



Travelers Within Society

Member Monthly Newsletter

The Journey Within And Its "Garden of Aliveness"

"Daffodil, Lilacs, & Roses" e.e. Cummings

Greetings everyone. I hope you are well and finding ways to make each day the very best it can be for you. My personal experience is that unless I take the initiative to find ways of not only staying occupied but also being fulfilled, I tend to let precious time pass with little gain to my personal enrichment. Isolation is challenging, and while what we are experiencing is far less ominous than many pandemics humanity has faced in the past, the solitude is still difficult to navigate. Staying aware of the fact that we, us alone, are our own best friend and mentor is important to remember.



As I reflected on what topic to cover in this month's Newsletter I realized I'm operating within somewhat of a vacuum. In terms of participation from our *TWS* members only about half are opening the monthly Newsletters, (you are obviously part of that half, so thank you.) I'm not complaining as I understand the tendency to disengage during this challenging time. I would, however, very much appreciate more feedback so I know that what I'm offering is useful. (I usually spend up to a week or more on my Newsletter articles and want them to be valuable so reader feedback is very important to me.) I want to also address another trend, as not mentioning it wouldn't feel right. I gave away over 60 *Travelers Within* books last month to our members as well as to a variety of other contacts and asked only for reviews in exchange. To my dismay I've received none so far, nor have I gotten any feedback about my book's impact. Please don't be concerned about my feelings however, as I know the value of my work and the depth and breadth it encompasses. Much like how Nature keeps giving regardless of the circumstances, I will remain undeterred and continue to contribute regardless of the reception . . . which brings me to what I want to write about this month. **BigVJSmile**

I'm devoting my literary reflections this month to what I call *"The Garden of Aliveness."* Embarking on this inner sojourn holds substantial value for those who are dedicated to enhancing their personal growth and spiritual maturity. (Valuable skills such as not getting discouraged or doubting one's self-worth during challenging situations . . . or even closer to home for me, confidently dealing with and resolving the grief and sadness associated with having ended a relationship.)

"The Journey Within" offers so much more than merely living one's life being caught up in the contrived illusions of the external world. The poem below by e.e. Cummings is a perfect entry point for our inner journey. (I suggest reading the passages three times so his message bypasses your mind and has a chance to enter into your depths.) I invite you to embark on a stroll with Cummings and me into a very special inner garden. I believe you'll enjoy the terrain and that one or more of the "flowers" we encounter along the way may have a personal revelation for you. ~ Val Jon



*"in time of daffodils (who know the goal of living is to grow)
forgetting why, remember how*

*in time of lilacs who proclaim the aim of waking is to dream,
remember so (forgetting seem)*

*in time of roses (who amaze our now and here with paradise)
forgetting if, remember yes*

*in time of all sweet things beyond whatever mind may comprehend,
remember seek (forgetting find)*

*and in a mystery to be (when time from time shall set us free)
forgetting me, remember me"*

- e.e. Cummings



There are essentially two ways we can go about living our lives. The first is to carry out our daily routines without much self-reflection and either ignore or overlook the value of "traveling within." The other is to take time to explore our inner nature and the deeper attributes of our humanity and spirituality. While the latter choice is more challenging, by doing so our degree of fulfillment and experience of being fully alive is exponentially enhanced. The poet, Cummings hints at this deeper approach to living in his extraordinary portfolio of poems and prose, and particularly the one I've included above. Let's explore the hints he drops about this inner journey and discover how they can act as guides for us into the "Garden of Aliveness."



"Forgetting Why, Remember How"

"... the goal of living is to grow." At first glance the question "Why" appears to be just as useful as "How," but upon investigation, we discover this is not the case. Asking why has a limited utility in that the answers tend to be self-referential and do not promote growth. What I mean by this is that in the normal course of events when we ask, (or are asked) why we did or did not do something, the reality is that the person doing the asking has already concluded the answer. For example, consider this question, "Why do I not listen to myself?" (Especially when we've gotten ourselves into some kind of trouble.) Clearly, it isn't an open-ended question, rather it's more of a statement about our incompetence, or minimally a harsh self-perception that seeks evidence for a coveted negative conclusion. Whenever I ask myself this question I know very well why I didn't listen to myself or follow my intuition . . . it's because I'm dense, stubborn, or incapable of making wise choices! While this is an extreme example, (and I don't really believe these negative perceptions about myself) it nonetheless illuminates the point.

Venturing deeper into our inner garden we stroll among the "Daffodils," the poem's first hint about being fully alive, it becomes clear that unlike why, asking how possesses no such conclusions. Also unlike why, (which can be asked openly, but requires a very clear intent to avoid conclusions) asking how empowers us to explore ways of bettering ourselves and growing, gaining greater life wisdom, and deepening our enthusiasm for being alive.



