

VII Jnana Darsana, Consciousness and its Modifications

Verse 3

That by which one experiences the witnessing of the non-Self, such as I-consciousness and so on, is Self-knowledge, by which alone immortality is enjoyed.

5/8/7

Nataraja Guru gives a significantly different translation to this verse, having it mean that the witnessing state of everything—from the ego to the enjoyment of immortality—is Self-awareness. Nitya has it that the Self-awareness of the witnessing state produces the enjoyment of immortality. Both shades of interpretation add to our understanding of the verse.

Narayana Guru's own explication includes, "The awareness by which the witnessing Self is experienced is Self-knowledge. It is the final conclusion of Vedanta that liberation is attained through Self-knowledge." He adds, "By the use of the word *eva* in the text, it is intended to point out the primary nature of this sole means of liberation. Such an awareness of the Self could be described as unconditioned awareness."

Thus Narayana Guru is teaching us a most simple and simultaneously radical form of meditation: to spend some time in a state of absolutely unconditioned awareness. Meditation is all too often a program, replete with steps and stages, fourfolds, eightfolds and multifolds. We are instructed to count our repetitions and imagine an impending result. All of this feeds the fantasizing aspect of the ego, breeding comparisons and consequent superior

and inferior attitudes. The Guru lumps this all together as more of the same effluent that clogs our mental plumbing day in and day out. Goal oriented games. Those are fine within the transactional realm, but to discover our liberated nature we need to have surcease from the endless waves of sorrow which bind us to action.

Happily we had two fine stretches of nothingness last night, bracketing a noteworthy dialogue. Sunset colors washed over the room, and we had no recourse to artificial lights until after the close. A heady bouquet of lilacs graced our wood stove: altar to the god of heat. Between the transcendent sky and the immanent blossoms we enacted a scenario of great beauty: the sharing of thoughts and insights between fellow humans, a.k.a the wisdom sacrifice.

The witness is very still. It doesn't offer opinions. It doesn't describe anything. It doesn't react. It doesn't assess or judge. It is purely aware. The minute the mind thinks "I..." and appends anything, it is no longer a witness.

Nitya rightly distinguishes two types of witnessing, that of the non-Self and that of the Self. Witnessing the Self means attaining the transcendent neutrality we have been speaking of throughout the study. All too often we confuse this with witnessing the non-Self, or basically observing details of the everyday world. We speak of eyewitnesses to crimes or eyewitnesses to momentous events. The accuracy of this latter version has been thoroughly discredited by recent psychological studies. One professor actually staged a knife attack in his classroom, and then had students describe the assailant and look for him in a police-style lineup. Although the students were actually studying how to be expert witnesses, the average accuracy of identification was around 15 percent. DNA testing is currently exonerating a significant number of people who were positively identified and received life sentences for crimes they didn't commit. The bottom line is that our perceptions are famously flawed and prejudiced by our beliefs

and inclinations. Knowing this should help keep us from jumping to conclusions and flying off the handle, which in turn can help us to move toward true neutrality.

John pointed out how it was relatively easy to witness aspects of the past, to run them by our consciousness so to speak, but it was supremely difficult to stay centered in a witnessing state in the midst of the intensity of present struggles. Truer words have not been spoken! The heat of battle is the graduate exam, but fortunately we can practice and work up to it gradually by spending time sitting quietly outside the fray. Pushing the lawnmower, with its energetic aum sound, around the yard, and smoking a stinky cigar. Or perhaps you prefer sitting in a sumptuous room burning stinky incense. Or sitting on the shelf of a mountain staring into nothingness and sniffing the freshest air on the planet. Everyone has their druthers, their preferences. When we're in a place that suits us we can easily let go of all those mental processes we are afflicted with and take a short vacation. With enough practice we can stay centered even as we grapple with life's multifold disasters. Or more likely, we can regain our center much more quickly after we have been knocked out of it yet again by the vagaries of Fate. Life has its blows, and very very few of us are flexible enough to take them all in stride. We need to know our inner witness so we can regain it as soon as possible, and we need to reach out for the help of our friends too. A good friend will help us to regain our calm, not stoke the fires. We can act more wisely from the eye of the hurricane than while we're being whirled around in the full blast of the storm.

Whew!! I need to take a break from all these metaphors myself! Sheesh!

