



Eighty-Two & Still Counting

Dí Shearer

Meditations on my Being and Becoming ... and yours

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*The soul is like a wild animal —
tough, resilient, savvy, self-sufficient
and yet exceedingly shy.*

*If we want to see a wild animal,
the last thing we should do
is to go crashing through the woods,
shouting for the creature to come out.*

*But if we are willing to walk quietly into the woods
and sit silently for an hour or two at the base of a tree,
the creature we are waiting for may well emerge,
and out of the corner of an eye we will catch a
glimpse
of the precious wildness we seek.*

Let Your Life Speak
Parker Palmer
Wiley, 2000

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Beginnings and Openings



A Psalm for the First Sunday of the Year

Body, Earth, Universe, God,
how shall I name that which is more than I can know?

Little me, private me, public me, spirit within,
how can I name that which is more than I can be?

Today we embark on a journey out of the old.
Today we embark on a journey ever new.

I yearn for wholeness, integrity and authenticity.
I yearn to be somehow more than I have ever been.

Yet my body grows wearier year by year.
Earth suffers as it reaches its limits in so many ways.

Universe struggles to show its depths, its infinity.
You, my God, become a word contested ...
... rather than Living Being.

I give myself today to you, Living One.
I acknowledge myself as Universe ...
... finding expression in me.

I tread the Earth lightly.
I treat my body with the respect it deserves ...
... after so many years.

I speak today of Love, of Light, of Life.
I laugh my way into their fullest expression.

I experience myself as body, Earth, Universe and Divine.
In relating to others, I come to know myself.

My naming echoes the riches of all that is past
and invites the possibilities of all that is yet to come.



A Psalm for the Day

God you are greater than any thought I can have of you.
God you are wiser than any wisdom I can fathom.
God you are stronger than any strength we know.
God you are for me, in me, with me.
God you are the one who loves to the highest degree.
God you are hidden in time and space ...
... and manifest in the smallest detail.

How shall I come in worship of you?
How shall I name you, know you, feel you ...
... let go of false understandings and experience you?

I come in humility today.
I come with deep thirst and hunger.
I long to know you intimately, personally, communally.
Let the hours of this day be spent
in prayerful worship and reverence.
Let each moment pass with fuller sense of you.

Centre of all things, primordial light,
your centre is everywhere – no circumference, no limit ...
... to who you are and how you are.

I worship you.
There is nothing I desire beside you.
There is no-one who can surpass your companionship.

May the remaining years of my life
give testimony to all that is good and true and beautiful.
I rest in you.



A Morning Psalm

I wake this day aware of your Presence.
I'm wrapped in silence and stillness.
I wake this day assured of your Love.
I'm embraced by mercy and tenderness.

I rise this day aware of your calling.
I'm ready to follow your promptings.
I rise in confidence, vulnerably so.
I'm assured of your purposeful plea.

I stand this day in a humble gentleness.
I'm open to all that you send.
I stand enveloped in grace and peace,
filled with deep longing for mercy.

So I can go forth without fear or resistance,
equipped for whatever life brings,
for you are my shield and my stay,
an exceedingly great reward.

Psalm of Longing

A yearning for all that is deep and true
rises within my heart
as I look for ways to satisfy my longing.
It can't be put off. So I settle to prayer,
not speaking words but waiting in silence.

I lean into the space that is deep within
and wait to know its meaning.
My body is still. I let feeling subside
as pure consciousness arises.

A sense of mutuality
pervades my inner self
and assures me
of all encompassing presence.

I leave this time yet it never leaves me.
The contemplation has yielded its fruit.
I go into the day ready to face
whatever is going to meet me,
longing fulfilled yet never complete.

Morning Walk

The quiet earth draws me to herself,
alone in the company of birds and bees.
A magpie warbles, exalts and sings
because the day is new.

Piping shrike adds her tune,
a piercing clarion call.
Sweet twitters come I know not whence
and the bright sun warms me through.

A breeze caresses skin so tenderly.
Wattle bush stirs and sways.
The vines stand bare and ready.
New life awaits our welcome of the day.



New Week

I sink quietly into my inner being.
The air around is still.
A grey cloud cover sits soothingly above.
Birds chirp their way into the morning.

