



The Sound of Rain

Supporting the work of Emily Carson

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Silence

Transcribed from a sitting with Emily Carson, Monday, August 16, 2010

Keep peace with the quiet parts of yourself. Know yourself there, in those silences. Know yourself in that stillness. Live sometimes, if only briefly, in that quietness and solitude where you are not touched by the world and your soul not forfeited in its turbulence. Keep peace there, and may the door be always open so that you may pass into that without struggle and without challenge. Keep the door to your quietness unlocked, enter often, and be content. Silence is not something you carve out of the otherwise-distracting and chaotic circumstances of your life; it is something you find, already intact, already whole, something you grasp deep within yourself, where even you have no bustle and no speech. Silence exists already; it can be occluded but it cannot be lost. It can be ignored but it will not wither. It is silent, yes, but it is moving in the way that your breath is moving, in the way that air billows into wind, in the way that water flows gently towards its source. Silence is a living, breathing space. It is as rich and full as anything you have tasted. It is as deep and pure as anything you have seen. Go there now. Go to the place where anything can be felt and it is fine if nothing is. Go to the place where sound is not needed but music could not be sweeter, where light is not what illumines but, instead, wisdom. Go to that current, touchable but not explainable, living but with no fear of death. Be at peace in that silence that is peace, content in that true source of all happiness. Whatever you love, it is there, not in the form you will recognize but in the quality that you know, in its essence. Be at peace in your silence and solitude. Visit often. Visit now. Stay a while and make a home there.

Questions and Answers

Q: I'm still struggling with willingness to embrace my woman's nervous system, the delicacy, sensitivity, and also yesterday learning that I have a big reaction to what looks like my speaking up generates a change or has an impact or it seems to change the tides; it's distressing to me and I don't know quite what that's about.

I will address the second part of your question because that's most relevant to you right now. The aversion you have is an aversion to your own agency. It is an aversion, in fact, to the idea of agency at all. That things happen, even devastating things, is somehow comprehensible and potentially even palatable to the woman locked inside you; but the fact that these events are caused with absolute precision by our own actions is something she has not decided she can accept. She would prefer to be a pawn in some divine but external play than to be just another human being whose actions have consequences, whose speech and behavior produces visible, material effect. Something did not just happen to her; she sees herself as an operator of sorts, as someone moving pieces around and making things happen though they were, perhaps, not what she had intended. She has never, in all her time of hiding, solved the question of her own agency, and she runs from the mere possibility that she could have a kind of power which disrupts and destroys. What I will say to you, as her keeper and her friend, is that we all have this power and it cannot be stopped. We are all agents and every breath we draw, every word we speak, every movement and decision produces consequences, and most of them unintended. You cannot relinquish the power of agency, you cannot decide that you will not have it—you already do, no matter how you attempt to curb your own expression. Curbing that expression has the consequence of keeping you imprisoned, that is all it does; it does not prevent you from having an effect. You cannot be alive without having an effect. And the more you try to control the consequences of your every word and action, the more confused and muddled you become, and the more confused and muddled those consequences become. Being yourself is the only viable option. Not being an agent isn't a choice; you already are one. The best you can do is be as you are.

Q: I don't have a specific question, just whatever would be useful for me to hear tonight about my process—coming into my power.

Ask your guidance what question you should ask and I'll come back to you.

[Later:]

So I feel like at the last intensive I discovered this fear of aloneness is really...[that] in that aloneness I recognize the horror of what I've done, and in the past week I've spent time alone but I haven't been able to go back to the depth of the experience that I had at the weekend, so I'd like you to address that resistance or unwillingness...

Can you feel, when you sit with this at home, by yourself, the difference between that and sitting with it in the intensive? Are you aware of the difference the circumstance makes for you?

I felt like at the intensive it was just right there, and I feel like this week there's a tension and efforting, like trying to recreate something that...I'm just not allowing to happen.

Do you mean that your experience of the aloneness was right there or your experience of the transgression?

Of the transgression.

Do you feel how alone you are when you sit at home?

I do.

Did you do anything public at the intensive to expose your transgression?

