

# Voices from the Silence

Verses written by members of the Julian Meetings and included in the JM Magazines 1999-2022

# **Contents**

Contemplative Prayer Brenda Lofthouse

Silence Pauline Hawkesworth

May I take time

Sanctuary Elizabeth Mills

Come Elizabeth Mills

Sinking Into Silence John Harvey

We sit in silence Helen Turney

If I were to sit Elizabeth Mills

A Julian Haiku

Making Sense Kay Short

Wednesday Evening Mary Russill

Softnesse Brian Morris

Just because Elizabeth Mills

Poem Roger Kidd

For The Julian Group Sue Sinclair

It is time Jenny Thomas

Contemplation Jenna

End of Retreat Rosemary Weekes

Letting Go Jennifer Tann

Chrysalis Martin Winbolt-Lewis

Joy Deidre Morris

Time Joy French

Silence envelops us Elizabeth Mills

O God, give me enough.... J S.

Derby Day Janet Robinson

The Sunset Penelope Morris

Lost and Found Marjorie Wheeler

Connecting Into Space Fiona Elliott
Like angels wings Joy French

Cwm Gwaun Brian Morris

If I Could Janet Robinson

Shrift Joy French

The Pool Michael Cayley

The Labyrinth Brian Morris

O Clavis David! Denis Parry

Advent Vigil Gill Butterworth

Where Will You Be for Christmas? Shirley Fry

Christmas Eve in an Empty Church Shirley Fry

Christmas Eve Elizabeth Dugmore

Easter Search Shirley Fry

The Power of the Spirit Dorothy Stock

Pentecost Haikus Deidre Morris

What Would JESUS Do?

John Winterbourne

Wind Whispers Elizabeth Mills

# **Contemplative Prayer**

Silence In the depth of heart At the centre of being.

Silence
Making space
For God's indwelling.

Silence
When mind and heart
Are at one—
In the present moment.

The present moment
When time and the eternal connect

In this eternal NOW

Let there be — Silence

Brenda Lofthouse

#### Silence

Silence
has a great hole
at its centre
through which
we enter:

nothing is asked of us, no words spoken; we find ourselves as we always were before living got in the way.

Pauline Hawkesworth

May I take time to be quiet

That I may hear

Your Spirit whispering

That I may know clearly Your Wisdom and Joy

That this day may be Yours And every day that follows too...

Amen



# **Sanctuary**

Step slowly
Into the sanctuary
Of stillness

Walk with reverence Into the room Where the Spirit dwells

Sit quietly
By the heart
Of the Living Flame

Rest gently In the warmth And the Love

For it is always present And always ready To welcome us

This day and every day

Amen

Elizabeth Mills

Come...

Be still....

And know....that I am God.

Be quiet and attune your heart to the Spirit Who waits for you And greets you with Love.

This day and every day

Amen

Dear Lord
Help me to be quiet and still
And to wait on You....
To listen for Your Voice, calling
In the wilderness of life
May Your Spirit be both My Rock
And My Shield
That I may walk in Your Light
And live in Your Truth
This day and every day
Amen

Quietly...
Go quietly...
That you may tread softly
And listen carefully...
For there is much to 'hear'
And there is a path to walk
That will follow in His Footsteps
And enable you to
Stay close
For in quietness and trust shall be your strength
This day and every day
Amen

Elizabeth Mills

# Sinking Into Silence

Through stillness, Through quietness, By closing my eyes And shutting out

The distractions of the world.

I sink Deep Deep

Within myself Into a pool

Of silence.

In this calm and holy place, Thoughts flood in, But I drown them out With silence. Mv mantra: "Wide, wide as the ocean, High as the heavens above. Deep, deep as the deepest sea ..."

Draws me in, deeper, And the silent void Is filled with peace.

The song of the birds Echoes round the walls Of my silence. But does not disturb it.

I draw my loved ones in, One by one, To bathe with me In the waters of silence.

My desire is to stay In this timeless place, But, summoned from the depths, I rise. And carry the blessing with me, My eyes open To the beauty around me, My heart flowing with love, And my spirit Enriched by the silence.