Anita brought up an interesting issue that took us a while to connect to the subject, but which actually does. She has been bolder of late to be herself and say what's on her mind, and to joke around with people more. This is partly due to the influence of

Gurukula classes, it seems. To her chagrin, several important people have criticized her about this. She feels bound to her old self by these opinions, and is struggling to accommodate their wishes and still maintain her new momentum.

This relates to some larger issues than just witnessing, but as we attain our neutral witness state we will certainly find we are less affected by other people's opinions and demands.

All that talk we've had in so many classes about how we are held imprisoned by social strictures is just a lot of hot air until we actually start to become ourselves, until we begin to heal the schism between our persona and our dharma or our true nature. There is relatively little conflict when we remain frozen in our allotted poses; it's when we start to turn away from them we notice all the hooks, and the embraces that are chains and straitjackets in disguise. An ordinary person just settles back into the groove and the pressure lets up, but I suspect Anita is not simply looking to accommodate the prevailing ignorance. This is a time to be brave and keep holding to her inner guiding light. Sure, we should entertain people's criticisms to see how much validity they have, and then go on our way, incorporating the good parts and shrugging off the unnecessary. Life is too short to always dance to someone else's tune. At the same time, you don't have to force the issue, usually. People are so habitual that they don't actually see much more than what they expect. We can easily learn to toss them a sop and then forge ahead with our program of growth, as long as we don't become confused or get upset. It is normal for people to be timid and conventional, and if that's all they want, so be it. It actually leaves a lot more psychic space for us to revel in.

This relates to the verse in that the witnessing state is where we maintain our balance whenever we are buffeted and snagged by social constraints or unhappy circumstances. Instead of reacting angrily or anxiously, we take shelter in our neutral understanding. We see why people say what they do, and we see why we have to

be more true to ourselves. And we say inward thanks to our gurus and fellow seekers who support us in our journey of Self-discovery. We might even be able to gently confront our conventional friends and teach them to have a more open attitude to other people and other ideas, but we have to first master our own reactivity and tenderness. Remember, Arjuna went to a guru complaining of “the evil of a tender disposition.” Too much sensitivity is as bad as too little. As with Goldilocks, we need to get things “just right.”

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7/18/17

Jnana Darsana verse 3

That by which one experiences the witnessing of the non-Self, such as I-consciousness and so on, is Self-knowledge, by which alone immortality is enjoyed.

Nataraja Guru’s translation:

*That by which is experienced all things
Of the non-Self such as egoism and so on
And even by which immortality is enjoyed
(As) the Witness, is Self-awareness.*

Nitya restates the verse and gives one of its primary implications in the first paragraph:

The Self can be compared to a light that can see and is always witnessing whatever it illuminates. Its experience of such illumination ranges from the witnessing of deep sleep to the

witnessing of empirical transactions with gross objects in the wakeful state. In and through all experiences runs a golden thread of pure consciousness. This is not affected by the changing modes of consciousness which occur in the shifting of interest from one item of experience to another. Comprehension of this pure consciousness is obliterated in the minds of most people because they become so intrigued by the values in each item illuminated by the Self. (333)

In other words, pure consciousness is always our essential nature, but we become so caught up in the passing show that we forget its presence and become entangled in the dramatic ups and downs of what the Guru calls the non-Self. The effort we have to expend is to consistently regain the steady state that underlies all the vagaries of fate. It requires a kind of “stepping back” whenever we find ourselves being pulled out of our blissful *ananda* into emotional and intellectual chaos.

Nitya calls our mesmerization by items of interest “normal consciousness,” with only the slightest hint of irony. Yogis should realize that the transcendent state is truly normal consciousness, but we more readily apply the term to the reactive state that predominates most of the time, making an endless parade of demands upon us.

The key to accessing pure consciousness is maintaining a state of neutrality. Paradoxically we sometimes have to struggle to reassert neutrality if we are caught up in the surface waves of the social ocean. Struggle easily takes us away from neutrality if we happen to be already in it, but if not, we may have to engage in it. The process really is a lot like learning to float in water. Often the first response to finding our self at sea is panicky thrashing movements, and the swimmer has to intentionally resist them to become calm. Once negative thrusts are neutralized, floating becomes nearly effortless and can be maintained with minimal

effort. The bliss of floating peacefully supports a calm state that is naturally buoyant.

