

Spring Service / Joy and Dust



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Experience as a student of Vipassana Meditation, and a bit about family, written down so I can remember, shared only when I found it worth reading, self-edited because I have to keep on improving. These words are for you, my friends, and my dear wife Susanne, and my son Ben. I am so grateful for your companionship and support. Thank you!

*Craig D. Miller • April 20, 2010 • Revised May 4, 2017
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SPRING SERVICE

Bright foamy waters
high on a hillside—
the Springtime rush
can shift even the largest
of boulders

By their own efforts
and the support of the teacher
the students have worked
to create the flow

Students are grateful
and we, the cookers, cleaners
and bell ringers,
like pebbles in the stream-bed
have also
been moved

CDM May 3, 2009

J O Y A N D D U S T

joyfully we sweep the path
for this is the path of enlightenment
joyfully we enter the hall
for this is the hall of progress

efforts rewarded
as we see their faces
the newest of students
absorbed in the task
a momentary glance
when we take our places

may this hall shine brightly
beautiful and clean
for no tales of the past
or promises of the future
can compare to the
seat-side experience
of the worker
joined in progress
with students
who are sweeping
towards
enlightenment
on this very day

CDM June 2, 2009

F R I C T I O N

two or three or more vehicles
traveling with momentum
suddenly find
they are on a collision course

swerving squealing tires
brakes burning down
are necessary
to get back on track

two or three or more workers
traveling with momentum
on a Dhamma service project
suddenly find
that words exchanged
begin to clash

desiring harmony
they observing the rise in heat
and the dissipation of heat
necessary
to get back on track

CDM September 10, 2009

B U S Y D A Y

The piper of Hamelin
has drawn out my children
who are dancing and swirling
while I sit low
in these empty boots

having only an hour
at the start of a busy day
I try to hang on
as Vipassanā draws
a parade of saṅkāra
the children of past follies
out of these bones

CDM May 19, 2009

IN THE FOREST

Is that nibbāna –
just beyond the cool spring
under the dark green forest
in the hidden valley of the north?

Crawling blindly on needles
can I feel the stillness
and catch a glimpse of the noble,
just beyond that tree?

Now,
just underneath that
throbbing temple
and on the vague surface
of the knee
and in the unfathomable depths
of abdomen

Once again I breathe
inward
outward
to find awareness and equanimity
where my guide awaits

CDM September 11, 2009

NEW YEAR

Knowing aniccā
is in the event
not the object

knowing aniccā
keeps us from pain

So we despair not over people
we despair not over puddles

for the compassionate one
has shown us
that the meaning
of inclement encounters
is in the feeling
of the droplets
that form the rain

CDM January 1, 2010

ANY OLD FOOL

Take any old fool
—any old fool—
take *this* old fool
and examine his life:
rubbish, depravity,
a life full of mistakes.

Take any old fool
—any old fool—
take *this* old fool
put him in a 10-day course:
you'll get hard work,
cooling of passions,
advance of wisdom,

what a difference the Dhamma makes.

CDM January 3, 2010

THE CANDLE DREAM

Last night I thought I lit a candle next to a small shrubbery at the edge of a yard, the green yard of a big white house which I arrived at after walking a few blocks for an unknown purpose.

The small shrubbery at the edge of the yard was dry, and a few twigs, too close to the candle, started burning. I snapped off the burning twigs to save the plant but my flat dream went vertical while the burning twigs dropped down, down a cliff to a much larger bush below me which started to smolder before I could retrieve the embers. Having no time and no water I watched the large bush burn and burn, and soon saw a frog and other small amphibians roll down dead from the heat, towards the lake that appeared below the bush. Since I was now on the bottom of a cliff at the lake I had no choice but to ascend the cliff to get back to the yard of the big house. But how to ascend when the swinging apparatus that appeared at the top of the cliff kept on frustrating my purpose? Well, there was no way until the strange acrobatic man in tights appeared to demonstrate the proper back flip up over the cliff, onto the green yard of the big white house.

Now after this dream it is early morning, and I can reflect on conversation with my wife last night where she burst into flame, briefly illuminating our mutual fatigue after I had asked a question of unknown purpose. We were both tired, irritated, and very close to, but not close enough to the cool lake of sleep. The bush burned.

I am so sorry, my dear wife. Small amphibians have died and all I have is the feeling of foolishness, illustrated by the candle of my dream.

CDM January 27, 2009

FOURTH ROUND

The 4th round
is the survivor's round
where like the last two rounds
after the good news of recovery
come the seasonally short days
and cool news of another tumor
that grows in conjunction with
the spreading mid-winter light

we who are the supporters
wonder as does she
at how we will stay
bright and not batty
and whether we will even
be here late enough
in our fleeting
life to witness another
round of this
continuing story.

CDM February 16, 2010

FROM THE ROOT

Branches spread high and wide with
leaves turning in the stirring air
the domain of spiders
and sparrows
narrows
down to
a hard
trunk
which drops
through damp humus
over dark lair of mouse and worm
to a many-toed anchor upon the deep mineral base.
An ever-changing ecosystem to protect and support, we
observe objectively, down from the crown, and up from the root.

CDM February 16, 2010

MAKING WAVES

Sensuous is the world
and beauty i have known
with each breath i live
with each breath i die
and as the breeze stirs
and the moon tugs
and the waves rise
towards the warm sands
of an attractive shore—
this boat is determined
to row against *that* tide

CDM February 16, 2010

OUT OF COUCH EXPERIENCE

I'm tired of meditating
I don't want to do it,
I say to myself,
as I turn off
the TV and head upstairs,
knowing that the guy
who gets up from his cushion
an hour from now
will have no need to thank me,
because unglued eyeballs
and the unglued mind
are their own
rewards.

CDM January 28, 2010

R E S T L E S S

With the attention span of a squirrel
I'm going to crack this nut
but there is no nut
and there is no I

to soften a little
and feel the shell
nutless
I'll keep trying

while there is sensation
and there is agitation
and the unfinished task remains

CDM February 21, 2010

G R I S T L Y

The corporeal mass heaves
as the fly-like mind buzzes around.
This story is not a beautiful one
when we must burrow like maggots
to devour the putrid
in this quivering lump of flesh.

CDM March 2, 2010

H A R N E S S E D

mind – so quick
thoughts a trillion
a day
thoughts for good
thoughts for evil
do I harness this force, this fast horse,
and let it take me away?

No, I must remain here
in the land of aniccā
mind on matter, sampajañña
the fast mind harnessed
to plow the fields
in which I walk
in which I stand
in which I lie down
in which I sit.

CDM March 2, 2010

C L I M A T E C H A N G E

Mrs. Abbott,
my teacher in the 4th Grade,
warmly I remember you,
but fading, cooling,
I remember less
of what came before.

In the long slow cycle,
where glaciers quickly fade,
who am I to say
I remember;
even the Gods forget.

To master this moment
is to dare
to have influence
over the long slow cycle
of climate change.

CDM April 4, 2010