John Harvey



We sit in silence round a flame -

As a moth comes once again.

We trawl the depths

for inner peace

As once was sought the golden fleece.

You join our mirth, share our pain,

The focus of our soul's refrain.

Helen Turney

If I were to sit and wait Would You come?

Would I see Your Face again?
The Face I love the most
The Face that shines like no other

There is a kindness in Your Eyes
There is a warmth that radiates out

Of course, I do not know But this is how it feels This is how it always seems

You are not visible
But that does not mean You are not present

The warmth shines through in feeling And the light radiates out in love

All the qualities that You bring Are always available

It is not a case of will You come What matters is that I come And that I sit and wait.

This day and every day Amen

Elizabeth Mills

#### A Julian Haiku

In gathered silence we wait, prayerfully, on God in circled stillness

# **Making Sense**

As I sit in the silence, my eyes are opened and I see all that You have done

As I sit in the silence, I taste the cold of winter; your purity made clear through the white of the snow, reminding me of your perfect sacrifice of love

As I sit in the silence, I smell the fragrance of spring; your creation blossoming around me and within me, helping me grow

As I sit in the silence, I feel the heat of summer; burning a deep passion to live for You alone and use my gifts for others

As I sit in the silence
I hear the wind rustling the autumn leaves;
and I know it is the breath of life moving towards me,
filling me and shaping me
for Your purpose

As I sit in the silence

I see your grace all around me; I smell your presence next to me; I feel your beauty within me; I hear your call;

I taste the victory of your death;

And I live.

Kay Short

# Wednesday Evening For Jenny

White walls and sea green floor A cell. a sea cell.

Silence flooding in

Deeper, deeper.

Images of peace

Quietly unfolding.

A woman, blessed, accepted

Mirrored in the silence.

A painting of a woman

Caught in an eternal now,

Accepting blessing

And acceptance.

Mary Russill

#### Softnesse

We meet in quiet twice a month, and when The silence ends with words spoken again We surface slowly; as from sleep, and then,

Was that the full time?' someone will complain.

Around, the river flows, the traffic runs;

The world pursues its endless, restless gait.

Within these walls, like silent monks and nuns

We sit, wait on the Word and meditate.

Silence; the softness of the robe which wraps

Around us, free from fear and free from stress.

Silence, between the words, important gaps

Where meaning hides which language can't express.

Like new-born babes, we nuzzle at the breast

And drink the love of God that's here expressed.

Brian Morris

Just because we cannot see You

Does not mean You are not there

You breathe Life into our midst

Just as the breath of the wind

Changes and moves what it touches

So with Your Life

So with Your Love

This day and every day

Amen

Elizabeth Mills

logs blaze
warm in lamplight
beyond the window
soft mist enfolds the trees

we wait

as one in silence hearts open

still

who waits?
This self
centre of my world
this body fades

becomes a dance of atoms

changing with each breath

this mind a stream

moments of awareness

flowing on

into this spaciousness

a voice come, sister

the work is just begun

only in this place beyond self can we awake remember who we are

a child of God remember

we can hear

Christ the bodhisattva

speak

for this we wait

Roger Kidd

# For the Julian Group

Do not be waylaid by the tree with the list of 'Things to Do' pinned to its trunk.
Ignore, as you usually do, the dusty chest buried at its roots marked 'That which I have left undone'. Go right on past the large rock carved with the words 'Fear of the Future', and the thorny tree bearing the legend 'Things that have hurt me'.



Let your thoughts and concerns be as the autumn leaves swirling around in the wind, and become the still, quiet centre of your own storm.

Raise your head slightly to acknowledge that a higher place is calling you home. This journey is just a heartbeat but takes a lifetime to perfect.

Trust the silence to enfold you.

Feel the slight movement of air
as He raises His arms to welcome your coming;
His patience rewarded.

And you, His beloved, arrived at last.

Did you know He was waiting?