Neutrality—it's all about neutrality. We are so used to taking sides that we are unaware of how far from neutrality we often are. We come together in our weekly classes to practice neutrality and discover how our best insights emerge from it. Ideally all the specific references we share are traced back to a witnessing mentality, rather than being put forward as modes of salvation in and of themselves. Let's defer to Nitya once again:

When the limitation of normal consciousness is transcended, then consciousness refers neither to the cognizing agency of the ego nor to any factor of the non-Self made specifically interesting by any particular value. Such a state may perhaps best be described as the awareness of an awareness which does not necessitate the dichotomy of the seer and the seen. (333)

Neutral enough for you? Bill talked about one of his favorite ideas along these same lines he learned from Katagiri Roshi, to pay attention to the mind *before* it formulates a thought. From that place look at the world dispassionately, watching your reactions without getting involved in them. Bill accompanied this with the exhortation to trust your inner voice, since if we are able to remain neutral it allows the true inner voice to be heard. All too often we mistake our ego voice for the deeper-seated wisdom that emerges only if we can quiet our self-interested reactivity. It isn't really all that mysterious, once we admit the obfuscating dominance of our ego. Nitya puts it this way:

The non-differentiated consciousness of the Self prevails at all times. It is like the ocean which, though seeming to take on the forms of the waves, never in fact changes its fundamental nature as water. Recapturing the original non-differentiated

state of consciousness can be identified as realization – that is, Self-realization. What is real in that state is the Self. The non-Self together with the shadowy ego are found to be unreal.
(334)

Nothing to it! Just convert our identification of what reality is from all transient phenomena and the shadowy ego that draws its sustenance from them to our inner state of certitude. Too bad the former is always begging for our attention and the latter sits silently, biding its time without asking to be noticed. So the human default setting is to attend to the show and shush the neutral witness. What good is that tiny little nonentity, anyway?

Well, that thought was the impetus for sharing a few examples, because, surprisingly enough, remaining neutral is the optimal problem-solving technique. One of our formerly regular class members often advocated for practical examples of the teaching, and I have tried to keep bringing them up. Nowadays it seems no one else is much interested in examples, but there are bound to be a few out there, so I dared to importune. Happily we heard a few good examples last night.

Deb and Andy reported on a recent article in The New Yorker magazine on one of the Black Panthers, who was kept in solitary confinement for 43 years, the longest of anyone:

(<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/01/16/how-albert-woodfox-survived-solitary>). Deb was struck by how gentle and nonjudgmental he was, where you might expect extreme bitterness. (The United Nations has defined more than 15 days of solitary confinement as torture.) Albert Woodfox must have realized that he was the only person who would be affected by his attitudes, so he worked to be kind to himself. Why curse injustice when the curses only add to your punishment?

Part of being fixated on external events is that you imagine your fretting and fuming is having a mitigating effect on them,

when it hardly ever is. It's much more likely to have a detrimental effect on you, and block any avenue of meaningful involvement. It is a crucial changeover to realize that we ourselves are the beneficiaries (or otherwise) of our thinking, and therefore we change our world by changing our level of self-awareness. Love begins at home.

I offered two examples of the value of neutrality from my own life. Recently I visited my younger daughter, planning to choose a dance we would perform together at her upcoming wedding. I had made several suggestions, as had she, and we were going to try them out and practice our moves.

The songs I suggested were not only gorgeous and meaningful to me, they would have worked nicely for the event. But Harmony rudely dismissed them with hardly a moment's listening. I might have felt aggrieved and argued with her, but I had anticipated something like this, and I have been doing my homework for nearly 50 years now. I did not indulge any resentments or hurt feelings, but merely witnessed and accepted. Her choices didn't go very well either. As I sat still, witnessing, a new option presented itself. We gave it a listen and a dance, and it was perfect! We tried a couple of other similar pieces, but we already had what we needed, and happily agreed to it. This shows that witnessing is not surrender—we wound up with my suggestion, after all—but can easily be a dynamic presence that accesses more intelligence than our ego is privy to. And what might easily have been another disruption of our relationship turned out to lead to further bonding instead.

Deb recalled how Nitya would often say in response to a question or a predicament that he was waiting for an answer to come. He would listen closely to the question or ponder the quagmire, but not jump to a hasty response. After a while, from deep inside him, a superlative answer would bubble up.

My other example might be familiar to a few of you. It demonstrates that the ego is more willing to give up its acknowledged faults than its items of pride. I am a lifelong pacifist, having consciously adopted a childish version of ahimsa around age 8, and having had many reinforcing experiences over my lifetime. I was and am deeply committed to it, and feel sure that with all my faults, at least I am kind and considerate to others of all species. I believe that true civilization won't arrive until all weaponry is put away for good.

