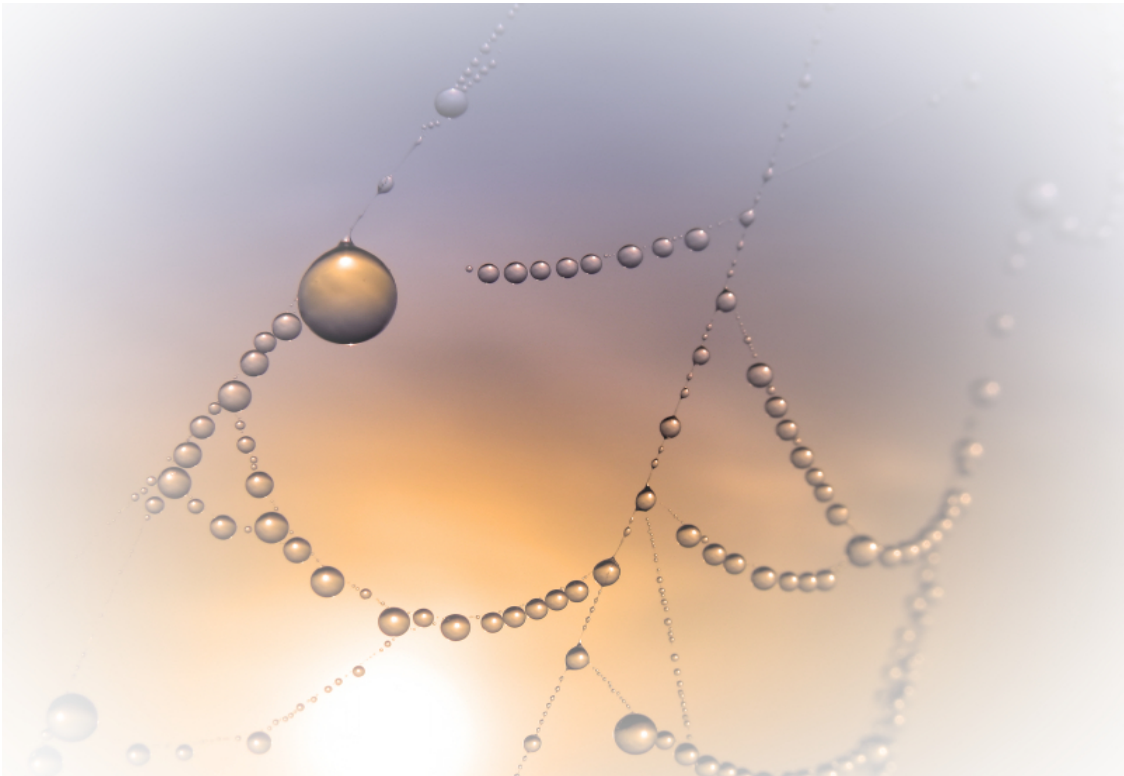


Living Connection



Two things I believe

1) We're home

We are a part of the cosmos. We belong where we are. There is no perspex bubble separating 'us' and 'nature'. It's our nature to live here.

I can't remember a time when I didn't know this – I've certainly never met a dog who didn't know –

– and also, most days, there's a good chance I'll forget it.

How come? Why isn't it always self-evident?

Partly because there's a natural 'going out and coming in' to the process: remembering, forgetting, remembering again. But mostly because we live in an alienated culture built on disconnection.

Fear disconnects; the anxious hankering for sameness and predictability disconnects. So food, for instance, ceases to be something that grows in the earth; it becomes something you buy in hygienically sealed plastic boxes. Come to that, so do beauty, health, fulfilment, wisdom, human relationship... there's a box for everything.

So if you yearn for connection, and if you don't believe you can buy it in a plastic box, then you might start feeling it must be somewhere else, far away from ordinary experience.

"Our ancient experience confirms at every point that everything is linked together, everything is inseparable."

Dalai Lama XIV

2) *Experience has meaning*

After you've explained *what* happens and *how* it happens, you still – naturally – ask *why* it happens.

This is a real question (and it has real answers).

Each person's 'ordinary' experience is meaningful; each of us lives a story that is coherent and whole (and part of the whole).

"To put meaning in one's life may end in madness,
But life without meaning is the torture
Of restlessness and vague desire--
It is a boat longing for the sea and yet afraid."

Edgar Lee Masters, *Spoon River Anthology*

What this means

Conversation

Our experience has meaning; the cosmos is the natural habitat for us as meaning-seeking, meaning-creating animals. And so the nature of the cosmos is *to talk with us about the larger meaning of our experience*. We're constantly invited into conversation with bigger realities and broader dimensions.

That conversation happens in dreams, in synchronicities, and in divination of all kinds – from ancient and profound to made-up-on-the-spot.

“Everything that enters our field of perception means something, large or small. Everything speaks to us, if we will take off our headphones and hear a different sound track. Everything corresponds. We travel better in the forest of symbols when we are open and available to all the forms of meaning that are watching and waiting for us.”

Robert Moss, The Three “Only” Things: Tapping the Power of Dreams, Coincidence, and Imagination

Two more things I believe:

This is ordinary

The great conversation is not set apart from ordinary life: ordinary life is where it happens. There is also no perspex bubble between 'spirituality' and 'everyday'. Just try talking with Yi and keeping the conversation neatly packaged – 'Now, I'm going to ask about work, so don't mention my spiritual life' or 'Now, I'm asking about spirituality, so this answer can't be about money.' *Not* going to work. Divination is a strictly plastic-box-free zone.

This is simple

The conversation isn't necessarily easy, but it is simple: not complicated, nor arcane, and above all *not just for the special gifted people*. (That's un-obvious, too, because the people who are moved to write about these things frequently *are* specially gifted, and their autobiographies can make the rest of us feel utterly inadequate.) The cosmos isn't finicky about *how* the conversation happens. Everyone can dream; everyone can notice birds or plants or insects. The Yijing speaks to everyone, too, and as long as you're asking from your heart, it shows no sign of caring whether you cast by reverently sorting yarrow stalks or tapping a screen. It also seems to be especially kind to newcomers.

"Coincidences link us to the unknown and weave us into it."

Doug Dillon

What I believe is possible

I believe this is possible:

A world where everyone lives inside the conversation, experiencing each moment as the centre of a full multidimensional web of connection: to spirit, to place, to fellow creatures. And – because it's impossible not to – everyone acts from that awareness.

...imagine the unfolding consequences of that, for a moment...

Yes, it is ridiculously hard to believe. And yet... it's how the cosmos is shaped, how it works, how *we* work, as naturally and simply as water flows downhill.

...it's true we have a way to go yet...

Now what?

What can we do?

- live the conversation ourselves
- dissolve the illusion of boxes
- build our own corners of the world where living-in-the-conversation is not only natural, but *normal*

"To pay attention, this is our endless and proper work."

Mary Oliver

...and how?