Raise your head a little further and you will see His eyes that say "Stay a while that I may gaze on you with love. I ask for nothing more."

Rest easy and learn to bear the beams of love, for this is the harvest of all your yearning; the very ground of your being and your place in eternity.

Sue Sinclair

Meeting once a month, these times are hard to describe: they are like the greatest gift Himself.

It is Time We three gather Travelled contrasting routes Women with our life's stories Met round candle, cross, Word Wise in years Wise in longing Wise in knowing the source of Stillness Listening for His Hello. So, having paused, recognised by name Journey on -Bathed in light Soaked in Presence Awestruck!

Jenny Thomas

# Contemplation

Slowly the chatter ebbs away

The breathing settles into a new rhythm

Eyelids close and shut out the world

And all is still — sinking deeper and deeper,

Moving inward, always inward

Towards the still centre.

Shut down the need to control,

To act, to create anything.

Shut down the wish to be, and grow, to become —

Let go of everything and wait,

And then let go of waiting too—

With perfect timing God will bring life from that nothingness,

And see, the road stretches ahead towards the light.

Jenna

#### **End of Retreat**

It is always hard to leave,
to go back to the rush and bustle of life.

It is sad to leave the quietness and the time to be,
To go back to the 'real' world.

But this is reality too - this I take with me.

This is a deeper reality than the superficial noise.
I have waited to be filled so that I may overflow

And give something of him to a world
so deeply in need of love,

And where I encounter him in those I meet.

Rosemary Weekes

# **Letting Go**

Starlight travelling to the world
from bodies long-since gone,
their brightness a benediction
traversing unimaginable distances
in time-space; gone yet present.

Changes in life's circumstances
create a sense of loss, of mourning even,

yet like the transformed star

they become a gift of many layered brightness; sensed for a while and then forgotten.

Each time-dependent act an infinitesimal building block, in God's designs and possibilities.

Jennifer Tann

# **Chrysalis**



Slowly from the darkness
You form me
Untwisting each knot
Unravelling potential
Of love; watching with parental pain
The crude stumblings
Of emergent grace.

Hold me in the growing
Dawn of awareness;
That in you, close by; within.
Held by you
I might
Find the courage to be.

Amen and amen

Martin Winbolt-Lewis



# Joy

Joy is God's gift not to be earned not to be learned.

A lift of the spirit
the heart
the mind
parting the world
from daily grind.
Joy transforms our routine space
into a wonderland
riven by God's grace.

Joy does not, may not,

should not last.

It may come slow or fast: a sudden overwhelming sense of otherness, of presence.

Or it may be a slowly growing, glowing light illuming all with His delight

Come fast or slow transcendent glow

is transient. and fades away.

From heights of joy
we must to earth fall back,
nor seek to hold

that glimpse of gold, but in our hearts enfold the uprush of delight that bore us to the height.

Let it suffuse the whole, then ebb away as light at end of day.

Joy, like a rainbow, Is a fleeting thing, unlooked for, unexpected, from your King.

Deidre Morris

#### **Time**

Time

To winnow the harvest of dreams

To unravel the chorus of birds;

Time

To uncoil, yawn, stretch,

To re-inhabit the body,

Salute

The stiff hip, the bruised toe

(Old comrade; new acquaintance).

Time

To breathe deep;

To become aware

Of self,

Of you,

Quietly there.

Time to give thanks;

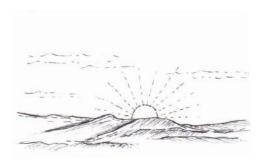
Time

To be.

Silence envelops us
Slowly
Descending upon us
So gently
Enfolds us
In its Knowing
We came as individuals
Now gathered in Love
Held in Light
And sustained
By the Ever Present Life
And All Encompassing
Breath Of God.

