

Two Questions from Rilke on Our Work

Matthew Fox, Daily Meditations 17 May 2020.

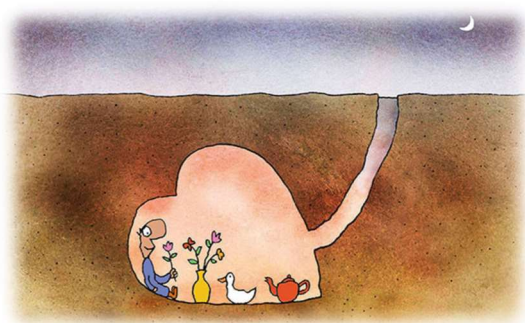
The poet Rilke asks: “When can we be real?” I propose that we are *on the way* to being real when we pay attention to non-action, to the **via positiva** (awe, wonder, gratitude) and the **via negativa** (silence, darkness, loss) in our lives. These constitute our “inner work.”

But we don’t *actually* become real until we abandon ourselves to creativity, until the Spirit that made the heavens and Earth can flow through us and effect its New Creation through us. We become real when our work joins the Great Work. We become real when our inner work becomes work in the world: when our creativity, born of deep attention to both enchantment and nothingness, serves the cause of transformation, healing, and celebrating.

In other words, we become real when our work becomes compassion expressed in creative ways that surprise and that effect change. This happens to the extent that we act out of non-action, when our outer work is born of our inner work.

Rilke poses a second question, “When does God pour the earth, the stars, into us?” This is a striking way of putting the issue of work and creativity and our becoming real. When our creativity has an opportunity to manifest itself in our work we do indeed become real. And our work becomes real.

Rilke notes that our becoming real is tantamount to our undergoing the holy experience of the earth and stars “poured into us.” Our work is cosmic because the cosmos has been feeding us all along—indeed long before we arrived on the scene. This is precisely what happens in creativity. The birthing energy of a compactly birthing cosmos, the fire energy of the original fireball, the sun energy of the process of photosynthesis, the expansion energy of our expanding universe all work in us when we too give birth. There is a natural progression from the **via positiva** and the **via negativa** to the **via creativa** in our work



Our inner work of enchantment awakens our passion and energy for work, for response, for saying yes. Our inner work of nothingness and grief awakens our awareness of how much work needs to be done, of how many beings are suffering because we are not working wisely.

When these two experiences come together in our work of creativity, we are led into the Great Work, our work of the **via transformativa**. Creativity is the bridge between our inner work and outer work that society requires of us. Creativity is the threshold through which our non-action leads to actions of beautification, celebration, and healing in the world.

Creativity is both an inner work *and* an outer work. Thus our “becoming real” and “God pouring the earth and stars into us” accompany our work wherever we go in life.



Lay Yourself Open

~ Neil Douglas-Klotz ~

When you want to lay yourself open for the divine,
 like a snare that is hollowed out to its depth,
 like a canopy that projects a shadow
 from the divine heat and light into your soul,
 then go into your inner place physically,
 or to that story or symbol that reminds you of the sacred.

Close the door of your awareness to
 the public person you think yourself to be.
 Pray to the parent of creation, with your inner sense,
 the outer senses turned within.
 Veiling yourself, the mystery may be unveiled through you.

By opening yourself to the flow of the sacred,
 somewhere, resounding in some inner form,
 the swell of the divine ocean can move through you.

The breathing life of all reveals itself
 in the way you live your life.

A Blessing

*Mystery of Life, may passion for life and longings for justice
 stir within us as we ground ourselves in the experience of your stillness.*

May we know in our souls and body the rhythms of creativity that you have established.

*May we know for your world the cycles of renewal given by you for healing and health,
 the pattern of the seasons given by you for the birth of new life. AMEN*

Elaine