



THE NIGHT SKY, KIDS IN FEAR, A BATHROOM SINK

The Stars seem to have a very special meaning to everyone who comes to Starcross, and to our friends who live far away. This is often expressed in haiku. The young people who are here to help us at this time of year and to help themselves activate their spiritual compass can often be found sitting on the Farmhouse porch or laying in the fields looking up at the sky. They don't always produce a haiku but that doesn't matter.

The other day I found a haiku that Sister Marti had written in 1972,

On a summer night,
listening for my inner voice
I hear a bird's song.

And anyone who has been following my writing even for a short time has discovered my favorite Issa (1763–1826) haiku,

How lovely it is

to look through the broken window
and discover the Milky Way.

And, here are a few other haiku from friends in our Haiku Circle,
Starry sky above,
fireflies below; mirrored
on the calm river. – (Andrés)

Black sky filled with stars
I lie on my back and gaze.
Silent, grateful prayers. – (Julie)

Full moon shines through clouds.
A lone star sits by its side
sharing the night sky. – (Katherine)

As the poet Dante put it seven centuries ago, “*And thence we issued forth to see again the stars.*” — so let us do it!



Mother's Day is on Sunday. I have a strong and happy memory from when I was in grade school, leaving the church and seeing everyone wearing roses. Red if your mother was still alive. White if she had died. Standing there and looking around it felt good to realize that we all had a mother.

I still wear a white rose on Mother's Day, but as I have grown older I've come to realize that we don't all have a mother who helps us grow up. Sometimes she is taken away in a terrible pandemic. I learned this when AIDS became an important part of our life here and in Romania and



Africa. Sometimes the government takes her away from us — in war or in politics.

Motherless children are for me one of the most heartrending aspects of the never-ending Syrian struggles. The girls have the worst of it. They are often given away in marriage very young simply because the family cannot feed them. An education becomes a vanished dream. How much they need the mother who has been slaughtered in this barbarous conflict. We do what little we can to help at our end. We are on the list to give a home to refugees. But in the current political atmosphere few refugees are coming.



This Mother's Day I think and pray for the many children who are among the 1200 people in the caravan that is trying to enter California. They banded together on March 25th as a means of protection as they were fleeing from violence and poverty in Latin America. Volunteer lawyers at the border estimate that there are at least 200 children who are in severe straits and in need of

immediate "*Credible Fear*" interviews to determine if they are threatened by genuine violence and if so to allow their admission pending a judicial hearing. Many organizations, including Starcross, stand ready to assist once these kids cross the border. But it is not at all clear that will ever happen.

When one member of Congress opened his heart to those fleeing in fear, the man in the White House attacked him saying, "*We need lawmakers who put America first.*" If this had been the attitude of those in power 150 years or so ago, few of the people I know today would be citizens of the United States — except perhaps our Pomo neighbors who actually don't like to be thought of in those terms!



Little Things are blooming and crawling and flying all about and it is important for us to respect that they are part of the same life force as ourselves. This is a time when small flowers and creatures can guide us to feeling more at home in the universe. All we have to do is look down at our feet. Is that a little yellow flower? Is that a freshly born ladybug crawling up the stem? Or perhaps we just need to look in the bathroom sink.

A few days ago I received an email from one of Starcross' oldest friends and advisors, Michael Mullins. For many years Mike was a well-known District Attorney and is now Dean of a law school. This is what he wrote,



As I age, I am aware I am becoming more mindful of Nature around me. Yesterday as I washed my hands I saw a very small spider in the sink. As I turned on the water, I realized the water would overwhelm him, dooming him to a watery death. I hesitated, then quickly twisted the water off, found a paper towel and carefully placed the towel in front of the spider, allowing him to crawl aboard. I placed the towel on the counter enabling his escape to further spider life. Why did I do that? How many spiders had I thoughtlessly killed before? As I grow older I am more aware how precious life is, desiring all creatures to enjoy life.

Think what a wonderful world it would be if we all had Mike's attitude. Let us each do what we can to make that happen!

Brother Toby



PS — My friends, during the past few weeks I have received numerous emails, letters and other communications. Many of these contain magnificent stories and I would

have liked to respond to them all. I've even had them marked with little flags! But this has been a difficult time at Starcross. There has been a lot of sickness. We have been in emergency rooms in the past couple of weeks more times than we have been for many years put together. Even my cat Tigger ended up in an animal hospital but quickly let them know that he would prefer to be home! He has recovered and everything for all of us has evened out as well, although Sister Julie and Lance have follow-up procedures. As my 5 year-old grandson, Damien, put it, "Those things happen." Maybe he will become a philosopher! Thank you for your understanding. BT

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Starcross Monastic Community 34500 Annapolis Rd. Annapolis, CA 95412

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