

## Discovering Poetry En Route to Finding Life by Jim Glaser

Olive Tree in Chianti, Italy, photo by Jim Glaser

Poetry—my father quoted it frequently, my grandmother collected it in scrapbooks –cards from friends, I memorized snatches of it in school. Poetry really came to me as a young father when my family and I needed to move across the country away from our best friends. It was an unsettled, lonely. time and I started taking walks in the evening to relax. It was spring. Lemon blossoms. Amazingly, I felt something in me wanting to flow out and dance-- and words-- short poems tumbled out of me. I was surprised, encouraged, and felt happily hooked. Then one day I serendipitously discovered another poet, and then a small community of poets. For the next 25 years I shared poetry with them. Poetry is a discovery I have made on my way to finding my life.

\*\*\*

### “Slow Road”

Last year, my partner and I spent time at an artist residency in Chianti, Italy.

A long winding road led through the countryside, past vineyards and olive groves, up into the lush foothills and past villas. The road was narrow, rutted.

Signs named it Slow Road, urged visitors to go slowly and take in one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world. Each day I walked this road, saw this olive tree.

Slow Road

No road to -- no road from

slow road

My chance

to stay with this

one

olive tree

shimmering

in morning drizzle

light wind

Chianti, IT

\*\*\*

“This Knowledge:”

This is a time of scrutiny of our feelings, reactions towards those of other ethnic and gender groups. Hopefully, it is also a time of greater flexibility and compassion in our actions towards one another. What are some of the discoveries you have made in your own journey towards this understanding and compassion?

THIS KNOWLEDGE

This is the knowledge that lies right

below the surface in me and yet eludes me

This is the knowledge that I see precedes

all knowledge in me this is the silent knowledge

that I see precedes all words

This is the knowledge that lay like a seed

in me not yet opened when the world opened to me

This is the knowledge that opened and

that continues to open me

the gift that continues to open my life:

This is the knowledge in me of  
your dignity my brother my sister  
whoever you are

This knowledge deserves a better name

I call it bliss

This knowledge rising in me

kernel of bliss

scent of wholeness

joy in my bones

This is the primal knowing I have

of your preciousness my brother my sister to me

that I know suddenly

like a lightning bolt in my darkness

that I know in some shadowy part of myself

like a soft light half-hidden glowing

that I know in the presence of confusion and fear

in the shock of awakening

and in sadness remembering

and in hope rising

This I know

like a scent that I love again

and can not give up loving

Something missing in me

you call into being  
something for both of us  
something unheard of before  
something beyond what this place  
praises or denies

You  
my brother my sister whoever you are  
you are transforming fire

\*\*\*

“Compass”

When have you made a radical shift in the direction of your life? A change of course? Was it out of necessity? This is a poem about someone hearing a call from wild, rough looking, unlikely, but very wise sailors to change their life.

COMPASS

Sometimes we hold  
    the logic of our words  
        too wise  
and they break  
    we break  
under the immensity of these skies

And the muses

-- wind blasted ruddy sailors

standing by

sing out

“Lay that aside! Come with us mates!

Join the roaring silent sea with

your own billowing hand-sewn colors

-- the clanging music of your rigging

-- your rope rough hands

Stand

on the storm boat deck

drenched

in your own discovery!”