



The Threshing Floor

July 2019

Newsletter of the Guild for Psychological Studies

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Guild Vision: The Guild envisions a world in which the significance of each person's truth, authority, and inspired purpose finds fulfillment in life and community.

Guild Mission: Guild seminars offer a way of psychological and spiritual transformation that inspires individuals to live their purpose, expand consciousness, and discover and create meaning in their lives and community.

Five Not So Easy Pieces

By Nils Peterson

1. On Towers

Jung built his tower stone by stone, a palpable archetype, and Yeats had his great tower at where he would go up the winding stair to brood and write his poems looking about him at what he could see, what he could see, remember, feel, about the whole of his life. Up in the tower his memory seemed to quicken and energize his awareness of self. But the real tower, the tower that we are all building, is the tower of age from which we look back and down at things, remembering, recreating, and, indeed, sometimes making up things that we think we're remembering.

2. "This is no country for young men," Yeats might have written had he ended up in a senior citizen residence. Better, "This is no country for the young." And it is true that there are none here save for the staff. Of course back in California, I had many friends my age and we all marched along together through the years. But I had many younger friends too, twenty, thirty years younger. When we were together, I felt as if I were their age. (I hope they didn't feel they were being pulled into mine.) As we go to dinner, there are almost as many walkers as people. I have used one for years, but I have not been surrounded by people using them. Back there, I was an oddity. Now I'm just one of the usual

folks. Here, the one-caned walker is queen or king.

3. Since we woke to the garden of this world we've strolled, picking, picking, filling our baskets with images, bits of sound, remembered touches, tastes, smells. Others have stuck to us like burrs, even more burrowed tick-like into our flesh. The moment we pick up a pen, it's all there again as if Memory is sitting on a rock aware of what is, what is to us and no other, everything, all at once, that we have seen, thought, felt, read, dreamed spread out on her picnic cloth. She's ready to serve us. So we begin, but... sometimes Memory's the CEO of a corporation grown too large. The boys in the mailroom can't keep up. Incoming and Outgoing bins overflow. Mail carts lose their letters as they plod from office to office.

4. I sent one of my younger friends an article about walking in England because it had a discussion of trees. My friend loves trees and leads walking tours so she can show off her favorites. The piece ends with talking about the old oaks of England. "Should anybody wonder why the English oaks hold a special place in my sentiments, do take a stroll across an open field and confront a single oak in the distance.... Alone in the field, it stands tall, its branches extended, like a colossus.... But not all English oaks are so perfectly shaped, particularly the old ones.... Very old English oaks are not unlike us in the ageing process. The accumulated years have seen them shrink, and it is sometimes

difficult to imagine they might have towered over the woodlands at the height of forty meters. Their girths are substantially thickened, so thick indeed that it might take two, or even three people, holding hands to circle them. Varieties of growths reminiscent of warts, or evidence of disease on their bodies deprive their bark of its youthful regularity. Their branches are thick, but the knots and bends in the them look less like the strength of their younger days, and more like ageing limbs experiencing difficulty in supporting the weight of their adornments. Their crowns too, are thinning of the lush growth of their heyday. Still, like us subjected to the force of age, they clothe themselves with the best they have at hand, and, in doing so, they retain their dignity.”

As I was looking about our dining room, my mind came back to this passage and I thought that this is what I was seeing, men and women clothing themselves “with the best they have at hand ... [to] retain their dignity.” But there is something more than dignity that comes from this gesture, some grand, human thing I have not found a name for yet, but am looking.

[The “old oaks” reference comes from an article by Adele Wilby that first appeared in 3quarksdaily, a fine compendium of interesting things, on Nov. 25, 2018.]

5. On Getting Old, Part of a Letter, A Process Poem on Process,

Dear Anna,

Years ago you sent me the heart meditation of – gosh, the man's name has just flown out of my head, but he wrote a book on silence which I've loaned out so I can't put my hand on it and get it back, the name that is. The book is yellow. But anyway, if you still have it, the heart meditation, in the bowels of your computer somewhere, I'd love to get it again. Hope things are good with you there. They are here except for my increasing difficulty in walking, though my skill at circumlocution, the talk around a word desperately hoping someone can follow me, gets better. I was unable to come up with monastery the other day though I was able to say it was the

opposite of nunnery, though no one was able to comprehend what I was saying even then – they were probably not good at charades either. Aha! His first name was Robert. Aha! Sardello. The long safari out of darkest memory bank accomplished.

