

Jewels: A Three Part Chant by Barbara McAfee

Photography in music video by Julie Marion Brown.

My voice coaching client is describing the very challenging time she is experiencing as she recovers from injuries sustained in a major car accident. She is certain that singing can help her healing process. Tears are flowing freely. I hear myself speak the words that eventually become the first line of this haunting three-part chant: "Every time I go into the darkness, I return with fistfuls of jewels."

The second line, "midnight velvet wraps all around me; stars glitter brilliant above" emerges as I sit in a hot tub overlooking the vast freshwater sea of Lake Superior. It is a deep midwinter night and fluffy snowflakes are floating out of the darkness and leaving chilly kisses on my warm skin.

The third line, "dreaming darkness, dreaming light" is crafted in a community song circle I lead in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. While the group of about forty people sing the first two parts, I discover the sweet, floating tones of this third line.

When we emerge from these dark times, what jewels will be tucked in our pockets?

What can we cherish in the darkness that isn't visible when the light is shining bright?

What are we learning that we don't yet know?

How are we being called to be of service to each other now?

What new dreams are being woven from this particular dance of dark and light?

May these nourishing questions - and others like them - burn like a steady candle in the deep darkness of this sacred and challenging time.