

A low-angle photograph of several thistle plants against a bright, cloudy sky. The thistles have long, pointed, serrated leaves and spiky flower heads. The perspective is looking up from below, making the plants appear to be reaching towards the top of the frame. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall lighting is bright and natural.

# *Fine lines*

Summer 2019

VOLUME 28 ISSUE 2

EDITED BY

David Martin

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# Inspiration to Self

DESHAE LOTT

*(I prefer being an essayist to a poet, but right now, poems fit into the crevices of time I have, and I'm learning to compose them in notes on my phone, which is a new way of writing for me. I recently re-read parts of an essay I drafted five+ years ago, and it's terrible, truly, but I have many other notes, more recent ideas. I just need the time to weave the threads. Here is what I recorded and shared in a reply to an impressive woman with severe physical disabilities; she emailed me about her current new health issues, so I shared some of mine, along with what I hope were compassionate and supportive comments regarding her situation.)*

My speech therapist came again, today; still suggesting vocal rest and conservation. Dr. Koder now suspects laryngitis precursor to muscle loss that will take away my power to swallow and speak. It has led to interesting contemplations today, because writing by hand and using my laptop have become such a physical strain — painful and causing shortness of breath, high HR, and vent alarms. The reflections of today are about adaption, what we THINK defines us/empowers us, and our desire to connect with others.

In sum, the I AM of my soul connects to the I AM of God. Human life may be more or less pleasant for my I am, but my mind will be alive no matter what happens to me, as a human and no matter how I can or cannot convey that to others, which made me think of all kinds of situations in which souls lack a “voice.” I have been blessed to have one.

Beethoven composed his last and most well-known symphony (9th) when he was completely deaf. There are so many dimensions to the open mind, even as the body closes off options. However, every week, multiple strangers email me, coming across my website,

discussing their significant challenges in life. One was from a woman placed in human trafficking for many years and tortured, causing disability. In contrast, I had a wait in public and overheard a woman speaking of her seven cars and a Porsche she so disliked and wanted a new model and how she was going with friends to Dallas, Texas, again to shop, dine, and party.

Khoi, who cuts my nails, will go to Viet Nam to see family again soon. She will return, describing their lifestyle, how many family members live in a space smaller than my small kitchen, and how they lack medical care. It will remind me of my abundance, again, no doubt.

I would enjoy an easier life and fewer challenges others add that are avoidable, if mindfulness were in use. That said, my blessings have been manifold, and I would not prefer to appear completely oblivious to others' challenges and completely unaware of the abundance of my own blessings. I have held this sensibility since early childhood, and tried to appreciate and honor my blessings. However, each time I face another huge personal loss, I learn. It's humbling. We can honor our blessings but not really understand going without them, until we must, and that's okay.

In my twenties I said I didn't want to live, if health care consumed over 50 percent of my time, energy, and attention. Now, it's far above that. I also wrote a poem (below) about my voice showing love and connecting me to others, so my spirit doesn't die. It held truth but is ignorant. My spirit lives, even if it cannot communicate with any minds but mine and God's.

I am learning.

Inspiration to Self  
no hands to paint the pictures  
wrap the packages  
prepare the repasts  
placate the pained



no hands have I

no arms

no legs

but voice

not the breathtaking soloist's voice

but a lilting, living voice

have I

somehow the words

will tell my vision

show my love

the words

my legs

and arms

and hands

and fingers

connecting me to others

so my spirit

does not die

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