July Birthdays

Sonya Milton	Jul 5
Regine Wilson	Jul 7
Dennis Serdahl	Jul 8
Fay Kilgore	Jul 9
Louise Frank	Jul 13
Dudley Pace	Jul 13
Donna Sachs	Jul 14
April Barrett	Jul 20
Ann Keiffer	Jul 21
Ruth O'Day	Jul 26
Hugh Leonard	Jul 27
Lisa Yount	Jul 28
Terry Dowdy	Jul 29

From Selina Sweet

Dear Friend

Sometimes I wish to be a sponge so I could put the book under my pillow at night and by morning be sparking already with ideas born of such a tryst.

So much brilliance, experience, knowledge and understanding between so many covers. Thanks for the new name and life - Karl Polyani - - so much to discover and learn - an infinity, my ignorance, which seems to expand far faster than what I manage to chew much less digest. How deadly insane one must be to think Earth and the infinite treasures she bears is not too startling a pure miracle to incinerate. And near dead those who insist not upon Viva La Vida!! at any cost. Isn't La Vida the promise of the New never before in the same way happening now and never again in the same way again?

Like the long light dazzle laden needles of the breeze tended fir just outside the bedroom window.

Dazzle razzle rapture inside out inside out....
You know what I feel. You feel it too. La Vida.
Now. Today.

Light is splashed Willy nilly recklessly all over the place. Inside as wildly outside. If the heart window is clear and the door open.



Final Call - Nominations for the Board of Directors Are Due by July 20th

Submitted by Elizabeth Bremer, Secretary of the Board

Help ensure that the work that has been such an important part of your life continues to grow and flourish. The Board invites you to contact one of us, or send a friend our way, so that we can share more information about board service. We are recruiting candidates between now and July 20th in preparation for the annual August election.

Board members bring varied talents, experiences and perspectives to the common purpose of helping the Guild realize its mission. Board work encompasses support for leaders, community outreach and financial management within the Board's overall scope of providing strategic, policy, program and operations oversight for the organization.

By July 20th, potential candidates must confirm their willingness to run and have the official nomination of a voting member in good standing (voting members may nominate themselves). Nominations are due to the Guild office by 5:00 p.m. Saturday, July 20, 2019.

Along with their confirmation, candidates are asked to provide a brief statement of interest and qualifications to be included with ballots (approx. 150 words). Ballots will be mailed to Guild voting members on August 1st.

The August election will provide for up to five directors to be elected; two for one-year terms and three for two-year terms. There are two vacant board positions, and three current directors are completing their terms: Elizabeth Bremer, Denise Dinwiddie, and Jennifer Mansfield. All three will run again. Other directors are Hal Childs and Harry Henderson, who are at mid-term.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Poem by Mary Oliver Mindful

Every day
I see or I hear
something
that more or less

kills me
with delight,
that leave me
like a needle

in the haystack
of light.
It is what I was born for---
to look, to listen,

to lose myself
inside this soft world---
to instruct myself
over and over

in joy,
and acclamation.
Nor am I talking
about the exceptional,

the fearful, the dreadful,
the very extravagant---
but of the ordinary,
the common, the very drab,

the daily presentations.
Oh, good scholar,
I say to myself,
how can you help

but grow wise
with such teachings
as these---
the untrimmable light

Of the world,
the ocean's shine,
the prayers that are made
out of grass?



Wrestling with Truth

A seminar presented by the
Guild for Psychological Studies
September 28 (Sat) – October 6 (Sun), 2019

In our upside-down society, where media and technology are appropriating the whole world, and the very idea of truth is questioned, what will help us live meaningful lives in an age of pervasive anxiety?

Though it has waned and is no longer the guiding light of our civilization, the Judeo-Christian tradition has been the archetypal DNA of our collective soul. Unseen, it works still in the background of our lives.