Today is the first day of the rest of my life.
I'm sitting up in bed, warm and cosy.
I wonder to myself what will come of this day,
first day of the week ahead.





Prayer at the Beginning of a Retreat

I am my beloved's
My beloved's desire is for me
 I come
 ready
 ready to be silent
I come
ready
ready to believe again
 I come
 ready
 ready to be my truest self
I come
to wait
to wait for new insight
 I come
 to wait
 to wait for fresh anointing
I come
to wait
to wait for a new sense of wholeness
 I come
 aware
 aware of what is missing
I come
aware
aware of my need for self-care
 I come
 aware
 aware of choice company

Praying and Pulsating



Pulsating

My heart is beating
the pulse of the universe
enfolding, flowing

My heart is beating
the pulse of the universe
unfolding, flowing

My heart is beating
the pulse of the universe
in Omega love



Hilde Maggie at Prayer

To pray is to turn
first inward to the deepest part of me.
That's where I find her,
Hildegard Magdalen in her ongoing becoming.
Becoming into greater fullness of being,
healthy wholeness of being,
A strong aliveness, Life expressing itself
through an aging body, a less able mind
and a heart that is nourished by Love.

To pray is to turn
outward, away from self to the wider world.
That's where I find her,
Hildegard Magdalen in her ongoing becoming,
becoming into readiness to go on serving,
healthy relational living,
a special sensitivity, Love expressing itself
through a robust aloneness, a mind resting in the moment
and a heart that is open to all.

To pray is to turn
upward and ahead, beyond the world of space-time.
That's where I find her,
Hildegard Magdalen in her ongoing becoming,
Worshiping the God of past history,
present to God as SuperCentre, everywhere & every when,
incomprehensible yet enthroned,
enthroned on the prayers of the saints,
and with heart healed by Presence of Life and Love.



Call to Lady Wisdom

I sense a need to pray.
I hear a call to prayer.
I struggle within wanting to be free,
wanting to flow along with the requests of others.

First I taste the sweet sincerity of my deepest being.
I get in touch with her and hold her with respect.

Then I breath in deep humility
a healthy sense of what I am and what I'm not.

So I find a way to be generous to myself and others,
gentle in that generosity.

I have a gift to offer.
I'm coy about its value.
I fear offending.
I dread being undervalued.

My God, guide me, nurture me, nourish me.
Teach me to hold both dignity and poise.

Lady Wisdom, sweep into my soul and mind.
Enliven me and grow new tender shoots.

Holy Spirit counsel me, speak into me.
fill my heart and mind with Love.



Labyrinth Psalm

I take that first step,
I hold the memories,
make my way forward.

I turn and remember,
put my life together again,
reaching the central sacred place.

I recall those who have nurtured me,
nourished me, challenged me,
accompanied me.

From there I turn
to face what lies ahead,
so ready to learn all over again ...

that you can be trusted,
that you remain faithful
and keep me safe.

I begin that walk
and realise how much
is already stored

from past writing
and experience.
Thread of gold guides me.

I unravel my wanderings.
I walk and pause and walk again.
More of the same,

Yet something new,
something
pulsating with life,
someone ever more
intimately known.



Breath

The source of all breathes into me.
I breathe into the evolving universe.

I receive breath from the source of all.
I breathe into the becoming of the universe.

My beloved breathes into me.
One with my beloved, I breathe into the All.

Entering Silence

As I enter this hour,
I long for a sense of Presence.

Will my scattered mind find its focus?
Will my restless body find peace?
Will my emotional responses to this focus and peace
be enough to keep me on track?

I become aware of the intensity of the weeks that have
passed, the months since my June retreat.
I feel the freedom of these afternoon hours
yet choose to take up my cross.

I hold the longing in deep embrace.
I sink, slowly but surely into silence.



Visceral

I enter into silence

restlessly

Body tired

eyes heavy

mind dull

Screeching into pause

I wish more to be full

than empty

Holding readiness

unwilling

to let go

...

Pleasant room

square

complete

Surrounded by wood

sloping ceiling

stripes as walls

polished floor

Trees

surrendered to saw and blade

constructed for my comfort

...



