

Jim Thompson's Spiritual Poetry Class #68

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

5 pm PT

Dear Friends:

This coming week we will begin meeting again at our regular time of 5 pm PT on Wednesday.

Here are the poems for this week.

- **Instructions** by Sheri Hostetler. Instructions for life in general, or climate change driving us from our homes, or our maturation as spiritual people? What do you think?
- **Anthropocene Pastoral** by Catherine Pierce. A great list of things we were "built like" in the last few lines of this poem.
- **Vietnam** by Wislawa Szymborska. What do we know and what are we willing to immediately say "Yes" to? Tom Hayden wrote a book called, "**HELL No: The Forgotten Power of the Vietnam Peace Movement.**" And here we are 55+ years later in an even longer war, and the leader who is getting the country out of it is taking a pounding in the press. While the dickheads who got us in are given lots of challenge-free pontificating time on the tube (am I letting my biases show too much? HELL No...)

Here's the link for this week:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81374816274?pwd=eG1PRUxoWC9iTjFaTHFBNTBrNkIvQT09>

Passcode: 704824

Note: This link and passcode is good for classes through October 27, 2021

+ + Jim

Instructions

—Sheri Hostetler

Give up the world; give up self; finally, give up God.

Find god in rhododendrons and rocks,

passers-by, your cat.

Pare your beliefs, your absolutes.

Make it simple; make it clean.

No carry-on luggage allowed.

Examine all you have

with a loving and critical eye, then

throw away some more.

Repeat. Repeat.

Keep this and only this:

what your heart beats loudly for

what feels heavy and full in your gut.

There will only be one or two

things you will keep,

and they will fit lightly

in your pocket.

Anthropocene Pastoral

—Catherine Pierce

In the beginning, the ending was beautiful.
Early spring everywhere, the trees furred
pink and white, lawns the sharp green
that meant new. The sky so blue it looked
manufactured. Robins. We'd heard
the cherry blossoms wouldn't blossom
this year, but what was one epic blooming
when even the desert was an explosion
of verbena? When bobcats slinked through
primroses. When coyotes slept deep in orange
poppies. One New Year's Day we woke
to daffodils, wisteria, onion grass wafting
through the open windows. Near the end,
we were eyeletted. We were cottoned.
We were sundressed and barefoot. At least
it's starting gentle, we said. An absurd comfort,
we knew, a placebo. But we were built like that.
Built to say at least. Built to reach for the heat
of skin on skin even when we were already hot,
built to love the purpling desert in the twilight,
built to marvel over the pink bursting dogwoods,
to hold tight to every pleasure even as we
rocked together toward the graying, even as
we held each other, warmth to warmth,
and said sorry, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry while petals
sifted softly to the ground all around us.

Vietnam

—Wisława Szymborska

"Woman, What's your name?" "I don't know."

"How old are you?" "Where are you from?" "I don't know."

"Why did you dig that burrow?" "I don't know."

"How long have you been hiding?" "I don't know."

"Why did you bite my finger?" "I don't know."

"Don't you know that we won't hurt you?" "I don't know."

"Whose side are you on?" "I don't know."

"This is a war, you've got to choose." "I don't know."

"Does your village still exist?" "I don't know."

"Are those your children?" "Yes."