

Transcribed from a sitting with Emily Carson
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Diamond Mind

Take to the sky tonight. When the diamond that is your true mind becomes one with the thought-producing other, you are released into flight, you are bound no more. When the crying subsides, there is the clarity of a bell in the space inside your head, and a shining the way only empty space can shine, from the depths of the darkness. And you are born then, after the weeping, into the night, but also delivered from it. And you are spoken for, finally, like a person never truly named until the moment of this flight. The diamond awareness is the true mind. You thought up your troubles; they were never part of you. And you cry to release your losses, but nothing is lost. You emerge from your own thinking, from the muddy dullness of your misunderstandings, and are born into liberty, into true form, into formlessness. And you, you find, are what is contained in your diamond mind, the emptiness of your breathing, the fact of your deathless life. And you shine at last, even to yourself, even inside your wholeness, even within your broken pieces, quite in spite of yourself. You shine, and are called by name, and are found to be nameless, and you leave, at last, your earthly unknowing for all the earth's knowingness. You are grounded in flight and lost completely in emptiness. And when you leave, you go nowhere, and no one comes for you, but you have never been so found and you have never loved so deeply. And I cannot say you will smile or you will laugh in your flying, but it is as if your skin becomes joy, your body made of gladness, and contentment encompasses you. The practice of living becomes all that you need, and you desire nothing, not even to hold onto that living. You are born then, you are free. You are made of the stuff of your own longing, released from its cage into the lightness of your own being, into your deathlessness, and into your homecoming.

Questions and Answers

Q: I'd like your help seeing what there is I can do to value my true presence more than I do.

Do you find that presence elusive or can you usually locate it?

...I can usually locate it, but under certain circumstances it...almost always eludes me, specifically if I'm engaged in a personal, head-on confront of my vow to not be humiliated.

It doesn't matter so much if you find and honor that presence at times when you're not being threatened; that is, of course, a lovely thing to do, but it doesn't truly undermine the confusions that need to be addressed inside you. And so the problem you have is not so much one of undervaluing this presence generally, it is of being unwilling or unable to locate it at times when it really counts. In short, you must choose presence over your vow in times when that vow becomes active, in times when you are challenged to accept some consequence you have decided is unacceptable. If you made, in those moments, even the smallest step towards valuing yourself and your honesty over your age-old misunderstandings, it would be a tremendous step indeed. But you cannot make that step if you cannot even find the alternative to your aversion and confusion in the times that count. When those moments arise and you are threatened with humiliation, you need first ask yourself, "What would it be to be true right now? Where am I, myself and my presence, in even this, the most threatening of circumstances?" And then all of your attention must move toward locating that honesty and at least considering it as a choice. The choice you make in your sitting or in your non-threatened moments to really be deeply with a true part of yourself doesn't bleed over into these humiliated moments; you don't undermine your vow through sitting. You can only undermine it at times when it is active. While you wait for these moments, for the danger of that humiliation to become real and eminent, prepare yourself with your vigilance, practice noticing what goes on inside you so you don't miss one of these crucial moments. And then ask yourself, "Where is that presence, now?" Practicing like this, you should be able to make some progress.

Q: I've had this musculo-skeletal issue in my chest for almost a month now, and it's getting better but pretty slowly, and I'm just wondering if it's connected to my emotional work at all.

What is your task right now in your emotional work?

I am working with the vow that I learned long ago that I would never be thrown out on the street to die alone again, and it's from the woman now instead of the little girl, and I know that...what I need to do is freely be able to speak and then freely be able to get thrown out on the street.

Why do you avoid being thrown out on the street? Why does it matter to you?

It feels like the rejection is just excruciating. I'm not sure that it's the dying, it's the before the dying part; it's, I guess, the rejection.

And who rejects you in this excruciating memory?

I don't know,...all I have is the image of getting tossed out into the street to die. I haven't gotten that far yet.