Sometimes

Sometimes there is an ocean wave
that breaks on the shore of my being.
You can see it coming as the sea swells
some distance from the shore.
Then it mounts and wears a broadening smile
as its edge curls ready to break.

Sometimes there is an ocean wave
that holds its breath
ready to spill and foam and spray
with resounding crash and smash.
Then it settles in lace-like pattern
on the ever-ready wet shore.

Sometimes there is an ocean wave
that has a strange power over me.
I'd rather not be smashed and crashed
but skilfully ride the wave.
These waves bring rhythm to my soul
and assure me that all will be well.

Today there's a sense of a heavy wave
about to mount and break.
I ready myself for its unstoppable force,
give in to its pull and its draw.
Once delivered a calm will return again
and all manner of things will be well.

I live in this liminal wave-like space
with a sense that there's nothing to fear.
And I hold the promise of life ahead
where justice and peace will reign.
For today, I simply must meet each wave
and ready myself to flow on.

Resisting each wave will not achieve
the mysterious desires of my heart.
Riding each wave can open the way
for new life to nourish and bring
those desires to fruition and ripeness
with music that gladdens my heart.

So I live today in this liminal space
and give thanks for its drama and art.
I live this day letting waves break over
and rejoice in their constancy.
I live with a faith that's deep-rooted and firm
in the story of One I can't see.

Fragrance of Musk

Intimate essence,

May the fragrance of musk pervade our loving today.

May the paschal mystery that distils

that essence, that fragrance,

be sacred and sacramental in all I do or say.

May we be saturated in Spirit to bring its aroma forth

to fullest strength.



Turiya

Essence and emptiness

Consciousness and timelessness

Bodily-ness and spaciousness

Whirling dervish and still point



Dart of Love

I sink inside myself.
I sense the enclosing.
I open myself to the cloud of unknowing.

A word arises.
I let the word pierce the unknowing within.
I open myself to naked intent.

A dart of love pierces my inner being,
opens my heart to receive
subtle sense of Presence.



BeLoved

I want to meet my BeLoved today.
I don't want distance between us.
One glance of our eyes, one wave of our hands
is enough to quicken our love.

I want to be with my BeLoved today,
To know him near in the crowd.
A sense of his presence and he of mine
is enough to sustain our love.

I want to rush off with my BeLoved today
to have him all for myself.
I want to be naked and let it be known
that he is my darling, I his.

So let this love flourish as day unfolds
Let me stay close in with him,
for he won't desert me or leave me alone.
His desire is stronger than mine.

Hunger and Thirst

I hunger for God.
I thirst for deeper, intimate experience of this god.
I hunger and I thirst for the one I've been seeking
all my life ...
... and finding.

My hunger is not for the god of the past.
the god who annihilates, who judges,
who fumes ...
...and loves.

My thirst is for the god of the future
the god who is still becoming, whose individuation
is not complete ...
... without us.

I quench my thirst as I sink deep down
into flowing light. As I know myself embraced,
enfolded, entwined, knitted ...
... in and with God.

I satisfy my hunger as I read and absorb
all that science teaches, marrying it to all
that theology aspires to ...
... I keep seeking.

I keep knocking and wonder as I find my own
individuation unfolding for a new decade,
for the rest of life ...
... I partake.

So today I ask that,
whether in private devotion or public worship,
I will let the God for whom I hunger and thirst
continue ...

... to absorb me,

... find me and

... satisfy

... my deepest longings.



Psalm of Reflection

Sitting in the sun,
settling heart and mind,
ready to spend an hour
reflecting on my life.

What will rise today?
What dream, what poem?
What journaling, what study?
I can't tell right now.

Life in my 81st year
is full of ups and downs,
just like any other year.
Yet this one is still special.

Arthritis, lymphedema,
heart, weight and bloods,
all afflictions chronically with me
that I would rather be without.

Yet inner me is strong and true,
feasting on the latest
in eco jurisprudence or mystic milieu,
at least while I can read or chat or write.

Tomorrow need not concern me
to greater or lesser degree.
Yet somehow the years ahead
weigh heavily on my shoulders.

Yet I am a feather
On the breath of God
that outweighs this weight
and brings me here today.

So the story, the poem, the dreams,
all interlinked and unfolded
like full blown rose from bud,
enlivening, enlightening, delighting ...