After many decades of work with the historical Jesus, the Guild now turns its attention to consciousness, truth and the end of meaning. The death of God symbolizes a new status of consciousness that influences us all. What does the death of Meaning, a brand-new event in the history of the world, have to teach us?

What can we learn about what has happened to consciousness over the last three thousand years by taking a fresh psychological look at the Judeo-Christian tradition? How do Abraham, Moses, Job and Yahweh, along with Jesus Christ, illuminate the evolution of consciousness from a new soul perspective?

We will seek a new truth embedded in the teachings of Jesus that reflects the historical self-negating and self-transforming work of soul, which is truth ever recreating itself. As we wrestle with truth we wrestle with ourselves and engage with what is called soul-making, or making soul real.

The seminar process uses a modified Socratic method to guide group discussion. We honor the dignity of each individual to express themselves honestly and move at their own pace. Mutual respect will support us as we engage difficult truths and new perspectives.

Our work together will be enriched by the use of non-verbal approaches: meditation, expressive arts, music, body movement and awareness, and silence.

Special Note: All applicants, please include a letter stating your interest in attending this seminar. If you are new to the Guild's work, please tell us a little about yourself and your psychological and spiritual journey.

Location: Four Springs, Middletown CA

Leaders: Hal Childs, PhD, MFT and Patricia Calcagno Stenger, MA, MFT

Fee: \$1,495, plus a non-refundable fee of \$50 with registration.

Scholarships and payment plans are available.

Contact for more information: Hal Childs, 415-573-2469; halchilds@gmail.com

Register at <https://guildsf.org/online-seminar-registration/>



Stay Connected

Bob Ridder, Administrative Coordinator, is available for all inquiries by phone at (415) 561-2385, or by email at office@guildsf.org.

Send your email address to office@guildsf.org so that we can keep you connected and up-to-date on Guild events. Also be sure that we have your current mailing address so that we are able to send you this yearly edition of the newsletter. Please keep us updated with your address changes.

Mailing Address

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Guild Website

Visit www.guildsf.org for information about seminars and events, and to register for seminars. The website also has general information about the Guild, past issues of the Threshing Floor, relevant news, and links to resources. If you would like to post information of interest to the Guild community, please email harryhenderson51@gmail.com, our web administrator.

Guild Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/guildsf>, launched in January! If you haven't yet, please "friend" and "like" us!

Newsletter

To receive 12 issues of *The Threshing Floor* a year, please contact the Guild office. There is no charge for an e-mail subscription. For a print subscription, please send a check for \$25 to the Guild office.

Items for inclusion in the Threshing Floor should be mailed to the Guild Office, Attn. Threshing Floor Editor, or emailed to office@guildsf.org. The deadline for each issue is the 20th of the month. Items received after that date will be published the following month.

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Order publications on the Guild website, or contact Carina Ravely at guildpublishing@yahoo.com.

Donations

Many thanks to our donors! Your financial support in any amount helps the Guild with seminars and other events, with the training of leaders, with outreach, and with other new and ongoing efforts. Because the Guild is a registered nonprofit organization, with 501(c)(3) status, your contribution may be tax deductible. Donations should be directed to the Guild office address, or you may donate online using the PayPal link you'll find by selecting the Make a Donation link on the main page of our website.

Volunteers

There are several people who fill necessary volunteer roles in the Guild. If you would like to be a Guild volunteer, please contact the Guild office at office@guildsf.org and let us know particular volunteer roles that appeal to you. Currently volunteers are members of the editorial staff for the Threshing Floor; members of the Board of Directors; serve as continuing education coordinator; train to serve as seminar coordinator, committee person or cook; provide transportation to/from seminars for attendees; help to catalog or research Guild archive materials; write reviews for Guild books and other publications; etc.

Friends and Members

Friends of the Guild are donors and others interested in receiving Guild information who are not Voting Members. Voting membership requires active participation in some form of leadership or committee role, or other volunteer effort, and the payment of annual dues. Voting members may receive a print subscription to the Threshing Floor upon request.

Board of Directors

Elizabeth Bremer, Secretary
Hal Childs, President
Denise Dinwiddie
Harry Henderson, Treasurer
Jennifer Morgan Mansfield,
Vice President