Foolishly and naïvely, in 1971 at the first Portland Gurukula I asked Nitya to teach me as a guru. Was I ever in for a series of surprises!

Possibly the most intense event of two solid months of soul-shattering intensity might sound trivial enough, but to me at the time it was devastating. When a member of the Portland Gurukula had personal questions we would make a date with Nitya in his room for a private talk. I had been quite severely battered (fish 'n' chips, anyone?) for some time, and couldn't understand when my well-meaning attitude didn't cut the mustard with him. Among other things he had recently thrown me out of his *Integrated Science of the Absolute* class as being too abysmally stupid. Well yes, I had some pride in my intelligence, which had been meticulously measured and fawned over in schools practically my entire life. Still, I could give that up, as my new spiritual orientation was absurdly anti-intellectual (which is another story). In any case, I went in to defend my position with Nitya and we got into an explosive argument. He just would not cede me an inch of consideration. I became amazingly upset, pleading my case as a sincere disciple who loved him profoundly and was willing to do anything he asked. At the culmination he blasted me with a thunderous look and shouted, "You're a liar! You are going to go out and get a gun and come back and shoot me!"

The accusation was so shocking to me that I felt as if I'd been shot in the heart myself. Only decades later did I realize that he was hitting me exactly where my ego's pride smugly resided. My commitment to non-hurting was zealously guarded in the "this part of me's okay" area of the psyche. I had imagined Nitya and I would be teaming up as allies against my weaknesses, and my strengths were already in the bank, making me a worthy person. Rotten old me, worthy at last. It felt nice to have some good qualities. Too bad they were being unjustly viewed as ego projections and one of Siva's demolition agents was in the vicinity and closing fast.

The bottom line is I had no idea of how attached I was to my ego pose, and how clever it was at deflecting assaults on its dominance. It was willing to be party to a polite charade, so long as a true realignment was never undertaken. Yet I *had* asked for it, and the Guru was going to give me what I'd asked for. Whoa! I wrestled with the ensuing pain for at least five years.

Jan wondered if this meant that we shouldn't have values, which is a pertinent question. It's a different matter entirely: I wasn't being blasted for my pacifism but for my egotism. Nitya and all the world's scriptures advocate for peace and kindness and compassion and all that. But if the ego takes its *identity* from its proper behavior or good values, and you have asked a guru to free you, which means breaking the hold your ego has on you, then you will be attacked precisely at what you hold dear. It's the same idea as the famous line, "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him!" Does it mean it's okay to kill? Not at all. It means when you meet a situation and associate it with something you cherish in your memory banks, you aren't fully alive to what you are encountering. You're meeting a memory. You have to let go of everything, both good and bad, to be present in a neutrally alive condition. No one could fail to be enthralled by actually meeting Jesus or Buddha on the road, and the opposite sensation would be to hate or kill him.

Dialectics of a sort. I think the statement is unnecessarily strong, but then I'm not especially affiliated with either of them. I think of them as lovely myths. In that case, how about if you meet them you just go on your way with a nod and a polite smile?

Jan's question did put me in mind that our Western culture is marinated in the religious belief that being good is the way to heaven. That socially useful belief is equally constraining of the non-believer as the believer. Regardless, Vedanta does not accept it.

Andy thought that as seers it was important for us to not take responsibility for the whims of nature. The implication was that by being partisan for good over bad outcomes, which are essentially out of our control, we cause ourselves unnecessary grief. We imagine we are in charge of how things turn out, or are supposed to be, and that false presumption leads us into any number of dead ends. We (and our friends) disdain us for our failures even though we are hapless mortals operating on severely limited information.

The idea of neutrality regarding good and bad really clicked with Moni this time, and she eagerly talked with me about it after class. She could see that the Absolute had no preference as to one or the other, but was simply witnessing all that happened, without intervention. Everything would play out according to its innate qualities. It's actually a very freeing realization, and Moni glowed as she spoke.

Bushra has been reading James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, a kind of witnessing of the impoverished lives of people during the Great Depression in the US. By simply describing what he saw and experienced, Agee creates a powerful and transformative work of artistic profundity. (Walker Evans' eloquent photographs add immeasurably to the impact.) There is no need for him to decry the injustice of what has transpired: it speaks for itself, all the more loudly because of the lack of opinionated underlining of the obvious. It's a wonderful example

that probably will fit better in next week's class on witnessing the non-Self. Narayana Guru wants us to establish our ground in the witnessing Self, and then we can always discern the Self within the non-Self, as will be addressed next.

