

Leeds Area Quaker Meeting

the Quiet Word

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 2 News | |
| 3 Diary | |
| 4 Letters to the editor | |
| 5 <i>A letter to Spiritual Friends</i> | Andrew Lloyd |
| 7 Spiritual practice in daily life:
<i>Spiritual healing with heart centering 5</i> | Patrick Herring |
| 8 Poem: <i>bird seeds</i> | Rose Anderson |
| 9 <i>Dowsing & chakras</i> | Patrick Herring |
| 10 <i>"Mr Tayer", a beautiful story</i> | Jean Houston |
| 13 Seeing with Pictures: <i>the divine on earth</i> | Patrick Herring |



Meetings for worship

Adel Friends Meeting House, New Adel Lane, Leeds LS16 6AZ
0113 267 6293, Sundays 10.45am

Carlton Hill Central Leeds Friends Meeting House, 188 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS2 9DX,
0113 242 2208, Sundays 10.45am, Thursdays 6.00pm

Gildersome Friends Meeting House, 75 Street Lane, Gildersome, Leeds LS27 7HX,
0113 285 2466, Sundays 10.45am

Ilkley Friends Meeting House, Queens Road, Ilkley, Leeds LS29 9QJ
01943 600 806 and 01943 601 181, Sundays 10.30am

Leeds University Claire Chapel, Emmanuel Centre,
University of Leeds, Tuesdays 1.05pm

Otley Friends Meeting, in The Robing Room,
The Court House, Courthouse Street,
Otley, 01943 463 351, dmr@cooptel.net
1st and 3rd Sundays of the month 10.45am

Rawdon Friends Meeting House, Quakers Lane, Rawdon,
Leeds LS19 6HU, 0113 250 4904, Sundays 10.45am

Roundhay Friends Meeting House, 136 Street Lane,
Leeds LS8 2BW, 0113 293 3684, Sundays 10.45am



News

Many are now processing through the vaccine queue. And there are many online events via Zoom.

Zoom details

If you have not yet participated in online meeting, it is quite easy to install Zoom here:

<https://zoom.us/download>. It will run on laptops, iPads, and smart phones. Once you have installed it and signed up, just click on the relevant link to join a Meeting.

If you can't join by Internet you can access a Zoom meeting by phone, at normal geographic rates, by dialling 0131 460 1196 or 0203 4815237. You'll be asked to key in the meeting ID which is the nine-digit number at the end of the Zoom link, then, if required, the password. Use *6 to mute/unmute the call.

Most Zoom links will ask you to make contact for the Zoom details, which are the meeting ID and possibly a password. This is because of the possibility of being hacked. You can do that via

<http://www.leedsquakers.org.uk/contact-us/contact-us>.

Also the relevant Zoom codes and passwords are in Robert Keeble's weekly email and the LAQM monthly email.

N.B.: Always refer to the most recent information for your Zoom links in case there has been a change. You might find it helpful to create a folder just to hold relevant emails so you can access the links easily.

Children on Sunday – if children join our Zoom Sunday meetings, they will stay in the meeting for up to 15 minutes and then do children's activities in a zoom break out room.

the Quiet Word is written by & for the Leeds Area Quaker Meeting, to swap valuable information & insight, and to join with those who don't often get to Meeting.

It is published bi-monthly. Articles, poems, short stories, and letters should arrive by the end of the month. They can be sent via Robert Keeble at robertkeeble@hotmail.com, or via the Quiet Word email quietword@leedsquakers.org.uk, or directly to the editor (below). A page is about 600-1000 words & an article should be around 2-3 pages.

The Letters page offers a way of contributing on a smaller level in both time and effort. A letter should be around 100 words.

the Quiet Word is available online at www.leedsquakers.org.uk/activities/a-quiet-word

front page picture: Forget-me-nots in Gledhow, spring 2021.

editor: Patrick Herring, ph@anweald.co.uk, Carlton Hill meeting

Diary

These dates are for events in the Carlton Hill Meeting, and are via Zoom unless otherwise stated.

Sundays 11am to 11.45am Meeting for Worship. You can enter quietly at 10.45am. Blended meeting, led by Carlton Hill Elders .

Saturdays (1st of the month) 10am - Light Group connecting with the spirit of the Quaker Worship experienced by early Friends – a session with guided meditation.