“Remember So, Forgetting Seem”

“. . . *the aim of waking is to dream.*” How wonderful to be both awake and to dream at the same time! Those who dream but are asleep while doing so have no power to consciously direct or make real what they randomly dream about. And those who are awake but never dream, live predictable lives never visioning or realizing anything beyond the obvious. Let’s examine this floral hint more closely. There is a huge difference between what “seems to be,” and what is “actually so.” It was the philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard who once said, **“There are two ways to be fooled. One is to believe what isn’t true; the other is to refuse to believe what is true.”** To live within the illusion of *Seem* is to constantly fool ourselves out of what is actually *So*, thereby disabling our ability to navigate the terrain around us wisely. It’s much like driving an automobile with a dirty windshield that obscures our ability to see what’s in front of us. *Remembering So* and *Forgetting Seem* dispels our blindness and doubts and empowers us to live with clear vision and solid faith.

Moving up more closely in the garden to the blooming “Lilacs,” the poem’s second aliveness hint, when we focus our presence on what is actually *So*, just as it is without wanting it to be more, better, or different, something extraordinary happens . . . the “*So-ness*” of life takes on the magical qualities of our dreams to the point that being alive becomes the most wonderful dream we can ever live into.



“Forgetting If, Remember Yes”

“. . . *amaze our now and here with paradise.*” This is a very powerful passage and one that vividly articulates what the “paradise” of being fully alive is all about. When was the last time you allowed yourself to be “amazed?” The experience of amazement is more available than you might think. What it requires on our part, however, is vulnerability and a willingness to let go of control. What many people fail to realize is that maintaining control may seem like a good idea, yet the more control we apply to our lives, the less vulnerable we become, and the less vulnerable we are, the less we are likely to be amazed or surprise by anything or anyone. Amazing insight . . . Yes?

Smelling the sweetness of the “Roses” in our garden trek we come upon the poem’s third hint of “*Forgetting If*” and “*Remembering Yes.*” When we practice this dual poetic musing we begin to undo the control put in place by our mind and ego and reopen to the “*Yes-ness*” of our vulnerability. This opening occurs by allowing life’s unbounded aliveness to deliver us to the experiences of amazement, joy, and fulfillment. I don’t know about you, but any time I open to the “*now and here,*” say by doing something as simple as taking the time to smell the fragrance of a rose I immediately enter a state of amazement. Yes, to be sure *Forgetting If* is the way forward into the paradise of aliveness!

“Remember Seek, Forgetting Find”

“. . . beyond whatever mind can comprehend.” I’m always amazed when people try to understand their feelings or “figure out” what to do about life’s emotional challenges. You can’t resolve anything by attempting to think your feelings, it doesn’t work that way. I have a saying I’ve referred to for many years in my counseling and workshops that goes like this, **“The mind struggles to understand what the heart has always known.”** This “always known” doesn’t suggest cognitive understanding but rather emotional knowingness or vulnerable engagement with our feelings. This path doesn’t deliver us to a comprehensive answer, but rather to an emotive opening in which we can wholeheartedly embrace questions, or as Cummings puts it, *Remember Seek*. When we remember to *Seek* and let go of needing to *Find*, what we discover is that seeking is where life’s unbounded fulfillment and aliveness dwells.

Standing back and taking in the sweetness of the Daffodils, Lilacs, and Roses we find ourselves within life’s garden of seeking; a magical journey rather than a mundane destination. A journey that results in an extraordinary revelation for those who choose to embrace the poetry of being fully alive. For as we embrace *Seeking* rather than *Finding*, we enter the domain of a paradoxical truth that transforms simply living into being fully alive. This truth is that who we have found ourselves to be, the litany of me, me, and more me is not who we truly are . . . which brings us to our identity dwelling beyond whatever mind can comprehend.

“Forgetting Me, “Remember Me”

“. . . when time from time will set us free.” What does Cummings mean by *“Forgetting Me”* and *“Remembering Me?”* At first blush, it seems to be a contradiction, but if we reengage with our bouquet of Daffodils, Lilacs, and Roses and apply their hints to this conundrum it dawns on us that the “Me” we are being asked to forget is not the “Me” we are being encouraged to remember. *“Forgetting Me”* refers to freeing ourselves from our ego’s illusions of self-importance, pride, and doubt. The very moment we surrender these limiting conclusions and open ourselves to the practices of not knowing, controlling, or needing, we enter the garden of remembering who we truly are. And so who is that you ask? It’s the Self that isn’t separate from others or the outer world; an interconnected Spirit-inspired presence we all share in. Now *that’s an amazing garden*, and one I’m inspired to tend and nurture for as long as I’m blessed with the privilege of being alive! ~ Val Jon



Here is the link to our blog page for leaving comments about this month’s Newsletter. The August post will be at the very top of the page.

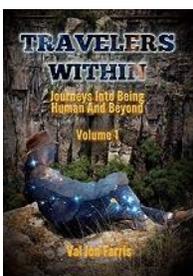
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