

Waiting for the Thaw

by Virginia May-Schiro, (Virginia May Drotar)

It's about this time in the long stretch of winter that I begin to ache for spring. By March, I tend to become a bit dulled to the beauty of winter. Though my prayer and meditation keep my heart open to seeing the passage of time and seasons with appreciative eyes, mostly I just want the cold days to be over. As the earth begins to thaw, we often want the process to hurry up. I long for bright flowers blowing in a spring breeze and warm summer evenings on the porch.

While impatience with winter is only human, I pause and remember the need to move slowly through this time of year. If we rush through the change in seasons in nature and in our lives, we will find ourselves missing that edge between winter and spring with its important lessons to teach.

What is the natural purpose and symbolism in this time of thawing? It is in that place between despair and hope that we find the beauty of the thaw. It is where Creative Life, or God if you will, is especially potent in us. Here is the pregnant place of life where we may come alive in the emptiness of our longing for what we have lost and what we have not yet opened ourselves to receive. The thaw is a fertile place of possibility. In seasonal terms, this is the time when hardened seeds are softened for germination. Stratification is the horticultural term for the freezing and thawing process that wears a seed down and prepares it for new life. Without this freezing and thawing, the seed embryo will not overcome dormancy and germinate. It is this difficult process of dying to the old self which causes the seed to develop cracks in the shell and impels it to move toward nutrients and light. Eventually, from this hardship comes the beauty of new life.

The story of our souls isn't much different. We like to be comfortable and naturally try to keep things the same. But if we were to remain in ideal, easy conditions, we might have little motivation to grow. It isn't that we should feel guilty for seeking comfort; it's just that no matter how we try, things will change in cycles of comfort and discomfort throughout life. It is just the way things are. The thaw is a call to "come out of dormancy."

So this March, instead of rushing through the thaw, I will take my time and recognize that no matter how deep or long the freeze feels—spiritual or material—the Mystery of Creative Presence is there in the thawing to call us to new growth. It is helpful to remember that our hardened shells are being broken open in the difficult things that happen, and that we can be moved to reach for spiritual nutrients and the light of the deepest love. Remember, no matter how long change seems to be taking in the seasons or in yourself, embrace the journey. New life is coming.

Three classic poems that delve into different aspects of the transition from winter to spring...

The Thaw

I saw the civil sun drying earth's tears —
Her tears of joy that only faster flowed,

Fain would I stretch me by the highway side,
To thaw and trickle with the melting snow,
That mingled soul and body with the tide,
I too may through the pores of nature flow.

But I alas nor tinkle can nor fume,
One jot to forward the great work of Time,
'Tis mine to hearken while these ply the loom,
So shall my silence with their music chime.
- Henry David Thoreau

Before you thought of spring

Before you thought of spring,
Except as a surmise,
You see, God bless his suddenness,
A fellow in the skies
Of independent hues,
A little weather-worn,
Inspiring habiliments
Of indigo and brown.

With specimens of song,
As if for you to choose,
Discretion in the interval,
With gay delays he goes
To some superior tree
Without a single leaf,
And shouts for joy to nobody
But his seraphic self!

- Emily Dickinson

[the snow is melting]

The snow is melting
and the village is flooded
with children.

-- Kobayashi Issa, translated by Robert Hass

Virginia May Drotar and her husband Duane Drotar are the stewards and founders of Shadowbrook, a budding, transformative experiment in community-building, based in Ohio. Shadowbrook is meant for people of all means, and from all backgrounds, "where silence and shadow work, mutual exchange and justice re-birthing, and whole person wellness and service, intersect." Shadowbrook's guiding intention as they see it is, "to organize our particular gifts and expertise into a collective activity that would benefit each other as well as the world at large. We would act as both incubator and sanctuary, inviting others desiring to contribute, during this time of social distance and separation, to a collective experiment that courageously takes steps to create the culture of connection that has eluded us."

On Thursday, (today!) May 25th at 1:30PM PST, join an intimate circle with Virginia and Duane to learn more about their shared journey, aspirations and plans for Shadowbrook. RSVP and more details [here](#).