
Hold no shame in what you feel  
This old world will keep on turning  
And our broken hearts will heal

There's a flame in the darkness  
Burning deep within our hearts  
In the love that grows between us  
This is where the journey starts

There is hope in the stillness  
There is solace in our friends  
In the love that holds between us  
The sacred journey never ends

*History will remember when the world stopped*

— by Donna Ashworth (written during the 2020 pandemic)

History will remember when the world stopped  
And the flights stayed on the ground.  
And the cars parked in the street.  
And the trains didn't run.

History will remember when the schools closed  
And the children stayed indoors  
And the medical staff walked towards the fire  
And they didn't run.

History will remember when the people sang  
On their balconies, in isolation  
But so very much together  
In courage and song.

History will remember when the people fought  
For their old and their weak  
Protected the vulnerable  
By doing nothing at all.

History will remember when the virus left  
And the houses opened  
And the people came out  
And hugged and kissed  
And started again

Kinder than before.

*All Will Be Well*

— by Joe Jencks

All will be well  
All will be well  
All manner of things will be well  
Wherever life may call you  
Wherever you may dwell  
All will be well  
All will be well

We gather here  
To witness and affirm  
The harmony of spirit  
And of heart  
Manifest with in you  
Brought forth from deepest hope  
To be a force of healing in this world

You find your purpose  
In service to a light  
That emanates from each and every  
Being that is life  
We see the gifts  
That blossom in your care  
And the people who are nourished by your love

May you go forth  
To mend what has been broken  
To feed those who are hungry  
To quench the ones who thirst  
For a world of compassion  
For mercy that abounds  
And a place to dwell in sacred gentleness

# *Other Healing Readings*

## *We Are the Oneness*

— by Herb Levy

We are the ocean,  
but for a short time  
we are the wave.

Honor the ride.

We are the air,  
but for a short time  
we are the wind.

Honor the gust.

We are fire,  
but for a short time  
we flame.

Honor the spark.

We are the earth,  
but for a short time  
we flower.

Honor the bloom.

We are a small piece of the One,  
but for a short time  
we are.

Cherish that time.

## *On the Occasion of Earth Day's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday*

— by Herb Levy (written during the 2020 pandemic)

Blessed is the rabbi novel Coronavirus.

It reminds us  
of the preciousness of a hug;  
of what is essential  
and what is not;  
and of the value of the work  
of stock clerks  
and cashiers  
and trash collectors.

Blessed is the kehillah Coronavirus,  
the gift that we can't return;  
that fits all sizes;  
that teaches us new ways of sharing community  
and love.

Blessed is the prophet novel Coronavirus,  
this small piece of All  
that shrieks to us:

Notice we are all interconnected!  
Pay attention that when we harm the planet,  
we cannot but also harm ourselves!

***Geula***

— by Herb Levy (written during the 2020 pandemic)

Tzitzit circled as they swung  
in the warmth of Ramat Gan's last day of Nissan.  
Clarinet as old as our oldest ancestor,  
as clear and new as this wedding  
allowed during the social distancing.

Connections deeper than distance.  
The stream of family felt as live stream.

They sang the old songs,  
prayed for the rebuilding of the Bet Ha'Mikdosh,  
Joy that masks couldn't contain.  
The wedding processed to the park where the khupah waited  
through an alley with large trash cans.  
Even the cans were swaying.

May their B'rakhot not end with seven!  
May the M'lakhim that waited for them at the khupah  
protect them the rest of their days!  
May their Joy remind Iyar to bring healing to all!

***Lifney Met***

— by Herb Levy (written during the 2020 pandemic)

Ehyeh asher ehyeh,  
not I am what I am,  
not G!d as Popeye,  
I am becoming what I am becoming.  
That's the All, folks!  
Everything,  
even the bushes burning in global scorching  
are Becoming.

Every time I breathe out  
I make the sound of Yud Hey Vav Hey,  
the sound of breath.  
Every time I breathe, I pray.  
I call out the Great Name.  
I am Becoming, right along  
as a small part of You.

One day I'll breathe out,  
but not back in.  
That day this wave will gently  
break on the shore  
Becoming the Ocean once again.

## ***Turn, Turn, Turn***

— by Pete Seeger (Ecclesiastes, 3:1-8)

To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)  
There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)  
And a time for every purpose, under Heaven

A time to be born, a time to die  
A time to plant, a time to reap  
A time to kill, a time to heal  
A time to laugh, a time to weep

To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)  
There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)  
And a time for every purpose, under Heaven

A time to build up, a time to break down  
A time to dance, a time to mourn

A time to cast away stones, a time to gather  
stones together

To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)  
There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)  
And a time for every purpose, under Heaven

A time of love, a time of hate  
A time of war, a time of peace  
A time you may embrace, a time to refrain  
from embracing

To Everything (Turn, Turn, Turn)  
There is a season (Turn, Turn, Turn)  
And a time for every purpose, under Heaven

### ***A little Torah about illness and quarantine.***

— by Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg (written during the 2020 pandemic)

In the book of Numbers (ch 12), there's this episode where Miriam is stricken with tzaraat, an illness that is often mistakenly translated as "leprosy," but that doesn't resemble Hansen's disease as we know it.

There's debate about whether it was contagious, but given that a 7-day quarantine is one of the things that has to happen, I'm led to believe that it is. (There are also interpretations of it as a primarily spiritual illness, but I'm not working with them now.)

In any case, Miriam was struck with tzaraat. I don't want to get into the weeds of the cause right now—there are a lot of readings, maybe I'll unpack them later, but now she's here, before us, and she's been "struck with snow-white scales."

This leads Moses to pray a short, powerful prayer to God on her behalf--one that we use now, still.

אל נא רפא נא לה

El na, refa na la--

"Please, God, please heal her."

But she isn't healed in that moment. She has to go out of the camp for seven days. To quarantine.

Alicia Jo Rabins, Musician and Writer, has a beautiful song about Miriam, sick, quarantined, away from everyone, bitter and lonely but also taking in the stillness and the quiet in a profound way. The time away, and the hurt and the pain.

<https://www.girlsintroublemusic.com/.../snow-scorpions-spide.../>

"If anybody had asked me  
I might not have chosen to go  
But everyone knows  
Sometimes you don't have a choice."

It also seems like a moment to note that Moses also got tzaraat, in Exodus 4:6. There, it's one of the party tricks God gives Moses at the Burning Bush, as Moses is psyching up to go confront Pharaoh. There, tzaraat is proof of his prophecy. Proof of his connection to God.

When they cross the Red Sea, in the Song of the Sea, it says explicitly that Miriam is also a prophet. (Ex 15:20). Is there a connection? I will leave that open.

In any case, here's the verse that I think is the most important here.

Numbers 12:15:

"So Miriam was shut out of camp seven days; and the people did not march on until Miriam was readmitted."

We. Don't. Leave. People. Behind.

We don't.

We do not march on without everyone we can take with us.

We do not kick people off ventilators because we've deemed their lives less worthy.

We do not give up on fighting for PPE for everyone who needs it.

We do not shrug and say it's OK if more people get infected.

We don't give up on social distancing because it's not convenient.

We don't refuse care to people who don't have the money.

We don't give up on fighting for just economic solutions for everyone.

We don't stop pushing for safety and justice for those who are incarcerated or in detention.

We don't leave anyone behind.

The Or HaChayim (Hayyim ben Moshe ibn Attar) teaches that "the people were willing to inconvenience themselves on account of Miriam."

We go out of our way to take care of one another. To make sure that everyone is on the journey forward with us, as many people as we can.

We must refuse to leave anyone behind.

We are in this together.