



Sangha Sharing

Poems of Expression

During the recent Summer Retreat at Serenity Ridge, retreatants were invited to share their creative and spontaneous expressions during a celebration following the fundraising auction on June 30. The evening included music, dance, acting, comedy, poetry, as well as performances by children. Here are two poems shared during that magical evening:

Are You Bonpo?

Are you a Bonpo?

A logical question
A simple question
A weighty question

Who is the I that answers?

Hosting
Hosting the I's

Waters of Baptism
Wine of Kiddush
Mala for Sera Mey

Son of Christians
Husband and Father of Jews

Teacher of Religion
Director of Religious Life

Smile of Rinpoche

Illumination of Taphritsa

Hosting, softening, awareness
Who is the I?

Stillness
I take refuge.

Silence
I take refuge.

Spaciousness
I take refuge.

E Ma Ho

— *Bob Clark*

* * *

Paying Attention

“Host the pain in your body,” he said,
“after you connect with the stillness that’s not in your head.”

“Look out the window,” my ego replied,
“the sky is so blue – it sure is nice outside.”

Faith in the teachings kept me still,
Until ego started enjoying the peace – after 50 years, it has great skill.

But so does the teacher
As he reminds me to rest while paying attention to the creature.

This is followed by the unfortunate reminder to “host the pain,”
And unease triggers ego to start its drill and stillness begins to wane.

Again, faith steps in, and allows awareness to open,
To my amazement the pain is a mountain of which I have never spoken.

How could it stay hidden for so very long?
Now it's feeling bigger and denser – I wish someone would ring the gong!

Like a star near the end of its time, will I become a black hole?
- Ever vigilant, there goes ego threatening my soul.

But I let that voice float away and continue to host that damnable pain,
Only to find that I prefer the stillness to the insane.

As I grasp for the quiet, it disappears, and in that moment am lost in fear.
Just as suddenly, I know that stillness is always there and in that relief, I shed a tear.

Ever so slowly I look at the terrifying beast
So large from years of an interminable feast.

“Hug it,” he says, “and let it dissolve,”
But instead, my heart breaks and cuts my resolve.

How many years spent in fear?
And how many others are similarly unclear?

The stillness is what dissipates,
And without thought, compassion practice magically takes its place.

Now, sadness follows like a ghost,
Along with joy of knowing it will dissolve when I have the presence to let stillness play host.

— *Caroline Bell*