

# 05. Healing



## Night (pages 51-58)

- ‘It is God who makes the “space”. John calls it “night”.
- ‘The symbolic quality of “night”, a symbol which speaks before we ever try to decode it: darkness, solitude, fear, the unknown, immobility, stillness, rest, peace, silence, sleep, dreams, moonlight, adventure, owls, stars, refreshment, friendship, romance, perception ... if these are the resonances, then such is the journey of faith.’

‘What resonances did John find? We could highlight these: blessedness, and mystery ... John’s quest for union is answered in the darkness, and it cannot but be “blessed”.’

So dark the night! At rest  
and hushed my house. I went with no one knowing  
upon a lover's quest.

– Ah the sheer grace! – so blest,  
my eager heart with love aflame and glowing.

In darkness, hid from sight  
I went by secret ladder safe and sure  
– Ah grace of sheer delight! –  
so softly veiled by night,  
hushed now my house, in darkness and secure.

Hidden in that glad night,  
regarding nothing as I stole away,  
no one to see my flight,  
no other guide or light  
save one that in my heart burned bright as day.

Surer than noonday sun,  
guiding me from the start this radiant light  
led me to that dear One  
waiting for me, well-known,  
somewhere apart where no one came in sight.

Dark of the night, my guide,  
fairer by far than dawn when starts grow dim!  
Night that has united  
the Lover and the Bride,  
transforming the Beloved into him.

There on my flowered breast  
that none but he might ever own or keep,  
he stayed, sinking to rest,  
and softly I caressed  
my Love while cedars gently fanned his sleep.

Breeze from the turret blew  
ruffling his hair. Then with his tranquil hand  
wounding my neck, I knew  
nothing: my senses flew  
at touch of peace too deep to understand.

Forgetting all, my quest  
ended, I stayed lost to myself at last.  
All ceased: my face was pressed  
upon my Love, at rest,  
with all my cares among the lilies cast.

**The Dark Night (Loreena McKennitt  
'The Mask & the Mirror')**

Upon a darkened night

The flame of love was burning in my breast

And by a lantern bright I fled my house while all in quiet rest.

Shrouded by the night and by the secret stair, I quickly fled

The veil concealed my eyes while all within lay quiet as the dead.

Oh night thou was my guide. Oh night more loving than the rising sun

Oh night that joined the Lover to the beloved one

Transforming each of them into the other.

Upon that misty night, in secrecy, beyond such mortal sight

Without a guide or light than that which burned so deeply in my heart.

That fire 'twas led me on and shone more bright than of the midday sun

To where he waited still. It was a place where no one else could con 

Oh night thou was my guide.  
Oh night more loving than the rising sun  
Oh night that joined the Lover to the beloved one  
Transforming each of them into the other.

Within my pounding heart  
Which kept itself entirely to him  
He fell into his sleep  
Beneath the cedars all my love I gave.

From o'er the fortress walls  
The wind would brush his hair against his brow  
And with its smoothest hand  
Caressed my every sense it would allow.



Oh night thou was my guide  
Oh night more loving than the rising sun  
Oh night that joined the Lover to the beloved one  
Transforming each of them into the other.

I lost myself to him  
And laid my face upon my lover's breast  
And care and grief grew dim  
As in the morning's mist became the light.

There they dimmed amongst the lilies fair





‘What resonances did John find in the symbol ‘night’? We could highlight these: blessedness, and mystery.’

‘John seems to have composed these stanzas in the peaceful months after his escape from Toledo; but they come charged with what he learned there.’

So dark the night! At rest  
and hushed my house. I went with no one knowing  
upon a lover’s quest.

– Ah the sheer grace! – so blest,  
my eager heart with love aflame and glowing.

1. It is a ‘lover’s quest’
2. It is experienced as a ‘sheer grace’
3. His eager heart is aflame with love and glowing.

Surer than noonday sun,  
guiding me from the start this radiant light  
led me to that dear One  
waiting for me, well-known,  
somewhere apart where no one came in sight.

Dark of the night, my guide,  
fairer by far than dawn when starts grow dim!  
Night that has united  
the Lover and the Bride,  
transforming the Beloved into him.

1. In this night the light is within, surer than noonday,  
fairer than the dawn
2. It is the place for encounter, for transformation.

