

Dear family of prayers

Its been said before – I do things backasswards.

Many have read the below before but the following will be a modest effort to express the inexpressible.

I am healed and your prayers were essential.

I received them on the solstice.

Voila!!!

Amazing and grueling

Pilgrimage to step one

As I offered the MS the refrains repeated – “receive the prayers” and :surrender to what God intends.”

Yes grueling – hard to let go of my agenda to Gods effort to heal and VERY hard to yield to prayers

Step one was receiving the love.

It eventually became clear that it is the way of Divine love is directly connected to receiving the prayers.

I also called on “mi angelos” – Elsie Smith who I was the nurse of for four years and Mary Waters – the mom of my friend Cynthia. Both Mary and Elsie died of multiple sclerosis.

The sudden instantaneity of deep healing—outside of time – then the body folding slowly around timelessness. What the hell is healing and disease?

Got me.

But I am walking now without a cane and I am spiritually made whole.

A miracle is upon me.

“Understanding”: is the distraction of the mediocre.

Truly celebration is more to the point.

Blessing upon blessings upon blessings upon blessings.

Michael

I crossed the desert singing gratitude for my undoing in California-necessary in its brutality. I went directly to the neonatal intensive care in Las Cruces, New Mexico, where I decided to stay alive when I was a baby -- a staph infection in my navel.

I received the last rites of the Catholic Church and so ducked the terrible possibility of eternity in Limbo.

Mark Twain once said he'd choose HELL for the company and HEAVEN for the weather

But limbo?

ETERNITY with a bunch of bored dead babies or Normal, USA or the San Fernando Valley?

The daily news suggests that somehow I ended up in HELL.

My father was a DJ so all of Las Cruces was praying for little Michael.

Again I go to sleep in a bed of prayers and wake up in a bed of prayers and so I say THANK YOU. I seem to be shaving away and giving over this round of secondary progressive multiple sclerosis, which has been with me for over a year .

I offer now a few poems with commentary on this cycle of healing. The poems of this cycle are about reweaving a viable life -- and a healthy body.

I sit now on my grandfather's land in the mountains near Santa Fe, adjacent to his grave and where my mother and I buried my little brother Paul.

Paul -- a psychotic, ecstatic Mormon -- had disappeared four years before we finally had his skull, thigh bone and a lot of unanswerable questions.

Here I will be largely until light fulfills itself June 20 at 10:04 pm -- solstice..

Here my primary spiritual practice is sitting still and receiving your prayers.

Offering the multiple sclerosis at the crossroads -- the bleeding bouquet of flowers.

I have never been more alive.

It is customary in one of the African traditions I trained a little in -- Ifa' of the Yoruba -- is to invite the trickster Eshu before entering any serious ritual activity.

So I begin with some humorous poems -- and then an appreciation of you the prayers called "Seek the light and praise it"

When you are alone for a few days or months nothing is more painful or boring than complaint.

So this poem is called

Quit your bitchin

Wisdom is merciless

suffer it with a smile on your face
and a song in your heart

and halleluyah on your lips

but suffer the light for real

You volunteered so quit your bitchin'

An incurable neuromuscular disease?

It gets a lot worse
and you KNOW it

Quit you bitchin' and get to work

A new diagnosis

I m pioneering pre-senile dementia
Boning up for the real thing

I think in bumperstickers

THINGS ARE THE WAY THEY ARE ARENT THEY?

Signed Dogen Zenji

Or was it old Al Einstein?

Or Doris Day?

We practitioners of pre-senile dementia
let slip small details like that

Things are like they are.

What?
You want to challenge that?

Well you have always been
who you've always been

Gobs

"He was perplexed"
on gravestone

About what?

Gobs of suchness all over the place.

Have a drink and a spoonful of graveyard dust.

Having offered homage to the trickster. let me offer homage to the
you, this village of prayers, who have sustained me in such a time of
uncertainty

And gratitude to the intimate stuff of healing.

This is the third draft of this essay.

Not incoherent, I hope, in trying to express the inexpressible.