Tuesdays 1.10pm to 1.40pm – BREATHE – Quaker style worship with the Leeds Universities Chaplaincy Team

Tuesdays 7.30pm Bible book club – everyone is welcome as we value differing views – this week we will continue the theme of ‘Miracles’

Thursdays 8.30am to 9am – BREATHE – Quaker style worship with the Leeds Universities Chaplaincy Team

Thursdays 6pm to 6.30pm Meeting for Worship led by Carlton Hill Elders

Fridays 2pm Poetry – Bring one or two poems to share, your own or those of others, or just come and listen – all are welcome

Letters to the editor

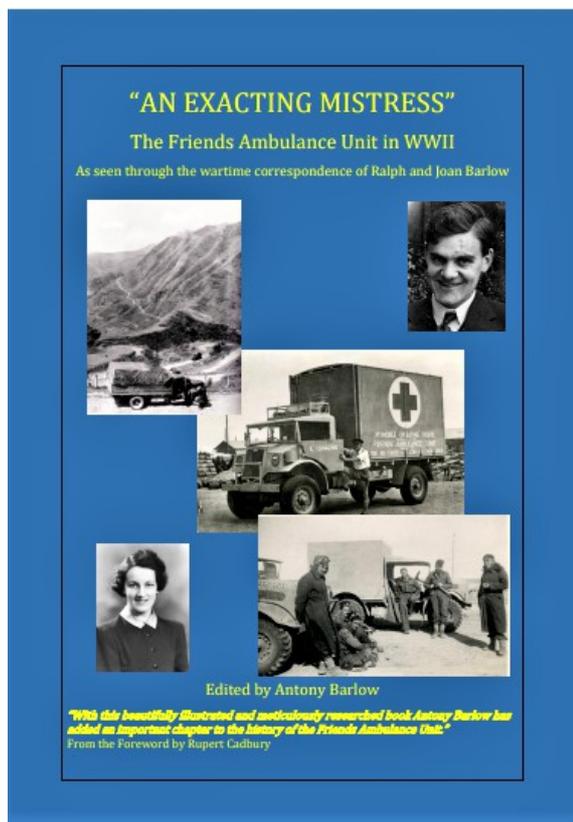
Lockdown walkies in the Lakes

On Facebook there are some daily videos of walking in the Lake District in aid of walking 3 friendly & lively Springer spaniels. Sometimes they jump in the water, because it's hot and they can't stop themselves. They live in Keswick so the lake in question is usually Derwent Water. Here's one where the view is particularly fine: <https://www.facebook.com/100050450570340/videos/311069587175895> . He mentions that it's very meditational...

Patrick Herring, Carlton Hill meeting

A new book about the FAU:

An Exacting Mistress
The Friends Ambulance Unit in WWII
As seen through the wartime correspondence of Ralph and Joan Barlow



As a child I can remember rooting around in our attic and coming across boxes of letters belonging to my parents, which they had written to each other during the turbulent years of the Second World War. I sometimes started to read them, but it seemed an intrusion into a world they were reluctant to talk about, concerning events that were not my business. As I grew into childhood my elder brother and I would, from time to time, dress up in my father's FAU uniform, pretending I suspect to be soldiers rather than pacifists, not really understanding the concept. But later still at my Quaker boarding school, Leighton Park, I mixed with other boys, whose parents had also been in the Unit, and I gradually understood further. In fact I became very proud that my Dad had been a Conscientious Objector and wanted to know more.

Growing up in an old Quaker family, affected me more than I realised, and despite intellectual challenges from my peers, my beliefs have not veered far from my father's or from the Society's historic stance, holding as I do even more strongly to Friend's core pacifism. Gradually, as I wrote more about Quaker history, I felt that I was capable

of tackling the huge subject of my father's life as a CO and his decision to serve in the FAU, and confident enough to confront my long-cherished project of editing my parents' war-time correspondence. Sufficient time had elapsed, my parents were both dead, and I began to realise that if I didn't do it, then probably no-one else would, and worse, the distance of time would mean that memories would fade and be lost for ever.

I no longer felt inhibited about trespassing into their correspondence or even into the intimacies of what amounted to love letters. The more I studied them and familiarised myself with them, the more I understood why their love survived the separation of war; how they supported each other when the other was down or depressed and how the constant iteration of their love for each other never became routine, but served as a constant reminder of why they had got married in the first place and why they would eventually emerge stronger than ever. For this reason, I have not held back from keeping in the

correspondence's many endearments, as to leave them out would be to omit a vital part of their story, as it helps us to understand why they grew together when so many parted.