The fact that anyone can matter to you in a way that makes their rejection so excruciating is a grave problem for you. You leave yourself open to untold suffering by being so tightly bound to the whim and opinion of somebody else. You leave yourself no room to breathe freely, no way to relax. You give yourself no opportunity to experience the basic kind of freedom that comes from being able to thrive on simple self-acceptance. You cling and you contract and these things are hard on the body. The body doesn't need people; it even knows this at a very deep level. The body exists perfectly in a perfectly relaxed state. But the tension you feel is a natural bi-product of your own contraction and your imagined need to have someone hold you in high esteem or include you or call you family. These needs you perceive are not real. The body doesn't have them; the mind—your mind—just made them up. If you can't even breathe freely, you can't feel free. You've made of your own life a cage, and you squirm inside its structure and feel it to be too small and much too rigid, and this is expressed in your body's tightness and in its lack of space. But a promise to remain bonded to another person or to a society or institution is a promise you will never keep, and so your vow is doomed to failure anyway. It is inevitably breakable, essentially fragile, and absolutely guaranteed to crumble. There is no fold in which we remain; to realize your own separateness accurately is to feel the pain of the very rejection you loathe, and so, truth, even, is impossible while you imprison yourself in your own vow. And

lightness in the body's being is not possible for these same reasons. When you align your own thinking with the way that things already are, you will give your body permission to align itself; until then you will struggle. You have no hope of being truly happy if you do not give up your promise. I dearly hope that you will.

Q: I need to leave S. alone, and...part of me, as I'm contemplating this, can just see and feel the relief and the poignancy of it, [but] there's another part of me that I guess I know...[and] part of it is related to a memory of watching people come apart, and that nightmare gets kicked up when he does things that appear self-destructive to me. So what can you tell me to strengthen my resolve here?

Why would you not want people to come apart?

That's a good question. I have no answer for it—other than my own distress....

In that distress, what does it seem that is so horrible about their breaking?

In the moment nothing, but...I don't know...why I haven't looked at it like this.... In this moment, I can feel the freedom that's available....

Imagine S., and imagine that he is coming apart, that he is breaking in the way you have seen people break, and see if in the imagining of it you can tolerate not intervening. And I'll come back to you.

[Later:]

What do you feel?

I mostly feel just quiet and expanded and just love—a little bit of a glitch in my solar plexus, obviously some fight—but I don't trust this expansion because it's so not what I've been [in].

You have to trust the fact that you feel this now. And by extension, then, you need to trust whatever you feel when the next circumstance of this brokenness appears. Repeat this for yourself whenever you notice yourself trying to repair or stave off some consequence of coming apart. Resist the urge to fix anything, and see if you can ask yourself what is so bad about people coming apart. The answer you find inside yourself may always be different; it may point you in many different directions depending on what else is active inside you. But the method is always

the same: You have to first resist the urge to fix anything, and then descend into your own sense of what it is like to watch people break. Maybe sometimes it will be you who you see in that breaking, and maybe sometimes it will be someone you love or even someone you've hurt. You allow yourself this experience of the breaking; there is no reason, then, to disallow yourself any other experience of it. People come apart so completely that it is unfathomable to the mind. People die, but that is nothing more than a beginning, nothing more than a superficial way they start to break. But there is deeper pain, the pain of having things wrenched apart and broken while still in form, while still alive, and the agony of parting with so many things held precious for so very long. And then there is nothing but pure relief, the pain transcended by the simple knowledge of its tolerability. You must watch S. come apart, over and over again, and do nothing, over and over again, in acceptance of whatever the nature of that experience is, however painful, and however light-filled. It doesn't matter that you enjoy it, and it doesn't matter that you don't; this experience tonight is real, and so will be its opposite—and you will have to allow for both.

Q: Recently my energy has come back and I've been bigger out there, and often I feel myself more, I would say, and yet I think it really scares me. It's pretty recent and I feel unbalanced and I'm not feeling my fear enough.... I was really big about a week ago and I got really afraid, and I know I didn't feel my fear enough and I don't really know how to be soft and big at the same time.... I don't want to lose my tenderness—I mean, I still can cry and everything—but...I just feel different, so I don't really know.