... the levels that give perspective,
the high and the low,
the place of intimacy,
the tomb and sheath.

Plaiting the environmental
and the mystical,
the child and the wizened old one,
the vehicle left parked

and the meal is served.
Pacing myself
finding life's rhythm

dancing to its beat.
So life goes on
and there is much to learn,
much to fathom,
much to dispute.

We know not when
our chest will fail to rise
for my body's last in-breath.
We know not how.

But each tomorrow
has its own care.
Today is for the living,
Feather that I am!



Psalm of Waiting

I still my mind,
fall into the space of my inner being,
let physical tensions ease,
open my heart
and wait.

Sinking deeper,
finding inner space expanding,
pay attention to my breathing
fill my lungs
and wait.

In this moment,
at this hour,
on this night,
I find Presence
and wait.

There is life in the waiting.
There is hope in the sensing
that all will be well.
There is love in this Presence
awaiting me.

To Be With You

To be with you,
to be among the gathered community,
to be a presence that affirms and embraces you,
this is my desire.

To stay away today,
to be absent from the gathered community,
to be distant, a cold observer only,
this is my distaste.

So I set myself to take the journey
to prepare myself for tears and sighs,
to hug you as I've never hugged before,
this is my longing.

There may be no words exchanged between us.
There may be just a fleeting glance,
a comment squeezed into your very full day,
this is the least I can offer.

But whether I reach you or am with you in spirit,
know that my heartfelt desire and longing
grow deeper through this your loss, your farewell,
this is what I most need to say.

May Way open before you
for fuller, richer life.
May Way enlighten you
and give you peace.



Wholeness

To Love is to make whole,
each particle more itself
each relationship enriched.

To Love is to be whole,
entangled in the Whole,
each longing fulfilled.

To Love is to be BeLoved,
a wholesome reciprocity,
each for the other.

Let Love be mine today.
Let Lover become BeLoved,
each known and knowing

until Love is All and all is Love.

Who Do You See Me To Be?

The twinkle in your eye, the smile upon your face,
Your gentle touch and hugs, your laughter,
The loving attention you pay me
Speak of the generosity you have been cultivating.

With strength and determination,
and with academic intellect,
you have a sense of grounded-ness and commitment
to keep on seeking in all different directions.

You made me think about the words 'frustration' and
 'disappointment'.
Thank you for your honest sharing.
Your words fed into my understanding
of the light/dark in all communities and relationships.

Your steadfast commitment, your deep integrity,
your rich experience, your willingness to help others,
 to dive deeper into spirit.
I felt your gentle generosity and the other positive qualities
you've been cultivating.

Your attention to values speaks of a deep and thirsty mind.
You show a vulnerability that I see in flashes.
How else than through a broken heart
may the Lord Christ enter in?

Your deep and wonderful artistic ability
accompany your deep thinking.

Quaker patience may help us both to sit with
our disappointment and urgency.

You are a person of great insights.
I can tell you have corresponded with saint(s).
And yet you also resonate that Life is a group project.
You are ever ready to face the dark and light
in that endeavour.

Your generosity of Spirit and care for how we all are
together. Your follow up conversations
when we have had a difficulty or misunderstanding.
The beauty you have brought in me
and created in our space.

When you smile, your face has the radiance of heaven
and you light up the world for others.
It has been wonderful journeying with you.
I value your journey and who you are –
intelligence, integrity and steadfast commitment.

Closures and Endings





Moving On

The child in me lives on,
eager to please, torn by disruption
of all the desires that arise within.
How shall I live beyond false achievement?
How shall I find what it is I'm steward of now?

The child in me speaks,
eager to be heard, distracted
by the loud wishes of others, outside of me.
How shall I please myself and still be heard?
How shall I express what is longing to be spoken?

This is a stage of life when reputation matters little.
This is a time to please myself and be heard.
I live each day conscious of self and others,
no longer asking these questions,
rather engaging with all the flowers ...
... and fruit of the decades.

So let this day be one that opens doorways.
Let this day shine light on the path ahead.
How shall we teach our children?
Question of the ever-flowing years.
Pay attention, be amazed and write about it.



May You Be

I wake troubled.

What takes so much energy from me
when a group struggles within their discursive minds
to unlock ways of overturning old beliefs.

