

The Call of Things By Christine Loughlin, OP

The magnificence of the natural world demands a response that arises from the wild unconscious depths of the human soul. Only the artist can give, in any satisfying measure of expression, such a response.

On Sunday, March 12, at Murray Unitarian Universalist Church, the Singers of the Sacred Web and the community of Crystal Spring gathered to sing a measure of expression of this response. Immersed in the power and poetry of music our senses awakened to the thrust of eastern waters turning their islands to the sun, felt the fill of prairie grasses praise a golden yield, and witnessed the ice ledge weep in Morning's sweep across a continent.

The Singers made tangible the Sacred Web, that non-linear connection that holds with gossamer fragility the deep interconnectedness of all Life. No image caught and held my spirit like the phrase—*nor feed on another's hunger*—as we sang "The Call of Things." In that moment culture born of art was present. The work of Crystal Spring is a response to that image.

As I look over the monitor and out the window while I type, I see the electric line and telephone wire hooked up to the retrofitted shed whose renovation is somewhat of a miracle. The shed has been transformed into Crystal Spring Garden Center with tool and equipment room, office and meeting space, and even a cozy corner when the gardener or intern need a respite. An old rug and farmer Ron's collection of farm artifacts add an aesthetic touch. East of the garden center are the huge piles of composting leaves and cured manure waiting to be spread. To the west is the long windrow with the richness of last year's 'waste' transformed by the mighty microbes to enrich this year's fields.

We enter our fourth year of community supported agriculture. It is the practice of the community supporting the CSA that is the healing notion here. Forty shareholders, a collection of sixty families, participate in the spiritual practice of learning "not to feed from another's hunger." A guest who stopped by the other day asked some intriguing questions. How have the members' consumer choices shifted since they joined the CSA? Where do they shop for foods the garden does not supply? How much of the food needs are met within the northeast bioregion?

Our common commitment is the long learning of living into the responses.

Last week we had an engaging visit from Michael Rozyne, the founder of Red Tomato, a not for profit marketing organization whose purpose is to strengthen family farms and ecological farms in the Northeast and to increase consumers' access to and awareness of farm-fresh fruits and vegetables. For U.S. folks to begin to eat locally is a major step in a recovery that halts our practice of feeding from another's hunger. Agribusiness, with its massive monoculture of one crop production and global transport practice is the decimation of life in the soils, the waters, the air. Imagine an organization committed to saving local farms and working to make things as basic as flavor and freshness and healthfulness extraordinary!

In the fall Carole saw a fisher scurry up a tree as Willy romped through the woods. One morning not long ago an otter waltzed across the field on its way to the Mill Brook beyond the lower garden. Coyote and deer are more numerous than we sometimes appreciate. Bluebirds have returned to our backyard for the first time in many years. Each life form must feed. Sometimes we forget that it was the universe itself that brought forth the novel strategy of eating. With this wild mutation of eating a living neighbor, Earth's adventure turned onto a particular path of power and beauty and intimacy. To survive, all life must feed. Earth wisdom knows the way to

feed from abundance. We have turned and fed from another's hunger. As we participate with this community of creatures, we have begun to seek the ways that the land of Crystal Spring will be protected. This land that is home to a community of creatures must be conserved so that no development be the way we feed from another's hunger.

We are not moved by the loss of forests, wetlands, farm or coastal lands. The death of 40,000 children a day from hunger and its related diseases does not stir us. We do not hear the anguished cry of the natural world. We are entrenched in a consumer culture of manufactured commodities produced by a corporate power to fill a false hunger that diminishes the human spirit.

On that Sunday afternoon in March the body of song brought us to the bend in the river. There the artist senses us caught in the narrows. What will push us through? *Love caught in the narrows will seize the stream again. Love caught in the narrows...* We are caught in the narrows of our time. The love that will move us through must be a supreme creative power born in the imagination of the artist. From the wild unconscious comes the grace to move through the narrows to birth a new dawn, "the ecozoic era, when the human will be present to the natural world in a mutually enhancing manner." What the artist dreams we come home to practice.

"The Call of Things" from the recording **We Are the Land We Sing**, Carolyn McDade and the Singers of the Sacred Web.

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The Community of Crystal Spring offers heartfelt thanks to Carolyn McDade and the Singers of the Sacred Web for enriching our lives through music and for your generous support. We thank the many friends who joined us to sing into consciousness *We Are the Land We Sing*.