



# *The Sound of Rain*

*Supporting the work of Emily Carson*

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## **Daylong Silent Meditation Retreat, Sunday, May 22, 2011**

Transcribed from a sitting with Emily Carson

Silence is always the friend of solitude. There is no need and no reason in noise when we are alone. There is a natural resting of the voice, a natural hush that accompanies solitude, as if bowing in reverence to it. There is a commonness in speech; it is a tool, and a useful one, and it helps to make the machinery of our communities function. But silence is, in its way, more sacred than this, more holy—not because there is no God in noise but because silence is like the living principle distilled. It has a purity, it is unadulterated, and this gives it its unique quality. Solitude is like this as well. It is the living principle in a single life, distilled to its most fundamental form. Connection and community and communication are created, but solitude and silence are before all of these. They are not created, not in the same way. They are source rather than consequence. They are both beginning and foundation, and they permeate all the created things that follow them. They are perfect companions. They are, together, more than each alone, because their like nature reinforces each and lets each settle into its deepest nature. We are alone fundamentally and unavoidably, and in that existential separateness there is nothing more restful or natural than silence. Begin with the silence of your voices, but stretch that until your limbs, too, become quiet. Feel your skin calming, becoming still. Take that silence into the muscles of your face; no expression is needed, no smile, no frown—without connection these are extraneous. And last, take that silence up into your mind, where you're most poignantly and completely alone, and let the silence of your voice and your body echo in the empty chambers of your mind until you are still, there, too, where you need your silence and your solitude the most.