Initially I wrote a longish -- rather epic -- dreadfully confessional tour
of the inner life of multiple sclerosis -- specifically through the
scleroses of the lesions spied by MRI --

heart chakra

throat chakra

third eye

corpus collosum

crown chakra

brain stem.

And finally offering the matrix of it all -- the composite reality of MS.
which I will do again on the solstice.

I will only offer you the prayer I wrote when I offered over the sclerotic
heart.

But first the pristine heart of compassion.

Seek the light and praise it

Happy ceramic cat

in rat shit

Front of virgen

bitsy baby Jesus

Found poetry
Zazen

Happy in rat shit
La virgen

Jesus loves being held
Jesus I love being held.

Zazen in Buddha field
Love in all directions
Jesus happy in rat shit

Cat ponders incarnation

Jesus born in rat shit.

Love in all directions
and every prayer
every flicker of candle
Every blessed intent
gathers now in my body

a wide and wild community of loved ones.

Seek the light and praise it

(One of the great gifts of MS is that she has made a born again
Buddhist of me)

Sutra of the heart

Health must be lost and gained

health is not lost or gained

Marriage never succeeds or fails

Enlightenment begins when gained nothing

No quanta of compassion possessed

No consciousness to be altered

Nothing is the pearl of great price

The heart of love forever receives another

Give it all over

Heart chakra sclerotic with ego.

As I "toured" the sclerotic domains of my MS body I found the Aries torque -- me born onto a "battlefield."

To see compassion as heroic is distortive -- and clearly distorted my neurosystem and my spiritual practice.

The priest who gave me the last rites spared me eternity in limbo and delivered me over to the hell of the twentieth and twenty first century: apocalypse --

Still, life

Never cared for the twentieth century
Too much technology

Truth is my soul never arrived

Nagasaki and Auschwitz
Nixon flying to the moon

But twenty-first?

Forget it
Capitalists and pet lemmings

Consumers as pet lemmings

Collective ecstasy of cliff
Sudden enlightenment
head bashed on stone

Bleak?

Cant be bleak enough

Yet still, life
Ashes, anguish, sing praise

We temporarily alive
Sing praise for life left to live

Full and abundant
Can't hold back

Sing praise
for such a planet
this ant
this starry night
spider in orb
and you, radiantly vulnerable
knowing this moment of breath
will not last
flash of lightning

KA-BOOM!

then silence

silence

Sclerotic Heart

Repeats stories
where compassion was called for

Meeting the moment heroically
substantiating to myself and everyone

HE IS A DEEP DUDE

Spirituality expunged of solitude

Give it all over

"

This is the first poem written as I was folding into your prayers --

First Day of Spring 2013
(Love poem to MS)

Within cauldron of prayer
Broth of MS
dissolved and sipped

elixir

Does she step forth blazing?
naked?

Or still yet moving
far interior burn through
pores and shit
You to whom I was passionately wed

We part so long

So very long

Before death

You and I part before beginnings,

symptoms, diagnosis, heartbreak and vision

Inseparable until separation

Chosen by MS to be husband

Ten years now

Longer than mother of daughter

and perhaps more intimate

A young mans longing for intimacy
is a painful thing

He hasn't yet the soul for it
Suffers both his fear and knowledge

But intimacy with spirit of MS?
We know each other well

May it not be til death do us part

God's Intent is to Heal

These neurons
Conversing with myelin sheaths
and wild roses

Singing to one another

Field of nameless lovingkindness
of prayers that I might be healed

Healing is previous to diagnosis
outside of any prognosis

Origin of healing
not of the body

Any healing that does not heal or soothe
the wound between inner and outer

is superficial

The real "hero" of the story is Spider Woman -- who my tribe in Africa
(the Shona) call Ambuya Bwebwe and the Navajo call Adzani Na'ash
jee'ii

She is the one who weaves.
She is Midzimu -- the ancestors beyond the ancestors.

This is the heart of the medicine I practice -- human beings cannot
heal other human beings -- to give oneself to the invisible ones.