Moni shared a new insight on a story she has told before, when Nitya called her a liar. Moni always prided herself on her honesty and truthfulness, but to some degree it was an abstraction, and she guarded herself in pretty much the same way as everyone does. She likely worshipped Nitya even more than I did, so when he accused her of dishonesty she was at least equally shocked. As she said, the guru being mad at you is the most painful thing. "You are not honest!" he told her. "What did I do?" she meekly replied. "You are afraid, so you pretend." Moni was very upset, but the lesson went home. Most of us mortals need the stimulus of misery to force us to change our perspective. We can tolerate a little discomfort, but a lot overwhelms our defenses, and a voyage of discovery often sets sail in response.

Deb talked about the repartee she observed between Nataraja Guru and Nitya that at times looked so painful, and yet neither lost his balance and became angry, so it was a liberating exercise that they both willingly entered into. As readers of *Love and Blessings* know, Nitya had not always been neutral under Nataraja Guru's onslaughts, but by 1971 when Deb saw them together he had gotten over his resentments and they stood together as equals. From the stories I've heard, the suffering I underwent under Nitya's care were no more than 1/1000 of what he experienced in the hands of Nataraja Guru.

Life itself is a guru, and often shoots its slings and arrows at us to afford us the opportunity to reassess our position. Too bad the commonly accepted responses are defensive or offensive: neutrality isn't sexy, and doesn't sell programs. Few advocate for it. We mostly have recourse to witnessing when in a static non-dynamic state, yet it is at its best when intensely engaged.

Because of the witnessing state's elusive nature, residing unobtrusively within the depths of our being, Nitya repeatedly redirects our attention back to it:

When we speak of the Self as the eternal Witness, it should be understood that we refer to its neutrality. Pure consciousness, without becoming a participant in the 'I' and 'mine' roles of the ego and without identifying itself with the objectivity of the non-Self, always retains its pure state. At the same time it is aware of the game of life projected as though a shadow play. (335)

Jan mused on this point, similar to Bill's of "the moment before," and shared an expanded version in writing, which you can read in Part II. Deb shared one of her poems that approaches the same theme in a more refrigerated fashion, also added to the second part.

Jan made a good case that we need our interactions with the non-Self to be expertly attended to, and Nitya elsewhere supports this as well. Yet in the Jnana Darsana we are moving into another dimension of involvement. Having established our intelligent relationship with the world we live in, we are being invited to delve within without reservations: "Now we should take the possibility of witnessing to another more subtle level, where what is to be witnessed is not the non-Self but the Self itself." The neat thing about it is that in witnessing the Self we are not denying the non-Self, but rather bringing our "A" game to bear on it. Unfortunately, by exclusively witnessing the non-Self we actually obscure our awareness and intimate connection with the Self. It doesn't—couldn't possibly—go away, but our awareness is dimmed down to the point where we no longer involve it in our decision-making.

And that's a shame. Our peace of mind resides in alert neutrality, and is not derived from aspects of the non-Self such as

pleasurable objects or spiritual practices, as has been affirmed over and over in this study.

After noting how we get caught up in our superficial preferences, Nitya expresses what happens if we don't succumb:

Realization means to discover one's total identity with absolute existence (*sat*), with non-modulated consciousness (*chit*), and with the unbroken blissful state of the Self (*ananda*). (334)

He elaborates here only on the third aspect of saccidananda:

Two important characteristics of *ananda* are the total abolition of duality and the attainment of the state of immortality. Immortality here is to be understood in a special sense. It does not refer to the perpetuation of a certain substance or substantiality in time and space. Indeed, it refers to a total transcendence of the relevance of the time factor, which is the main medium of the state of becoming. (334)

We have long ago dispensed with the notion that immortality means living forever. Here we see that the fleeting moments of neutrality we allow ourselves are immortal in the true sense, detaching us from the demands of time and space to float free. Although they are often brief, they have an eternal impact, not unlike focusing a lens. We all know how a camera, telescope or microscope looks when you go back and forth in degrees of fuzziness, and only when you attain the exact point of sharp focus does the objective become clear enough to make out in fine detail. The truth is that our egos are long accustomed to being out of focus, out of balance, and may even treat the presumption that clarity of vision is attainable as a threat to their continued existence.