I turn inward.

What holds me back from sharing at a heart space level
as I do my own evolving.

I yearn alone

disturbed by the rumblings of half-baked systems and
networks all in search of life.

I sink deeply

ready to receive, to give, to enfold, to unfold
as each day calls.

I go forward

knowing that we are in this together,
learning new ways of being.

I am. May you be.

As Day Closes

As this day comes to a close,
I breathe deeply and sigh
for all that I experienced
drawing on memories, friendships
and a sure and certain hope in life beyond death.



The Miracle of Life

I have laboured long and hard
and now I carry the heavy burden
of bringing that labour to completion.
I stand ready to receive this gift of rest.
I sit in the sunshine of its promise.

I take the yoke in partnership again.
It is the yoke of one who loves me
more deeply than I can know.
Its smooth contour fits my neck comfortably.
I rest within its reassurance.

I would go on learning, learning of one,
who walks beside me, shares the load.
I would go on finding that personal relationship
that lasts, will last
through the remaining length of my days.

Yes, there's a meekness in this partnership.
There's a lowliness, a simplicity,
a genuine and lasting friendship.
I will not forsake it now or ever.
I lean into the yoked-ness.

I find the rest that is promised.
I enjoy the companionship that has never left me.
I feel it deep within my soul and wonder
that this finding goes on and on in new and fresher ways.

The yoke I take is easy, brings me ease.
The burden of the years ahead is light, no weight at all.
I go on believing in the miracle of life.
I am brought into a sweet relationship of peace and rest.



Love and BeLoved

My God, I love you more than life itself,
for you are Love.

My Beloved, I love you more than I can tell,
for you are my BeLoved.

Lover of mine, I love you more than anyone I know.
for you first loved me.

...

There stirs in me as this retreat closes
a growing sense of much fruitfulness ahead.
I can't tell just how this will grow
but I know you are giving me strength and I'm fed.

Fed on the Word that is Life to me,
thirst quenched through your shedding of blood,
light pouring down, light arising within.
What more can I hope for, expect?

There are weeks, months and years
that will roll by in days,
each one given over to you.
So, receive my praise now
in this moment of grace.
Let mercy flow freely in me.
Show the way, shine your light
for without it, I'm stripped
of all you intend me to be.



A Prayer of Beginnings and Endings

To whom shall I pray now,
now that we are more fully aware of who we are,
how we are, why we are and where we are
in the stream of creative union, creative evolution?

There was, there is an Alpha,
a beginning, a timeless point in eternity.

There will be, there is an Omega,
an ending, a spacious fulfilling.

And in between I live, we live,
as expressions of the Divine
to whom our forebears prayed.
How shall we pray now?

...

Enter into the deepest part of yourself.
Let go of inner conversations with yourself.
Enter in to silence and stillness
at the heart of and in the depths of your being.

From within that centred place
spread out now to all the relationships of your life,
all the news of the day,
the writhing of Mother Nature.
Don't be afraid to de-centre, alert to the aware-ing.

Because these networks of relationship
bring you back to the Centre of all centres.
The SuperCentre who is the God
to whom you can pray,
Creator, Redeemer, Lover and Friend.

...

Creator, Redeemer, Lover and Friend
I come to you, aware that the coming
is simply a 'within-ing', a finding, an aware-ing
that I am, we are, already one with You.

There is so much in our world
and in our personal lives
that doesn't feel unified, united
in any way.

But prayer is the finding, the realising
of what is already true.
So, I turn to prayer for this year
daily waiting, abiding, contemplating ...

... until there is no sense of separation
of me from You,
of others and me,
of all and the little me that I am.

May my life this year
be a constant turning to the Centre of centres,
a finding of my true self, my divinity,
amidst the disturbances of mortal life.



There Comes a Time When

There comes a time when
you grow out of the skin you're in.
It's been comfortable, sleek and shiny,
but it's showing signs of shedding
and all you can do is wait.

There comes a time when
you reflect on past selves
that you've come to know and honour
but they are showing signs of being outgrown,
and all you can do is wonder.

There comes a time when
you think forward to the new
that somehow takes in all the past
but grows beyond it
and all you can do is hope:

Hope that you will make the right choices.
Hope that under the old skin
there's something even more valuable.
Hope that beyond the old self
there's someone who will still make sense.