Adzani Na'ash jeeiii

Other Side of Blue

Stars pulling upstream seeds

Cerebral spinal fluid in daylight
Twisting earth pulls stars upstream\
Across other side of blue

Dark of sun

light of sun

Sa'ah nagai

bik'eh

hozho

Spider pulling stars and seeds
day and night
in body

Cats cradle

reconfiguring

Love you all

I ll leave it to you to read between the lines.

After offering the lesions of each sacred loci I d wait a couple of days
the inquire of Stephen Karchers' I Ching of how my fate was
rewoven. After giving over the heart chakra scleroses I cast
hexagram 38 -- DIVERGING with 61 CENTERING/ OPEN HEART
the relating hexagram.

DIVERGING -- changing line in the heart of the exterior life -- "Your
ancestors are biting through the obstacles to confer their blessing.
Forget glory, achievement now. Help and nourish others. Consider
yourself blessed by these difficulties. Give open handedly and do
not impose yourself. You are returned to the Way like an animal led
on a leash. Be decisive and part from the past.
Step out and meet the new destiny."

Life is temporary

That is the measure of its beauty

Fragile?

Aliveness of its beauty

Vulnerable?

Fountain of compassion

Source of humor

Fuel of survival

dark night

namelessness invoked

Who is like God?

Yielding illness as gift

bouquet of years

THE INEXPRESSABLE

A wonderful word that allows both being ineffably intelligent and being a total DOOFUS.

Welcome to the Kingdom of Doofusdom!

Not exactly an unique insight that prayer heals but I do live in fear mistaken for some sort of weird ass fundamentalist.

God nonetheless is kind beyond telling.

So yes I seem to be healed.

How to express being free of MS and learning things like walking at 56?

(Enjoying my main prop in the theater of being disabled.

If I walk with a cane I seem to invoke all manner of deference and respect. If I walk without my cane well I m obviously a total drunk quite intoxicated day and night. Truth be told being able to walk IS intoxicating.

How to express giving my neurosystem to being rewoven by the kindness of others.

HOW?

I ll begin with a couple of poems, of course.
What else?

HENCEFORTH

Healing the wound
Between inner and outer

There is no disease
Never has been

Healing is reality through
Which you live .

Fait accompli of complete life
PERPETUALLY LIVED

HENCEFORTH

Extraordinary rigor
Tenacity

REQUIRED

to receive all this prayer

All this love]

I d be unconvinced, disapointed

If it were not so

(Some sing for their supper. My soul insists on dismemberment)

IF I remain diseased

So be it

I accept the full measure of what God intends

The Offering

Of the matrix of
multiple sclerosis
was for real

Been prepared vigorously for decades

Obviously the dharma now
Is living gratitude

No Healing Complete

Without draining
and healing the wound between inner and outer

That wound healed
no diseases clings
in past or present

And certainly am not now ill

See through the transparent veil of MS

“symptoms” quite “empty”

sunyata medicine

Empty as sclerotic composite of stories—
The matrix of lesions

UTTERLY transparent
temporary

NOW and
Not NOW

Composite of healing gestures.

Stories and insights

GIVE IT ALL UP

FIRST OFFERING

With Elsie Smith
Mary Waters

Four wild roses
Startled by thorns

Lost third to ubiquity

Will wither

Flake in heat

As MS flakes off

Three roses.

Stems fresh in tiny stream

That offering vital and fresh

All of this

ALL

Is succumbing to prayers

That I be healed

Succumbing to timelessness which is the heart of God

I ll never understand

Illness and healing

Illness did seem really real

But I went prior or outside its time space dance

It unraveled

It never in fact *was*

And medicine of at-one-ment is medicine of Gods love

Bottom line is that I gave MS
to Gods loving heart

Vast and generous

Gods love coming by prayer

Psyche naked

On wedding night

Now multiple sclerosis
naked this leavetaking

No less beautiful

Her nakedness is transparency

Through which I see blue spruce
Flicker of prayer

Wind in aspen leaves

She is gorgeous

Naked

As I said

Blessings upon blessings upon blessings upon blessings upon ...

Michael