Neutrality and transcendence are essentially the same thing, and are intrinsic to the oft-exaggerated term *realization*, as Nitya explains:

Realization comes only when all three of the modalities of nature are transcended. The transcendent state then obtained is called *samadhi*, and it occurs when the Self witnesses the Self. So we can see that to understand all the implications in the present verse, the word ‘witnessing’ must be appreciated in its correct sense. (335-6)

Nitya closes with the assertion that this does not necessitate us undergoing any particular practice. In fact, the idea that realization is the result of performing certain requisite actions is contrary to a unitive attitude:

From what has been said it should be evident that the Self, when in the state of knowing itself, does not accomplish that experience through the modulation of consciousness in any manner whatsoever. Nor does it engage itself in any exertion in an effort to perceive something, as in the case of perception of the objects of the non-Self. When such a high state of unconditional, nonmodulated consciousness prevails without its transparency or sameness being disturbed by the awareness of ‘I’ or ‘this’, it is called Self- knowledge, or *atmajnana*. (336)

If we view our native state as something to be attained through right thinking or behavior, it recedes indefinitely. By doing so we are unintentionally pushing it away. Instead we should snuggle up with it, loving it and honoring it as not only our very being, but the true nature of everything. It does not have to be attained, but only allowed. We are that. That Alone is. Aum.

Part II

Swami Vidyananda's commentary:

There is a Witness remaining within the bodies of all beings able to take cognisance of all non-Self factors beginning with egoism and reaching out to external entities like pots and cloth. At the time of deep sleep this Witness is not subject to any change and is capable of cognising the subtlest factors in consciousness. Such a Witness is no other than the Self. The awareness by which the witnessing Self is experienced is Self-knowledge. It is the final conclusion of Vedanta that liberation is attained through Self-knowledge. By the use of the word *eva* in the text, it is intended to point out the primary nature of this sole means of liberation. Such an awareness of the Self could be described as unconditioned awareness.

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Today Jan expanded on her thoughts from last night:

I thought we were talking about the witnessing consciousness mainly as neutral and pure and that what is witnessed is the Self itself. We also talked about the witness showing us our attachments and ego tendencies so that we can let go of them to allow for a more unaltered merging with the pure Self.

That all made sense but I thought we should include and look at how the witnessing consciousness also helps us *live with our attachments*, because they are inevitable as we are emotional and ego-driven humans. Our lives are full of responsibilities, commitments, relationships, political opinions, etc, many things that are deeply of the transactional world, and letting go of our

attachment to these things does not always seem possible. But like Deb said, we can loosen our hold on them and continually re-evaluate how we interact with them and our attitudes and emotions toward them, and in this process, the neutral witness is our guide.

I love the thought that we can practice what Bill said about opening to that moment before our reactions to life surface, and living more from that pure place where we are connected to the vast Self. Perhaps that is the witness before the witness becomes aware, or before when it perceives objects of the non-Self as the verse says. The commentary did talk about different forms or levels of the witness.

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Deb read out her poem that hints at “the moment before”:

Shards of Light

If this were the beginning
of a new poem
she would call what she felt inside
the silence of snow.
Memories of straight, shadowed trees,
flakes falling hour after hour
in the northern night.
She walks to the edge of the lake,
under the snow wordless cracks in the ice,
under the ice, cold currents,
the world a well,
the moment before.
Silence seeps from the weighted branches
into her ears and eyes, her shoulders.

Silence fills her mouth.

She turns
to the overhanging night,
the open sky
filled with shards of light,
those long ago stars,
their stories unraveling to her,
their faint music
becoming stronger,
words and dreams, all drifting,
streaming down
in dark currents, sparks
and the voiceless song.

Part III

Bill sent a quote he mentioned in the class, something he gets in his email daily from rigpa.org:

Two people have been living in you all your life. One is the ego, garrulous, demanding, hysterical, calculating; the other is the hidden spiritual being, whose still voice of wisdom you have only rarely heard or attended to. As you listen more and more to the teachings, contemplate them, and integrate them into your life, your inner voice, your innate wisdom of discernment, what we call in Buddhism “discriminating awareness,” is awakened and strengthened, and you begin to distinguish between its guidance and the various clamorous and enthralling voices of ego. The memory of your real nature, with all its splendor and confidence, begins to return to you.

You will find, in fact, that you have uncovered in yourself your own *wise guide*, and as the voice of your wise guide, or

discriminating awareness, grows stronger and clearer, you will start to distinguish between its truth and the various deceptions of the ego, and you will be able to listen to it with discernment and confidence.