Words written and shared by Elizabeth during a Quiet Day on Mother Julian

O God, give me enough anger to tackle wrongdoing Enough pride in family, friends and community Enough deceit to be careful of others' feelings Enough envy to notice other people's good deeds Enough avarice to hoard the world's resources Enough fear to avoid dangerous living Enough gluttony to savour every flavour Enough lust to live life to the full And enough sloth to be in and down, here and now. Amen



#### The Sunset

Chill October evening
God paints a sunset,
Creates a royal skyline
No-one can ignore Vapour, cloud and atmosphere,
The elements his brushstrokes,
And nature gives him colour
From her own heart's core.

A Scots pine stretching up
Black against the molten gold,
Intensifies the brilliance
Of the burning sky beyond.
Tonight this stately tree
Is his holy temple Between earth and heaven
It's branches are a bond....

It was cold that autumn evening When the sunset was created, Yet the colours in God's palette Were of summer's blazing flowers. Lord, is it vain to think, Feeble creatures that we are, You designed that sunset For eyes like ours?

#### **Lost and Found**

Have I lost you, Christ my Saviour? 'midst the stress of pain and woe: vainly grasping earthly comforts, ashamed, my Lord, for doing so.

Guiltily, I try to pray Lord like a child, with inner fear; reaching out for hands to comfort; simply - hoping, you might hear.

Could this be your way of healing - first, the dragon: then, the dove? Your spirit guiding me to find - Lord, words of cleansing, words of love!

You will have found me, Christ my Saviour! Foolishly I went astray: now, those nail-pierced hands can comfort as I praise you - as I pray!

Marjorie Wheeler

Like angels' wings
(Angels themselves unseen)
The heavenly messengers
Pass and repass
My clouded eyes.
What do they bring?
Blessings: the gift of sight.
And take away?
Terrors: the fear of night.
Ah, dearest Lord
Who came to be our Light,
Let me sing praise
Each day, each night.

Joy French

Derby Day. It wasn't what it sounds.

No silk clad jockeys, smells of turf and horse,

No loud-voiced bookies, shouting crowds,

No headlong gallops down the white railed course.

But Derby Day: in diary penned in red.

A day to meet like-minds, refresh the soul.

Where silence dropped like silk, where we were led

To seek the pearl within the Singing Bowl.

There was no clamour, rush, but restful space

To learn that prayer and poetry interweaving

Can allow the mind to receive new grace,

To delve beneath the words to find the meaning.

The day has passed, renewed, once more begin

To seek the God beyond, beside, within.

Janet Robinson

Written after our gathering in Derby for 45 years of JM



# Fiona Elliott's quiet day reflections on the Buddhist Ajahn Sumedo's 'Noticing Space' and on words from the Bible

# **Connecting into Space**

Space out there
Space here
SPIRIT
The Spirit hovered over the Waters.

In the beginning, GOD.

CREATION

Heavens and Earth

Heavens full, earth formless.

FORMLESS and EMPTY
DARKNESS over DEEP
Over the surface of the deep waters
The Spirit of God was hovering.

SPACE
CONTAINED
Space around me
Space to BE- in the Spirit.

Space....Form
Space being peaceful,
Form commanding attention.

Calming space
All space the SAME
God is the same
Yesterday, Today, Forever.

Sacred space
Thin places
Atmosphere? Spirit?
Walls containing space.

Old walls
Calm ancient atmosphere
Spirit, PRAYER
Walls holding prayers.

New walls
Space, Creation, Spirit
ENERGY
Reactions from form.

The earth was formless and empty,
Darkness was over the deep,
And the Spirit was hovering over the deep waters.

God said,

"Let there be light"

GOD formed in the SPACE.

And God created MANKIND.

In HIS LIKENESS.
IT WAS ALL GOOD.
In Him was LIFE.
REST.

In the beginning, the WORD, God formed LOVE. In the light of the world.

God is love.

In the beginning love,
The same yesterday, today forever.
God formed US
To be His likeness in the world.

JESUS said, I AM, the LIGHT of the world. REST.

#### **Cwm Gwaun**

There is no room for haste here. The road admits no rule but its own, and that was set for man and beast long before cars were thought of. And so every journey becomes a pilgrimage, a slowing of the spirit, and the eye awakens.