- ‘Night carries all the weight of the Lord’s Passover.’
- ‘Night signifies that which comes upon us and takes us out of our own control; it announces that as a place of resurrection. A God who heals in darkness –this is John’s word of hope in a destabilised world.’
- ‘Contemplation: prayer where I am no longer a tourist, where sense has shifted to spirit – where plenty of insights and aspirations have given way to a less picturesque, more total form of togetherness with God.’

‘Contemplation is nothing but a hidden, peaceful, loving inflow of God. If it is given room, it will inflame the spirit with love’(Night I.10.6).

‘The dark night is a certain flowing in of God into the human creature, which purges it of the ignorance and imperfections belonging to its very nature. God teaches it in a strange, secret way, educating it to perfect love.

He does this himself;  
all the creature can do is be lovingly attentive, listening, receptive, allowing itself to be enlightened without understanding how’ (Dark Night II.5.1).

‘It is a great grace from God when God so darkens and impoverishes the soul that the senses cannot deceive it. And that it may not go astray it has nothing to do but to walk in the beaten path of the law of God and of the Church, living solely by faith, dim and true, in certain hope and perfect charity, looking for all its blessings in heaven; living here as a pilgrim, a beggar, an exile, an orphan, desolate, possessing nothing and looking for everything from God’ (Letter to Dona Juana Pedraca).

- ‘Night: God’s love felt as pain.’ – widening, purifying, making space. God gives Himself. God makes space for Himself. This is the Night in which what is felt is my resistance to losing control, to letting go, to being consumed.

‘Night assures us:

that there is somewhere to go;

that only God can take us there;

that God does intend to take us there;

that God takes us there in darkness;

and that darkness must be lived in faith.’

‘Night is taking us,  
not to some soirée for the self-preoccupied élite,  
but to the heart of the world’s suffering.  
It declares the world’s wounds to be spaces  
through which God may graciously enter.  
John’s poem touches a universal chord;  
it is the song of the poor Jesus on Easter morning.’

## The Easter Vigil Exsultet

“This is the night  
when Jesus Christ broke the chains of death  
and rose triumphant from the grave ...  
The power of this holy night dispels all evil,  
washes guilt away, restores lost innocence,  
brings mourners joy. It casts out hatred,  
brings us peace and humbles earthly pride.  
Night truly blessed when heaven is wedded to earth  
and we are reconciled with God.”



## Part IV Healing

### 10. There is somewhere to go (pages 59-66)

‘Sense means body, imagination, emotion.

Spirit: there where resources converge,  
the home of choice, conscience, self.

These terms are dynamic.

Where sense is lord, the whole being is sensual,  
hostage to needs of its own creation.

If the person learns to live from within, she become spiritual,  
and with that her sensuality comes back home.

All this implies a journey: a surrender of sense to spirit,  
and of spirit to Holy Spirit.

And because surrender feels like dying,  
John calls it a night journey.’

*‘John is saying that every dimension of the human person has to strive towards God, and, discovering the inadequacy of its striving, must come under his transforming hand.’*

## 11. It has to be God (pages 67-71)

‘If night first tells us that there is somewhere to go,  
it also announces that we cannot get there on our own.’

‘Healing has to come, and we have to learn to look for it to come.  
The waiting is part of the healing.’

The journey is to God.

My guide is the Spirit of Jesus that God pours into my heart.

Engaged in this journey all my human God-given potential is harnessed for loving.

Longing for eternity keeps my present horizon from closing in.

Only the transcendent God can take me there.

I cannot heal myself. I cannot secure my deepest longings.

The flame and the spring can come only from the heart of God.

John traces the path not so that I can predict,

but to encourage me to surrender to God's guidance

and to the gravity of his grace.

## 12. Healing Darkness I : An inflow of God (pages 72-76)

‘Any suffering can become night.

For it to be night there have to be three elements.

For it to be “sheer grace”, in darkness, leading to union,  
there has to be:

- an inflow of God;
- darkness – that is, the suffering, with the accent  
on bewildering suffering;
- a creative response: faith, acceptance.’

# I know the living spring

(Composed in the dark Toledo prison, deprived of the Eucharist).

