

November 14, 2016

Dear Ones,

When the initial numbness starts to wear off, it's so very human to cast about for ways to cope. As understandable as that is, here's a counter-suggestion : Don't cope. Don't try to normalize the dangerous or manage the inherently unmanageable. What if, instead, we let our tactics and strategies fall away and take place, as much as we are able to, with what is actually happening?

And so sorrow, rage, hope, fear, empathy, and the rest will rise and fall with each new development. Let them be part of each new development. In a time when so much and so many are being rejected before our eyes, what if we attend to our emotions rather than turn them away? What if we offer, in our own heart-minds, the very welcome under threat in our country?

Instead of searching for the perfect response or the perfect defense, we're choosing the humble work of remaining aware as we move from state to state. And emotions that are attended to are more likely to rise and fall rather than rise and stay, sometimes transforming in surprising ways when given the chance to have a life cycle.

This is delicate work in an undelicate time. How does the balance between engagement and self-protection shift from day to day? Where's the frontier between engagement and obsession, or self-protection and denial? Is there ever really a balance, or is it about momentary returns through center, on the way to off-balance in some other direction? Can we welcome those off-balance but potentially creative states? How much will we let ourselves be pierced, by the suffering of others and by sunlight glinting on leaves? Above all, are we willing to carry these questions around, so they can hold us in their reverie?

Each of us has the capacity to hold the through-line that runs from before this time to after it. To sink deep enough to pick that thread up, we have to let go of strategies like coping, which keep us bobbing at the surface. We travel *through* the zones of our distress to the still place at the bottom. And then we feel how ancient and fierce and unconditioned that thread is, and how we are made of it – in our own deep minds ancient and fierce and unconditioned, too.

With my love,