No. And the only other thing that feels relevant is that it's almost like my mind's taken hold of it now,...like it's gone up into my head, and somehow there's trying come down from there instead of it just being this experience that wells up in me.

The best suggestion I can make for you is that you put blood on your hands and see if seeing that and feeling it on your skin helps you remember in your body in a way that your body is trying very hard to forget. Holding something dead may also help, but you need to put your body in contact in some visceral, sensory way with the kind of death and destruction you caused. I would also suggest that you remind yourself that you have caused bloodshed and death. I do not mean that you remind your mind, or even that you use it to try and illicit an emotional response; I mean, simply, that you soberly and with a clear head look at the fact of your transgression. It is not a story, it is not a process, it is a

fact—something you have absolutely done which can never be undone. Try to feel the blood on your hands again. Your body needs to remember, not your mind. When that fails, remind yourself of what is true.

Q: ...I was going to ask if I really can work as much as I am but then I got that I already know, week by week, each time my guidance is so clear, so in some ways I think I just underestimate what I'm capable of and what my kid is really capable of,...so that, or if you think there's something more specific I need to hear.

I also want you to ask your guidance exactly what I should address for you. I'll come back.

[Later:]

...I need to ask about my heart, and then after that,...from my unwilling place, like, why do I have to do this?... Even though I know the answer, I think it would be really good to hear it from you.

You have to do this J., because it's already here. It isn't possible to go back to some former state, however blissful that might have been; it isn't possible to stuff something back inside you when it is already out of its dark hiding place. You have to do this not because of some golden treasure at the end of a long and painful process but because the pain in the process must be tolerated for itself, as itself. You cannot look to the future and say, 'This is what I will be after this is over'; you can only look to the present and say, 'This is what is here today, and if all things are benign then this, too, must be so.' The great treasure in life is to be able to bear what we once considered unbearable, to be free to feel pain and trauma, even torture and death, without fear and without recoil or protest. When I say to you that your happiness lies in the heart of the thing you are confronting, I say that because it is pure and simple happiness to be able to confront something which you once found terrifying. It is bliss because it is freedom. You cannot seek to be free from this thing that is haunting you; you can only seek to be free of your fear of it. But if you are free of that, then what else do you need? If you are free to have all the harsh cruelty of the world showered down upon you while knowing that you cannot be harmed in any meaningful or lasting way—isn't that contentment? And so again I will say, you are doing this because it is here and there is nowhere else to look and nowhere you can hide. And to be able to see this, and bear it, is to be free so deeply that even fetters you did not know you had are loosed.

Q: I'd like to ask what your guidance could tell me would help this process of accepting what I am in a deep and complete way with all of its consequences.

Your best friend right now is curiosity. The best attitude you can have towards yourself is to be deeply curious about what constitutes this person you find you are. You cannot love her, you cannot be proud of her, you cannot, even, really understand where she is coming from sufficiently in order to approach her out of pure compassion, but you *can* muster deep curiosity. What you have inside you is a sort of final frontier of investigation. It's a place you have stood on the border of but never traveled into the heart of, the kind of place a person cannot visit casually but must be explored out of a commitment to that study and exploration and out of an abiding curiosity about what is to be found there. I am not talking about curiosity as a casual whim, like something you would look up once in a book that you then put away. I'm talking about the kind of curiosity that realizes that there is nothing here to know ultimately except ourselves, that there is no depth and no richness beyond that that we find in our own person, a curiosity that is more like a hunger to know than it is a casual question. You are standing on the border of some vast and terrifying territory. You can turn around—that is always your option—but if you are going to do so, you should do so now because once you cross into that new land, once you travel far and feel the darkness all around you, you cannot unlearn the things you have learned or unsee the things you have glimpsed. We are, every one of us, that same kind of dark and terrifying territory. Self-investigation should never be taken lightly, because what we will find takes courage to know; but it is the only place to go, and what else is there to be curious about if not yourself? Good luck.

Q: My question, Emily, is something around, spiritually, the need for a teacher, and recently coming to a point where I recognized there was just sort of an ego need for some sort of validation, progress or something, and consequently some sort of letting go around that and willingness to follow my own inner guidance...

Has your own guidance let you know what kind of help you really do need?