How well I know the living spring that flows      though it is night!

That ever-living spring is hidden fast  
and yet I found its dwelling place at last      although by night.

Its origin? All that I know or see,  
in the beginning from it came to be,      but in the night.

Nothing on earth so beautiful as this:  
heaven and earth meet here, and meeting kiss,      though it is night.

Down to its deepest depths man may not go,  
nor ford its flooding waters; this I know      though it is night.

Light, source of light, by which all light was made,  
whose brilliance never falters, cannot fade,      though it is night!

So mighty and unceasing is its flow,  
it waters heavens, earth and realms below,      although by night.

## I know the living spring (continued)

Something I know of its almighty force,  
the flowing stream that issues from this source                      although by night.

From these two streams wells forth another flow  
yet neither stream precedes it, this I know,                      though it is night.

This deathless spring, hidden in living bread,  
brings life to us who, lacking it, were dead,                      for it is night.

To all that lives: 'Come, drink your fill!' it calls  
'Come to this water, for the darkness falls,                      and it is night!'

This living spring, so very dear to me,  
is here, within the bread of life I see,                      though it is night.

‘In Fonte John shares his faith in the Eucharist. For him, Eucharist is not simply our ritual galvanising our togetherness. It is an act of the Trinity involving us in their togetherness. Nor is Eucharist a merely passive object of adoration. It is an activity of Christ powerfully “summoning his creatures” to the water (stanza twelve). John sees Christ here active, torrential, receiving the full force of all that God is and unleashing its flow upon us – the “everlasting fountain” released in the living bread “to give us life”(stanza eleven).’



The Triune God is the fountain.

I am graced to see God present and acting in the suffering,  
to look for the movement of God's Spirit.

Suffering makes me aware of my incapacity and my need  
and so faces me towards the Beloved  
who alone can draw me into the communion  
which alone heals and fills my life.

### 13. Healing Darkness II – Bewildering suffering and faith (pages 77-85)

- ‘Healing comes particularly in situations that take us out of our own control, in the kind of pain that is bewildering.’

The ‘mystical night’.

‘The divine approach is registering in mind and feelings, but registering as painful contrast’

– contrast between the love we experience and the situation we find ourselves in.

‘John is calling that the place, not of chaos, but of transformation.’

‘In writing *Night*, John does not want to say,

“It’s all right, you see, because this is the explanation.”

He wants to say, “It’s not all right; it’s a mess.

But you are not alone in this. God is present in this.

Now is the time not to lose faith in God.”

This is the third element to night.’

## 14. Beyond Sympathy (pages 86-93)

‘When the negative comes upon you,  
then remember your desire to be free –  
free from the personal weakness which was crippling you.  
It is here that God is doing it,  
and it is important not to panic or run away.’

Climbing a mountain ‘speaks of communion where the goal  
is not to sink a solitary flag-pole into the summit,  
but to “make an altar of oneself” there  
for “a sacrifice of love”.’

‘John gives us the schemas, not to help us predict,  
but to encourage us to surrender.’

‘Do not struggle for something you once had  
and have now gone beyond. Instead,  
“take heart, persevere patiently [don’t run away],  
without pain [let God carry you];  
trust in God in loving attentiveness.’  
‘We may have to live as if God sustained us,  
in order to discover that God does sustain us.’

We are called to trust. Not to panic but to hold on.

Not to collapse into the pain or to indulge it,

but to rely on God

and be attentive to God's presence and action in my soul.

When negative experiences come upon me (like the night),

I am to remember my longing and my need for God's inflowing life.

‘Grieve, address what can be addressed,  
do not condone the sin that may be causing the situation,  
but trust that the Father holds this situation in his hands,  
and will turn it to blessing.’



# Open my eyes, Lord

words and music Jesse Manibusan.

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Open my eyes,  
Lord,  
help me to  
see your face.

Open my eyes,  
Lord.

Help me to see.





Open my ears,  
Lord,  
help me to  
hear your voice.

Open my ears,  
Lord.  
Help me to hear.



Open my heart,  
Lord,  
help me to  
love like you.

Open my heart,  
Lord.

Help me to love.



I live  
within you,  
deep in  
your heart,  
O beloved.

I live  
within you  
rest now  
in me.