It is in another world, a world brought close, enfolded in the hills and secret. Time has another meaning here. Light lies heavy in the fields, filters through the woods, and glints in the soft ripples of the river where the heron guards, but cannot prevent its escape.

At night it is all gone. Silence returns soft as the owl's wing across the meadow, sharp as the stars. Even the wind coughs gently before it enters here, lest it awaken a slumbering lost age in the secret place where we hide ourselves.

It is a place of exchange:
What will you leave, what will you give
to escape? A dream, a hope, a love?
The wisest chose forgetfulness, foregoing
memory, and never know their loss. The rest
return, time and again, to bathe
in flowing peace between the hills

Brian Morris

#### Some people's 'thin places' are in their mind and imagination:

#### If I Could

If I could I would build a house upon the LLeyn.

Stone walls, slate roof and floors, very plain.

Much glass, through which would pass cool skies, green fields, deep walled lanes, rust-shadowed mountains, wind-combed grass.

And from both coasts the sea would sing, throwing its light on everything.

Janet Robinson

#### **Shrift**

Coming again to grace,
After long absence, I recall the way,
The winding stair,
The silence and the peace;
And You are there.

Heart pounding, mind in spate, I kneel, and I am blessed.

My listed sins become irrelevant.

Words falter, but the intent Is honoured: ah, my Lord!

You do the rest.

Joy French

#### The Pool

Only reflections move in the still pool. Trees' mirrored trunks stand guard against the light. I bring too many thoughts, too many fears to the silent water.

As I bend down, my face is chequered with leaves' shadow.

If I could shed pretence, break through these mere images which come between me and the stillness ... striving crushes peace. There is nothing but to let the trees' dark reflections weigh on the water and dwindle minute by slow minute till the sun climbs above the imperfection and the pool bursts with light.

Michael Cayley



# The Labyrinth



The labyrinth – the palm-print of the hand of God in which we walk.

And, at the centre we must reach, the nail-mark of his love.

We circle it; now distant; close; drawn by its gravitation in our orbit, till at last we reach its truth.

Then, turning, bear it out to those we meet along the path; the silent sharing of the love of God.

Brian Morris

#### O Clavis David!

This is the Key which God the locksmith cut, his Key of David, setting sinners free from prison, darkness and death; his Sceptre Key which, shutting, none may open, opening, shut; his Keyboard Key, means of communication; his Winding Key, empowering us, like clocks; his Code-of-life Key, which alone unlocks the mystery and music of creation.;

His Crossword Key - but there's a thought for sure: the Cross of Death and Word of Life-to-be require a humble, living, dying Key, like this down-fluttering one of Sycamore - the one solution to this Cross Word clue, which Key of David, God the gardener grew.

Denis Parry

# **Advent Vigil**

No annunciation
No angel's visitation
But a waiting in the dark
A yearning in my heart
To know the Word-made-flesh
One with my flesh,
For this he came to take
My life in His! ---My great baptismal gift
Where Bride and Body meet
And one Flesh births my life
To live, and wait,
Conceive, gestate,
And bring forth

Christ!

Gill Butterworth CJN

#### Where Will You Be For Christmas?

Where will you be for Christmas?
Under the Christmas tree?
Sharing family presents
Joining the jollity?

Where will you be for Christmas? Singing in the choir? Mulling wine and eating pies And stretching by the fire?

Or perhaps you'll be abroad somewhere Skiing down the merry piste? Staying at a good hotel Just joining in the feast?

Where will He be for Christmas, Our Lord, the grown Christ child? Huddled in a doorway No longer meek and mild.

Reaching out to all of us For each the choice is free, 'Come' the invitation reads 'And spend the day with me'.

Shirley Fry

# **Christmas Eve in an Empty Church**

And did that star so long ago
Reflect the future of the world?
And did those shepherds really see
The angel firmament unfurled?

And Mary, straining to give birth,
Agonising for the earth
To bear the Son of Man for us
Without, it seems, a lot of fuss.
With Joseph, mute, just standing by,
Waiting for the baby's cry.
It seems so distant, so unreal.
What can we say to those who feel
It's just a lovely story or
A tale to satisfy the poor?