I think so, I think just trusting in myself.

And so, does your guidance tell you that you don't need any help from anyone outside of yourself?

No,...this had more to do with a recent teacher,...something just seemed a little odd about it, so it was a separation on my part, and no I'm still...open to outside guidance...

I want you to ask your own guidance, right now, what exactly can an external teacher offer you? What can that person be expected to do for you? You know it is not a certain kind of validation of your progress, but what is it that they are good for?

[Later:]

From a teacher, I guess to be able to see what's being presented to me in any moment, to have an immediate reflection back to myself, and to maybe help me shift my attention if there's something I'm missing—I guess to reflect back when I doubt my guidance...

There is no teacher in all the universe that could ever compare to your own guidance. That is true now, it has always been true, and it will always be true. But that doesn't mean that you will not need help from outside sources. And though navigating when to seek help outside and when to look inside can be tricky indeed, your guidance can always tell you when another teacher or source has something to offer you and when they do not. Your guidance, unlike almost any physical human being you could possibly encounter, has no agenda and no ego to protect. Your guidance cannot be competitive or petty or frightened—and people can. Your guidance is somewhat new to you in the sense that you are only newly using it as the source of teaching and instruction that it can and should be. There is always the possibility that it will be difficult, particularly in this beginning period, to hear your guidance around issues you have that are very loaded for you. This is normal and you should expect it. When such issues arise and you know that it is difficult to hear your guidance, first I would say, persist and be patient. You may find that just your willingness to keep asking will bring you to exactly the help you need. But if that still seems confused or insufficient then just ask your guidance if there's somewhere else you can go to get help with that particular issue. Almost always you will be able to get a very clear answer to that. The more you trust your guidance, the more it can offer you. The more it offers you, the more you will love it and be content with your new teacher. Your guidance can help you particularly around the question of progress. It is, of course, the ego's agenda that if you will not get off the path of aspiration, at least you should succeed at it. But progress is also the genuine concern of the sincere aspirant within you, and from that perspective it is right and good that the question be addressed. It is right to ask your guidance, 'Where am I going?' 'What is this for?' 'Am I doing what I

should be doing?' 'Am I on the path that will satisfy me most?' This is not vanity or pride that makes you ask these questions; it is because when a sincere longing for God or spirituality arises, we are suddenly blind and lost. There are a million road signs on the paths that the world offers us, but this path, the one to transcendence, has strange and cryptic markers and we need help interpreting them. Your guidance can give you most of that help and it can tell you when you should seek some of that help from someone else. My general piece of advice about teachers is this: when you find yourself drawn to someone new, just ask your guidance, 'what can this person offer me?' And then go into that new relationship knowing what you have to gain from it, clearheaded and with open eyes, knowing the only teacher you must have is the one inside yourself who you cannot lose. All others are dispensable. When you know that, some others can be helpful. Good luck.

Q: My biggest problem...in my process has been my mind. I feel something, I make up a story or I persevere... What can you...tell me about just staying out of my mind and not indulging it?

Is there a particular story that keeps coming up?

...There has been...a person in my life that's been kind of the focus of my craziness, but I feel like I finally got below that and can feel more the source of my own rage, which really has nothing to do with this person. But I still find myself wanting to go up into my head.

The first thing you need to do is make the distinction between a problem that really is primarily mental and one that is the avoidance of an emotional experience. If you are angry and should be exploring that anger, then focusing on your mind as the source of your problem doesn't help you. But if the problem is truly mental then it can be controlled at that level. Ask your own guidance, right now, where the real source of your problem is.

[Later:]

I get that there's an avoidance of the experience and it's around my rage.

Can you feel that rage right now?

Oh yeah, if I let myself I can feel it...

You must run this every day. If you do not run it every day, you will get lost. The only mind control you need is the kind that comes about automatically and organically from feeling something deep and real and true. If we are not feeling something that needs to be felt, the mind must be active and no form of mental control can do anything about it. But when we are willing to feel the thing that is present, the mind no longer has its defensive task and it is quiet. Every single day you must get angry. Get angry at everyone and everything that you feel that rage towards. Your mind will be very quiet.