The letters date from 1939/40 soon after my father joined the Unit, and provide an historic archive of a relatively un-recorded part of Quaker history. He soon finds himself alongside fellow CO's at the Manor Farm in Northfield, Birmingham, training with others who had also just joined, such as Duncan Wood, Jack Frazer, Brandon Cadbury, Tegla Davies, Michael Barratt Brown, and Richard Symonds amongst others. He then moves on to working in Poplar Hospital in the East End, becomes Deputy Chairman, before travelling out to the Middle East as Officer in charge, and on to East Africa, India and China, and eventually being invalided out with encephalitis which he contracted in Ethiopia.

The undertaking has been in many ways both thrilling and revealing, but by no means simple, and there have been many editing problems along the way. Thrilling, because as I progressed, I almost felt the presence of my parents watching over my shoulders as I worked; revealing as, inevitably, I discovered things I didn't know about my parents; and problematic in the way editing any letters from 80 years ago is bound to be.

It has been an enormous privilege to be able to bring this to fruition and to have the support of family and friends, as well as the help of the many descendants of Unit members who served with my father. As I neared completion, it has been borne in on me that within a few short years, not only has my father's generation long since gone from us, but we now in our 80s, will shortly have died too. This, therefore, is the eleventh hour to preserve memories as near to first hand as possible. I trust everyone who reads these pages will enjoy not only an important part of Quaker history, but the wonderful descriptions, the joyous humour and the loving tenderness, that kept this relationship of two very special people together.

Published by Quacks it is being sold at £20, but I am happy to offer 25% discount to Friends. This would be £15 plus £3.50 p&p. Please contact me at artspublicity@hotmail.com

© Antony Barlow, Croydon Meeting

A Letter to Spiritual Friends: In the Shadow of Covid

In this life I have moved between several faiths. As a child I absorbed the Christian faith of the village primary school. By the time I was a teenager, I began to ask critical questions and saw no reason to believe in anything supernatural. The physical sciences, it seemed, could give an explanation of how life originated on earth, whilst the existentialists told me I should take responsibility and create my own ways of living a meaningful life. Yet something was missing and I became fascinated by the idea that the Buddhists might have hit on a basic insight that could transform the quality of our lives. Secular reforms might still be needed to create a more just, peaceful and environmentally-friendly way of life, but they would never be enough. I was never fully convinced by the supernatural aspects of the Buddhist faith, but I studied under Buddhist teachers from several traditions.

Then, a year or two before falling ill with a long-term form of post-viral fatigue, something unexpected happened. Whilst exploring my Buddhist faith, I was plunged into a brief but mystical experience of Christ. Afterwards, I began to wonder whether this was genuine or not, so I put it on side. I was training as a therapist, looking for a new social work job and planning to go on a Buddhist retreat. That seemed quite enough for me at the time.

When I first fell ill, I did not know what was wrong. I was often exhausted, unable to digest food properly and muddle-headed amidst all the aches and pains. In one of my more lucid moments, I decided to take stock of my life and I was shocked. It seemed now that the lack of any consistent and heart-felt faith had played havoc with my life. I had chopped and changed in ways which led me to let down the people I loved the most. Unusually for a Buddhist, I found myself praying to God. If I had many more years to live I wanted to help in supporting other peoples' quests for more faithful lives. I would try to do this through providing the reasoning which established that we are each endowed with a basic spiritual nature. However, reasoning is never enough, so as I absorbed a more spiritual point of view, I would also need to convince people through the way I lived and faced up to my inevitable death.

At this time I did not specify what kind of spiritual faith I thought it best for people to adopt. If we were indeed endowed with a spiritual nature, the reasoning would apply to all of us. I myself continued to value what I was just beginning to learn from my Buddhist teaching, but I have returned to my childhood Christian faith. I prefer the silent, contemplative forms of worship, so I attend Quaker meetings when I can.

Now, as I look back during the Covid-19 pandemic, I am struck by how slow I have been in fulfilling my goals. Almost thirty years have passed since that first prayer to God and none of my attempts to set things down in writing has been entirely satisfactory. That is because reasoning is never quite enough and I have buzzed about like a deranged fly, searching for ways of deepening my own kind of Christian contemplative prayer.

Nevertheless, I have been rash enough to promise my Quaker friends in Leeds a series of articles for their on-line magazine, so it is time to make a start. I may have received my first Covid-19 vaccination, but I am not going to live forever. [tbc]



Spiritual practice in daily life

It seems that there's no separation between what we "do" in Meeting for Worship and how we go about our daily lives. This is a collection of write-ups of what people "do" in their spiritual practice. That started being expressed at a meeting one Sunday, called by Ben Wood and Andy Watson. The collection was introduced by Andy in the April 2020 issue.

