



Coalesce Podcast

Episode 040 – Wisdom of Imaginarium

Note, terms, scripture, practice



The whole point of Scripture is the transformation of the soul.

Mature spirituality insists that we hold out for meaning instead of settling for mere *answers*.

Imaginarium: inner symbols, meanings, archetypes, and memories that have formed us

Transrational: bigger than the rational mind can process

Joseph Campbell: “Myths are clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life. . . . Mythology teaches you what’s behind literature and the arts, it teaches you about your own life. . . . I think of mythology as the homeland of the muses, the inspirers of art, the inspirers of poetry. To see life as a poem and yourself participating in a poem is what the myth does for you.”

[Romans 8:22](#)

[Isaiah 29:13](#)

Let your heart open as you read this poem by Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926):

I'm too alone in the world, yet not alone enough
to make each hour holy.

I'm too small in the world, yet not small enough
to be simply in your presence, like a thing—
just as it is.

I want to know my own will
and to move with it.

And I want, in the hushed moments
when the nameless draws near,
to be among the wise ones—
or alone.

I want to mirror your immensity.
I want never to be too weak or too old
to bear the heavy, lurching image of you.

I want to unfold.
Let no place in me hold itself closed,
for where I am closed, I am false.
I want to stay clear in your sight.

I would describe myself
like a landscape I've studied
at length, in detail;
like a word I'm coming to understand;
like a pitcher I pour from at mealtime;
like my mother's face;
like a ship that carried me
when the waters raged.

Practice: Haiku

In *The Cloister Walk*, Kathleen Norris writes, “Poets understand that they do not know what they mean, and that is their strength. . . . Writing teaches us to recognize when we have reached the limits of language, and our knowing, and are dependent on our senses to ‘know’ for us.” Haiku is a short form of Japanese insight poetry, a simple way of communing with nature. As with writing and reading other poetry, haiku can open the heart and mind to non-dual consciousness and to immediate encounter with Presence.

Creating haiku requires discipline and conciseness, focusing on just a single moment or movement and a couple juxtaposing elements. A haiku is a little sliver of concentrated reality. There’s no room for parenthetical, extraneous material—all the if’s, and’s and but’s. You must leave space for the imagination to fill in the gaps.

Here are two different translations of a frog haiku by Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694):

An old pond
A frog jumps in—
Sound of water.
(Geoffrey Bownas and Anthony Thwaite)

pond
frog
plop!
(James Kirkup)

I invite you to try writing a haiku as a way of being intimately present to reality. Don’t worry about making a perfect poem or following the rules. Many English haiku poems consist of 17 syllables in three phrases of 5, 7, and 5 syllables. But however the words emerge, let the process of creating the poem break you open to a deeper knowing, beyond definition and description to experience.

Find somewhere you can sit undisturbed while paying close attention to something in nature—a flower, tree, sunrise, rock, rain. Observe the object without words or analysis. Experience being here, in this moment, in this space. Listen for the essence of being, communicated wordlessly to you.

After some time in silence, jot down a few words and phrases. Play with the way the words sound, speaking them aloud, rearranging them, letting go of unnecessary words. Allow the poem to flow from your unmediated encounter of God’s presence within nature.