The world moves on and looks askance At those who now would join the dance. And yet that babe, when He was grown,

Showed the way and stood alone,

Calling to us all in turn:

Those with ears to hear and learn,

Saints and martyrs, early, late,

Lives we cannot emulate.

And so, in this neglected pew

I humbly kneel and welcome You.

Happy Christmas.

Shirley Fry

#### **Christmas Eve**

Out in the woods this Christmas Eve under cold skies as heavy as lead.
Branches reach bare - as good as dead and boots tramp mud and soaking leaves.
In this dark North we hold Christ born midnight, midwinter - rags and shed.
Shamed birth, tramps life, shamed death - he bled and died for love, new life, the curtain torn - killed death and rose with hope of peace and joy to .... Even the Middle East - to starving kids who crouch and groan fly-eyed in sub-Saharan sun.
He knows the worst, the poorest, least: knows, loves and calls us one by one.

Elizabeth Dugmore

#### **Easter Search**

On Easter Day I climbed a hill Not just to find a daffodil But, oh, to see if I could find The God of Love and Heart and Mind.

I stood beside the wooden cross And wept because of our great loss And, oh, the thought of that cold tomb Still fills me with sepulchral gloom.

So, where's he gone this God of ours Who burst forth in the early hours Who rose again to live anew And bring new life to me and you?

He's not up in the realms above He's in the eyes of those we love. He's in the music of the thrush And bursting out from inside us!



Shirley Fry

# The Power of the Spirit

That inner peace Is strength and power. It grows in quiet and stillness, Like a flower That sleeps within the womb of a bulb For months. Then thrusts it's fragile, tendril stalk Above the heavy black and clogging earth, Out into the sunshine, rain and wind. Just so, our souls are fed and nurtured By the Holy Spirit's power -In quietness and stillness. To burst forth and face The rain of sorrow. Wind of adversity And sunshine of God's smile. Dormant or active.

The power is still the same.

Dorothy Stock

#### Pentecost Haikus

Shape-shifter Spirit

Come as breath, wind, fire or dove

Fill us with your love

Shape-shifter Spirit

Touch us, fill us, transform us

Send us out renewed

Deidre Morris

#### What would JESUS do?

Whenever there's a problem
And I don't know what to do
I stop right there
And ask myself
What would JESUS do?

Whenever I am feeling low And just a little blue I stop right there And ask myself What would JESUS do?

Whenever my mind goes wandering
To where it shouldn't do
I stop right there
And ask myself
What would JESUS do?

Whenever someone's unkind to me
It gets me in a stew
I stop right there
And ask myself
What would JESUS do?

Whenever days go by
And I don't know what to do
I stop right there
And ask myself
What would JESUS do?

John Winterbourne

# Wind Whispers

Softly whispering Spirit Blow gently into our lives

Blow softly into our minds
And bring peace

Blow softly into our thoughts And bring understanding

Blow softly into our concerns
And bring calm

Blow softly into our fears And bring courage

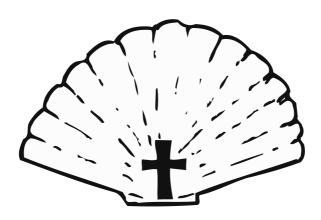
Blow softly into our hearts
And bring love

Life giving Spirit
Breathe Your Life into our lives

This day and every day

Amen

Elizabeth Mills



# The Julian Meetings

- Foster the teaching and practice of contemplative prayer in the Christian tradition
- Encourage people to practise contemplative prayer in their daily lives, and explore ways of doing this which are appropriate for them
- Support the individual ecumenical Julian Meetings groups whose members meet regularly to practise Christian contemplative prayer together

The Julian Meetings Magazine is published in April, August and December each year. It contains articles, prayers, poems, book reviews, JM information and updates and a publications order form.

For more information, visit our website at <a href="https://www.thejulianmeetings.net">www.thejulianmeetings.net</a>
This QR code will take you directly to it