Spiritual healing with Heart Centering 5

I'm continuing to experiment with heart centering energy as a healing energy, with partial results.

I've had to return to my usual BP pills for the meantime.

The main finding recently is I had a reason to look to see if my chakras were balanced or not (see separate article below). Life generally puts them out of balance. A few years ago I got a healer to put them in balance deliberately (rather a dramatic experience: like being injected with petrol), but I didn't expect my state to have lasted all this time. But they were entirely balanced. Dowsing confirmed the heart centre activity had kept them energized. I don't know what that means.

There has been no more reduction in insulin needs, though the balance is always shifting slightly. No change is a good thing in itself. Again, no change from last time.

Patrick Herring, Carlton Hill

Poem: *bird seeds*

*Like my garden birds
they just keep coming:
more haiku than I can feed*

Rose Anderson, Carlton Hill

Dowsing & chakras

In the previous issue I mentioned about dowsing as being a way to look for invisible things and chakras as the kind of thing worth enquiring about. It's not a Quaker thing but I find it a spiritual matter and it's worth knowing about in case it's useful. So I'll try to make it clear so far as I can.



You use a right-angled wire as from a coat hanger. You don't need 2 but that does give a good demo. You hold them like pistols (! as above) and point them down so gravity centres them, then raise them to just below the horizontal so they are very twitchy. Then ask "Show me Yes". Most people find the rods moving to cross in the centre. Then ask "Show me No". Most find the rods moving outwards, i.e. the opposite. These two questions and movements are the ideomotor effect (discovered by Dr William Carpenter in 1852) and are the basis of all dowsing.

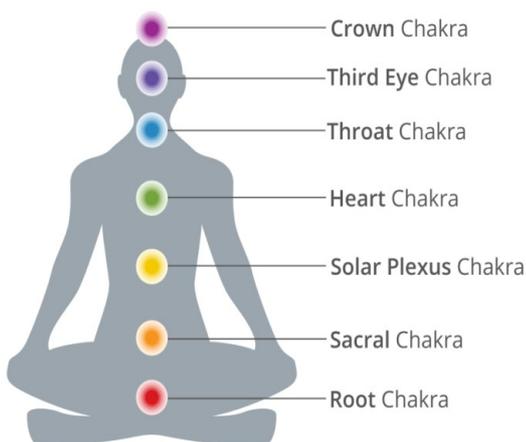
I've tested them for consistency and found the directions are the same to within 1 in 370 times, i.e. to 3 sigmas, which means they are statistically a fact. That doesn't mean the answer to a question is true, just the reliability of the Yes or No mechanism. The big question is what dowsing actually measures, to me it's a semantic thing.

A pendulum gives the same effect though with different directions for Yes and No, also Don't Know and Can't Know.

Then you ask other questions for which the answer is either Yes or No and see the result, or just follow a direction e.g. to an underground water stream.

Chakras

The Western mindset doesn't include chakras as an experience, but they are there to be seen. Dowsing can help you to see them. I recommend the Wikipedia page on chakras. The earliest reference is the Rig



Veda, so about the age of the pyramids but in the yogic world. The 7 chakra scheme is a modern invention (as at the left, particularly the rainbow colours) but it is very useful. You can see the heart chakra is at the centre of the 7. The main relationship is between the heart chakra and the ego (solar plexus chakra). A dowser would ask if the chakras are balanced and to point to any that aren't. There is much more that could be said about this, and dowsing in general.

Patrick Herring, Carlton Hill

"Mr. Tayer" by Jean Houston

a beautiful story found online in a contemplative group on Facebook, and reproduced here verbatim.

When I was about fourteen I was seized by enormous waves of grief over my parents' breakup. I had read somewhere that running would help dispel anguish, so I began to run to school every day down Park Avenue in New York City. I was a great big overgrown girl (5 feet eleven by the age of eleven) and one day I ran into a rather frail old gentleman in his seventies and knocked the wind out of him. He laughed as I helped him to his feet and asked me in French-accented speech, "Are you planning to run like that for the rest of your life?"

"Yes, sir" I replied. "It looks that way."

"Well, Bon Voyage!" he said.

"Bon Voyage!" I answered and sped on my way.

About a week later I was walking down Park Avenue with my fox terrier, Champ, and again I met the old gentleman.

"Ah." he greeted me, "my friend the runner, and with a fox terrier. I knew one like that years ago in France. Where are you going?"

