

Old Maps No Longer Work

Joyce Rupp

You will find an evocative reading of the poem “Old Maps No Longer Work” followed by a meaningful reflection at

https://www.instagram.com/tv/B_0ggn7IW_U/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet

I keep pulling it out –
the old map of my inner path
I squint closely at it,
trying to see some hidden road
that maybe I’ve missed,
but there’s nothing there now
except some well-travelled paths.
they have seen my footsteps often,
held my laughter, caught my tears.

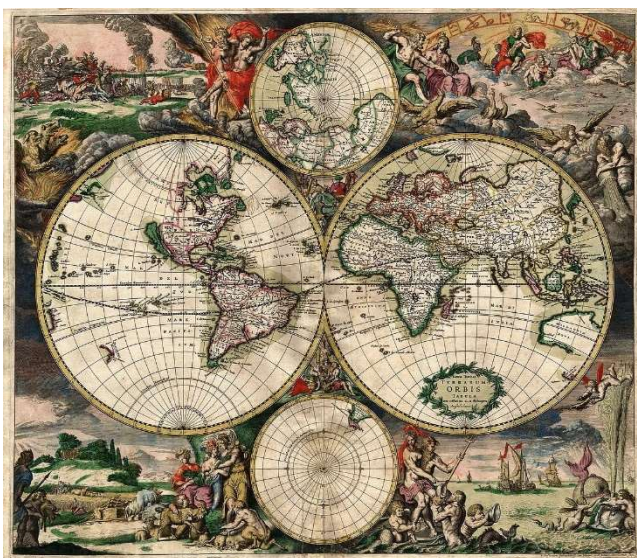
I keep going over the old map
but now the roads lead nowhere,
a meaningless wilderness
where life is dull and futile.

toss away the old map,” she says
“you must be kidding!” I reply.
she looks at me with Sarah eyes
and repeats “toss it away.
It’s of no use where you’re going.”

“I have to have a map!” I cry,
“even if it takes me nowhere.
I can’t be without direction,”
“but you are without direction,”
she says, “so why not let go, be free?”

so there I am – tossing away the old map,
sadly fearfully, putting it behind me.
“whatever will I do?” wails my security
“trust me” says my midlife soul.

no map, no specific directions,
no “this way ahead” or “take a left”.
how will I know where to go?
how will I find my way? no map!



but then my midlife soul whispers
“there was a time before maps
when pilgrims travelled by the stars.”

It is time for the pilgrim in me
to travel in the dark,
to learn to read the stars
that shine in my soul.

I will walk deeper
into the dark of my night.
I will wait for the stars.
trust their guidance.
and let their light be enough for me.

The Liminal Paradox: Sheryl Fullerton

Sheryl Fullerton, editor and author, received a cancer diagnosis that required a difficult surgery. She allowed the painful and challenging experience to transform and guide her to greater wisdom.

When we find ourselves in liminal space, we are not where or what we were before, nor do we know how or where we will land in our new reality. We are betwixt and between. In that space - which is mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual - we are destabilized, disoriented. The old touchstones, habits, and comforts are now past, the future unknown. We only wish such a time to be over. We may be impatient to pass through it quickly, with as little distress as possible, even though that is not likely.



But what if we can choose to experience this liminal space and time, this uncomfortable now, as a place and state of creativity, of construction and deconstruction, choice and transformation? I wonder whether it is also the realm of the Holy Spirit, our comforter, who does not take away the vastness and possibility of this opened-up threshold time, but invites us to lay down our fears and discomfort to see what else is there, hard as that may be. . . .

Like Jonah in the belly of the sea monster, we are led where we do not want to go—not once, but many times in our lives. Dwelling in unsettling liminal space, whether we are pushed or we jump, we are led to draw on resources and possibilities we may not have tapped before. In the unknown space between here and there, younger and older, past and future, life happens. And, if we attend, we can feel the Holy Spirit moving with us in a way that we may not be aware of in more settled times. In liminal time and space, we can learn to let reality—even in its darkness—be our teacher, rather than living in the illusion that we are creating it on our own. We can enter into the liminal paradox: a disturbing time and space that not only breaks us down, but also offers us the choice to live in it with fierce aliveness, freedom, sacredness, companionship, and awareness of Presence.

“Let go of the shore, and let the water carry you. Let go of the shore, float into the mystery...”

Karen Drucker (Songs of Spirit 4)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nja_Vxf7HPs

Elaine