

**Water Communion  
As We Mean to Go On  
Sept 13 2009  
Ellsworth, Maine  
Rev. Leela Sinha**

**BEGINNING:**

**gathering music**

**welcome and announcements**

**prelude**

**call to worship**

fall in love with the world

one leaf one frog one smokestack at a time

fall in love

be loving

see the angel in every face

if you do not believe in angels

learn to believe in them now for they are

everywhere on the earth and we are everywhere on the earth and you are

everywhere on the earth you angels and your wings

feathers shedding over everything

piled up to shout I love you

piled up to cushion the gap

between fear and anger and the tender underbelly that keeps us breathing

that keeps us whole

we are here to be in love with everything messy and unmanageable

everything incomprehensible and raw

everything and especially this impossibility of connection that is living

is breathing beneath our feet

is looking into another's eyes and seeing ourselves

reflected

inverted

turned inside-out so the truth

can be made real.

**words**

**This morning we are doing something different;**

**I have not a single sermon but a series of poems;**

**between the poems I will ask a question;**

**you will have the chance to call out a one or two word answer.**

I am here.

I am here.

I am here and we are here and you are here, together

in chairs and bodies and minds and souls and spirits

and ineffable ways of being,

you are here making  
personal-space circles wide with your arms you are here  
making personal-space bubbles in your hearts you are here  
hoping someone will see you hear you feel you, you are  
here  
you are here,  
you are here with each other, we are here with each other we are  
here in this space with this light and these soaring walls these  
soaring spirits these soaring dreams these  
visions of a life of a world of a moment made whole  
we are here wholly and the laundry and TV and terror of last night's nightmares and  
beauty of last night's sunset are left to last night and we are here  
in each other's pockets and shoelaces,  
in each other's sweet and tired hearts in each other's days  
in each other's lives  
we are here  
in each other's lives  
and in this moment  
right now  
right  
right now  
with nothing behind or before just  
this exquisite and glistening moment  
poised on the tip of the leaf of tomorrow  
but still  
right now  
we are here.

how shall we be?  
(ANSWERS)

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and it is time to begin,

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begin, she says  
as you mean to go on  
find your path and follow it  
clear it of debris, of brush, of brambles of hurricanes and tornadoes but also  
of banana peels and low-growing roots looped up to the ankle  
begin the best way you know how  
in the spirit of strength and hope and wisdom  
begin in possibility,  
begin in love,  
if that is how you mean to go on  
what is important, what is critical

what cannot be ignored,  
what is the highest value, loftiest dream  
and how can you stop saying  
that it is impossible  
that you cannot possibly,  
how can you say yes to the fairy tale  
and mean it?

begin as though you mean it  
begin as you have never begun before  
consider the tattoo of no limits  
beating from bygones and into the distance  
through now, through here, through this beginning and wonder, then  
what it could possibly mean to believe without ceasing  
to believe without wondering to believe, to just believe  
to believe, to begin  
as you mean to go on.

if you could not fail  
if the world could not fail you  
what would you want?  
spices and gold and frankincense and myrrh  
or world happiness  
or one more day  
with your lost daughter?

every hope is doomed  
to eventual heartbreak  
without the insanity of unbreakable yes  
unflaggable over and over and  
over  
and finally you stop worrying stop waiting  
stop holding back  
and tumble headlong into limitless desire

wanting that stretches to the horizon  
is the only wanting that chases the sun  
is the only wanting that lives in days long enough  
to get from here to that other place  
we can only barely see  
in the eye of our eye  
in the flutter of our heart

if you could not fail  
would you spend it on yourself  
or would you gift it

to all the world?

(What is your hope?)

These are our waters, this is our tradition, to once a year bring ourselves back to ground, back to center, back from all the places we go when we forget ourselves, and so we stand together now and bring our waters, our journeys, our lives together. We begin this day again, together, we begin interlinked, intermingled, and still each of us as whole and as broken as ever. We come to journey together into the rich and bereft places, that we might make meaning and forge connections that will bring us deeper into the world.

Today we will do it like this: When the ushers invite your row forward, please come and add your water offering to the common bowl. We will begin singing spirit of life as we begin to come forward, and will repeat it until we have all made our water offering. If you wish to remain seated, please do so; an usher will be circulating with a vase and will bring your water forward. These are the waters of our lives, from our taps and rivers and lakes and streams and ponds and oceans, from our wells and from our spirits.

**gathering the waters** (Spirit of Life, 123)

we don't take it for granted--  
clean water--we went  
so long with bottles and boiling and Bisleri  
little reminders that the world is not a safe place  
that bacteria and illness and death  
lurk  
everywhere  
don't take it for granted  
some people never take it for granted  
and most of them are not hiking the Appalacian Trail  
most of them are not on Cadillac or rafting down the Colorado  
most of them are not on any kind of quest except  
food and shelter and water  
don't take it for granted  
health sun rain the world don't  
take  
it for granted don't  
ask  
of me permanence or perfection they are  
unattainable excrutiations  
but don't take it for granted this water we have  
from everywhere from nowhere from right here it is richness beyond measure  
drop by drop down drainpipes and ditches  
all who wander but are not lost  
will find their way to the ocean to the trees to hearts of intimate strangers  
gathered to quest, to hope, to love,

we are the water, we are the celebration, we are the alpha and the omega of this place  
and this time, we all of everything  
the breath of life that we carry  
gift from past to future through us  
beginning and ending and sacred and profane and unimaginable and exquisitely  
profoundly  
immediately  
real

(FOR what are you grateful?)

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love the world and begin with yourself  
be the change you want to see in your own heart  
find the thing that you most need and begin to live it now,  
today  
forever begins with a single breath  
and that one  
and that one  
you will never know your mind if you begin there  
you will never know your heart if you dictate from the sidelines  
you will never know who you could have been  
if you live your life in who you resent not having become  
last week  
last month  
when you were born  
when you were born you were who you were  
all summer packed into one day and that day was you it is you it has  
nowhere to go  
no way to be except through you  
if no one comes to the parents except through the children  
then surely no one comes you  
except through  
you--  
that is yourself  
that is the very hands and heart you bring to the world  
love the world and begin with yourself,  
begin where you begin, where you touch your edges,  
where you and the vast universe become one,  
at your skin,  
with your breath,  
in your eyes  
on your tongue.

Love the parts of you that are almost other and you can love anything,  
even the wild and furious fire that burns in your gut

that flares and dances  
that gutters, that festers,  
that burns and burns and yet you cannot  
yet you would not  
put it out for anything

when it falters your heart is in your throat  
when it soars you are in such pain and so alive

love the world and love yourself.  
it is the same.