"Well, sir." I replied, "I'm taking Champ to Central Park."

"I will go with you." he informed me. "I will take my constitutional."

And thereafter, for about a year or so, the old gentleman and I would meet and walk together often several times a week in Central Park. He had a long French name but asked me to call him by the first part of it, which was "Mr. Tayer" as far as I could make out.

The walks were magical and full of delight. Not only did Mr. Tayer seem to have absolutely no self-consciousness, but he was always being seized by wonder and astonishment over the simplest things. He was constantly and literally falling into love. I remember one time when he suddenly fell on his knees, his long Gallic nose raking the ground, and exclaimed to me, "Jeanne, look at the caterpillar. Ahhhh!" I joined him on the ground to see what had evoked so profound a response that he was seized by the essence of caterpillar. "How beautiful it is", he remarked, "this little green being with its wonderful funny little feet. Exquisite! Little furry body, little green feet on the road to metamorphosis." He then regarded me with equal delight.

"Jeanne, can you feel yourself to be a caterpillar?"

"Oh yes." I replied with the baleful knowing of a gangly, pimply faced teenager.

"Then think of your own metamorphosis." he suggested. "What will you be when you become a butterfly, une papillon, eh? What is the butterfly of Jeanne?" (What a great question for a fourteen-year-old girl!)

His long, gothic, comic-tragic face would nod with wonder. "Eh, Jeanne, look at the clouds! God's calligraphy in the sky! All that transforming. moving, changing, dissolving, becoming. Jeanne, become a cloud and become all the forms that ever were."

Or there was the time that Mr. Tayer and I leaned into the strong wind that suddenly whipped through Central Park, and he told me, "Jeanne, sniff the wind." I joined him in taking great snorts of wind. "The same wind may once have been sniffed by Jesus Christ (sniff). by Alexander the Great (sniff), by Napoleon (sniff), by Voltaire (sniff), by Marie Antoinette (sniff)!" (There seemed to be a lot of French people in that wind.) "Now sniff this next gust of wind in very deeply for it contains.. . Jeanne d'Arc! Sniff the wind once sniffed by Jeanne d'Arc. Be filled with the winds of history."

It was wonderful. People of all ages followed us around, laughing—not at us but with us. Old Mr. Tayer was truly diaphanous to every moment and being with him was like being in attendance at God's own party, a continuous celebration of life and its mysteries. But mostly Mr. Tayer was so full of vital sap and juice that he seemed to flow with everything. Always he saw the interconnections between things—the way that everything in the universe, from fox terriers to tree bark to somebody's red hat to the mind of God, was related to everything else and was very, very good.

He wasn't merely a great appreciator, engaged by all his senses. He was truly penetrated by the reality that was yearning for him as much as he was yearning for it. He talked to the trees, to the wind, to the rocks as dear friends, as beloved even. 'Ah, my friend, the mica schist layer, do you remember when...?' And I would swear that the mica schist would begin to glitter back. I mean, mica schist will do that, but on a cloudy day?! Everything was treated as personal, as sentient, as "thou." And everything that was thou was ensouled with being. and it thou-ed back to him. So when I walked with him, I felt as though a spotlight was following us, bringing radiance and light everywhere. And I was constantly seized by astonishment in the presence of this infinitely beautiful man, who radiated such sweetness, such kindness.

I remember one occasion when he was quietly watching a very old woman watching a young boy play a game. "Madame", he suddenly addressed her. She looked up, surprised that a stranger in Central Park would speak to her. "Madame," he repeated, "why are you so fascinated by what that little boy is doing?" The old woman was startled by the question, but the kindly face of Mr. Tayer seemed to allay her fears and evoke her memories. "Well, sir," she replied in an ancient but pensive voice, "the game that boy is playing is like one I played in this park around 1880, only it's a mite different." We noticed that the boy was listening, so Mr. Tayer promptly included him in the conversation. "Young fellow, would you like to learn the game as it was played so many years ago?"

"Well. . .yeah. sure, why not?" the boy replied. And soon the young boy and the old woman were making friends and sharing old and new variations on the game—as unlikely an incident to occur in Central Park as could be imagined.