There comes a time when
a new stage of growth is all you can hope for,
emergence of who you are becoming.
evolution of all that you are
to something, someone sleek and shiny.





An Evening Psalm

The blue sky begins to blush
as Earth turns away from Sun.
The horizon takes on a distinctness
as the sky steals the show.

The glowing orange atmosphere
holds promise of a fine tomorrow.
The sea shines like mirror
reflecting the peace of the day.

Birds fly homeward
as planes descend and land.
I sit bemused and wondering.
How will this week go?

Intensity of colour, deepening, expanding.
Horizon stretches firmly holding its own.
Sky above is deeper, darker
as Earth continues her homeward turn.

A redness kissing deep blue.
Pastel shades high above
embrace the arch of the sky.
and dark sea speaks not a word.

An evening star shows its colour,
twinkles in heavy sky.
Time to retire, to rest, to realise
life is one day older.



What Age Now?

Life takes strange turns
a birth, a death, an illness
but none as strange as the one
that ushers in the last great stage of life.

Age is something we always have
or are or count or measure
but age-ing is stranger than them all
not a feeling, nor a thought, nor

anything you can easily define.
It creeps upon us, shatters
the confidence we had unthinkingly
that life will go on not forever

but at least for today,
for tomorrow and for the years to come.
It's that growing awareness
that makes us wish it were over and done with.

But we hang on to life
to loves past and present
and to the hope that our ending
will be bearable.

Psalm of Endings

Things do come to an end.
Night ends.
Morning ends with noon.
Afternoon ends with sunset.
Evening ends as darkness descends.

This retreat is coming to an end.
I've walked and waited.
I've convalesced and prayed.
I've deepened desire for God.
I've learned a new stability.

My life too will come to an end.
I can't anticipate how or when.
Yet I must prepare for that day, that passing.
What is there yet to do
to make it easy for those who mourn their loss?

Night ends as earth turns towards the sun again.
A new day dawns lit up by sun's rays.
Creatures go about their business,
finding food and shelter and care.
I too would anticipate each day yet given to me.

I cannot know what there is yet to suffer.
I cannot foresee the calamities ahead
as rulers and people stir themselves up
in passion, power and persecution.
Yet there is something I can know.

I know that my Redeemer lives,
I know not how nor where.
But I know that in my flesh beyond my death
I shall see God. And that seeing will satisfy
as indeed my dim sight this side of the grave ...

... has learned to anticipate, to appreciate,
to hold in trust, to accept in mercy,
to receive as unconditional love.
I go forth from here to a new day, a new season,
and receive again that unction that will see me
through.

Spirit, be my guide.
Son of the Father, hear my prayer.
God of all times and places, receive my praise.
Without you, I am nothing.
Without you, I can only fail.
Abiding in you,
I can reach new heights, new depths,
your life, flowing through, flowing out, flowing in.

So I leave this place, I leave this time,
assured of your companionship.
I have eaten your flesh and drunk your blood.
I have learned to adore the blessed sacrament
and received your healing and your blessing.

Praise be to you,
Eternal, ever-Present One.
Praise be to you.



Coming Home

Tall kindly leaning gums
form an archway to my cabin.
Native hibiscus, strong and gentle,
welcomes me at the door.
Coolabah cabin, spacious and inviting,
sunshine alluring me outside to wander and pray.

Kanga sits tall. Halts my journey.
Twists one ear backward
staring me out, sitting tall and alert.
Then leaping away, sleek and carefree.

Lakes filled with reflections
and memories.
Blue wrens brave greeting
from path and twig.
The sound of the chorus is sweet
quite delirious,
harmony, variety, filling the air.

What will this day hold?
Evening then morning,
first day of a special year,
welcoming me home.



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Di Shearer has always
been drawn to the
everyday art of nature.

From childhood play in
Brownhill Creek, camping
holidays in Second Valley,
through years in Bornean
jungles, and on to travel
in Australia, Orkney,
Germany and worldwide.

In many ways, these meditations
feel like a collection of the
flowers

which have been the
companions of her own being
and becoming,

...significantly...,
in out of the way places.