But perhaps the most extraordinary thing about Mr. Tayer was the way that he would suddenly look at you. He looked at you with wonder and astonishment joined to unconditional love joined to a whimsical regarding of you as the cluttered house that hides the holy one. I felt myself primed to the depths by such seeing. I felt evolutionary forces wake up in me by such seeing, every cell and thought and potential palpably changed. I was yeasted, greened, awakened by such seeing, and the defeats and denigrations of adolescence redeemed. I would go home and tell my mother, who was a little skeptical about my walking with an old man in the park so often, "Mother, I was with my old man again, and when I am with him, I leave my littleness behind." That deeply moved her. You could not be stuck in littleness and be in the radiant field of Mr. Tayer.

The last time that I ever saw him was the Thursday before Easter Sunday, 1955. I brought him the shell of a snail. "Ah. Escargot." he exclaimed and then proceeded to wax ecstatic for the better part of an hour. Snail shells, and galaxies, and the convolutions in the brain, the whorl of flowers and the meanderings of rivers were taken up into a great hymn to the spiralling evolution of spirit and matter. When he had

finished, his voice dropped, and he whispered almost in prayer, "Omega ...omega. . .omega.." Finally he looked up and said to me quietly, "Au revoir, Jeanne".

"Au revoir, Mr. Tayer," I replied, "I'll meet you at the same time next Tuesday."

For some reason. Champ, my fox terrier didn't want to budge, and when I pulled him along, he whimpered, looking back at Mr.Tayer, his tail between his legs.

The following Tuesday I was there waiting where we always met at the corner of Park Avenue and 83rd Street. He didn't come. The following Thursday I waited again. Still he didn't come. The dog looked up at me sadly. For the next eight weeks I continued to wait, but he never came again. It turned out that he had suddenly died that Easter Sunday but I didn't find that out for years.

Some years later, someone handed me a book without a cover which was titled The Phenomenon of Man. As I read the book I found it strangely familiar in its concepts. Occasional words and expressions loomed up as echoes from my past. When, later in the book, I came across the concept of the "Omega point." I was certain. I asked to see the jacket of the book, looked at the author's picture, and, of course, recognized him immediately. There was no forgetting or mistaking that face. Mr. Tayer was Teilhard de Chardin, the great priest-scientist, poet and mystic, and during that lovely and luminous year I had been meeting him out side the Jesuit rectory of St. Ignatius where he was living most of the time.

I have often wondered if it was my simplicity and innocence that allowed the fullness of Teilhard's being to be revealed. To me he was never the great priest-paleontologist Pere Teilhard. He was old Mr. Tayer. Why did he always come and walk with me every Tuesday and Thursday, even though I'm sure he had better things to do? Was it that in seeing me so completely, he himself could be completely seen at a time when his writings, his work, were proscribed by the Church, when he was not permitted to teach, or even to talk about his ideas? As I later found out, he was undergoing at that time the most excruciating agony that there is—the agony of utter disempowerment and psychological crucifixion. And yet to me he was always so present—whimsical, engaging, empowering. How could that be?

I think it was because Teilhard had what few Church officials did—the power and grace of the Love that passes all understanding. He could write about love being the evolutionary force, the Omega point, that lures the world and ourselves into becoming, because he experienced that love in a piece of rock, in the wag of a dog's tail, in the eyes of a child. He was so in love with everything that he talked in great particularity, even to me as an adolescent, about the desire atoms have for each other, the yearning of molecules, of organisms, of bodies, of planets, of galaxies, all of creation longing for that radiant bonding, for joining, for the deepening of their condition, for becoming more by virtue of yearning for and finding the other. He knew about the search for the Beloved. His model was Christ. For Teilhard de Chardin, Christ was the Beloved of the soul.

Years later, while addressing some Jesuits, a very old Jesuit came up to me. He was a friend of Teilhard's —and he told me how Teilhard used to talk of his encounters in the Park with a girl called Jeanne.



Jean Houston
Pomona, New York
March, 1988

Seeing with Pictures

Some art has a spiritual interpretation. It may not be the intention of the artist, nor be the only possible interpretation. But sometimes you see things in a new way. It's worth writing it down to remember the thought. Hopefully others will have such thoughts to contribute.

the divine on earth



The channel of Gravelines, Grand Fort-Philippe, Georges Seurat, 1890

This is one of several pictures Seurat made in 1890 in his *pointillist* style: all dots, in a reaction to photographic printing that had recently been invented. You see buildings on the shore and the canal and sky in a soft, cloudless, subtle, omnipresent haze.

But half of the picture is golden sand. You can just see the tide marks in it. We have the phrase “the divine ground of being” meaning us being essentially divine if only we could see it. But here it's everywhere, you can't miss it. This is a picture of the divine on earth.

Patrick Herring, Carlton Hill