How do you feel right now?

I feel good when I'm actually speaking to you, I feel a little more embodied, to me; but then after I stop, I get a little scared.

What do you get scared about?

That I'm doing it wrong, that I'm not vulnerable, I'm not really big, I'm just kind of...[doing it] the old way, or pushing, and I don't really have a word for this because it's been so long that I've been down and not really had any energy...,and now it feels great...but I feel unbalanced, I'd say; I worry about it.

Does your guidance tell you that you are unbalanced in this?

I don't know. I mean last night, with I, I got really afraid.... I don't know whether it's thought...,it's pretty new, I've never really felt this way, I don't think, before.

You are right that you need to track your fear better than you are, and you need to listen to the reactions of the many parts of you and not just notice the more superficial way you feel in the particular situation. You are very frightened sometimes, and you are not always willing to notice it. But even if there is something you should do better in your own practice, you never need stoop to the kind of self-abuse, the kind of hysteria and mental confusion that has tended to draw you in in the past. It is not softness to be hysterical; there is no tenderness in that. There is genuine, pure tenderness in being willing to present yourself—and all of yourself—in any situation, no matter what the consequence. But it is not tender to be self-abusive; even if you cry, there is no tenderness in that. Notice your fear and the sense you have of your own complete helplessness and inherent, inevitable brokenness, whenever that fear arises. And when you feel solid in yourself, energized, alive, then present that with no barriers, transparently and without any need to remain in that state or any need to leave it. And then fear and power, both, contain tenderness. They are the same, really, because at their essence is truth. It is because they are honest that they are both so tender, and it is because it is dishonest that your self-abuse is not.

Q: My vow is....just basically...to never let them get me again. And I learned something today,...I made a connection to something I've always known, that I have this huge issue around my own perceived justice in situations, and...this 'I won't let them get me' is this sort of a predicate to that, unless I'm at fault, because I can take my punishment when I know I'm wrong, but if I believe I'm not wrong and I believe...they're...doing an injustice...[then] I feel I have God on my side to win against them.... I've been aware of this justice thing since I was a little kid. I would get so mad at...teachers, anyone that...I believed wronged me.

God is not on your side, D.; he will not lift a finger to fight your battles, no matter how virtuous they be. You are wholly on your own and you always have been. And your cage is your belief that you have a position, a precious side worth fighting for. But there is no cause because there is no justice. There is not a side of right and one of wrong; there is not a virtuous victor reigning supreme over evil wrongdoing. Nobody has ever wronged you because there is no such thing. We all—every one of us—proceed out of our own stupidity, and we act exactly as we must, according to that confusion, and so, then, we are either all wrong all of the time or none, none of the time. Either way there is no justice. You fight for an ideal you believe gives you so many things: your dignity, your sense of self-worth, your idea that you can be in some way superior to

others, that you can be amongst the good, the righteous, the virtuous. And your ideal gives you purpose and a compass, but it is like false guidance, like a mechanism broken and pointing endlessly in the wrong direction. You are not right any more than you are wrong, and the same is true of them. But very importantly, you should know, even if you choose never to leave your position, that God is not on your side, that such a God would be worthless, indeed, were he to be so blind and so ignorant. God is here in equal measure in every experience, no matter its quality, and since experience is devoid of justice, truth, too, is devoid of it. God is here immeasurably in everything real. Most poignantly for you, your own defeat is real, and you will find God most blazingly apparent right inside that defeat.

Q: In my contemplation of my vow, I have found a level of terror that I live with. It has always been there and I have known of its existence but I haven't, for some reason, been able to face it, except for brief moments. How do I overcome this terror?

People are not meant to feel comfortable here. You are alone, dangling naked over some dark confusion, over an abyss holding all of your nightmares, with no understanding to keep you company, and no God you can see anywhere near. And yet you expect that you should not be afraid. If you are alive you will find that frightening; no one with your memories could expect anything else. It is nothing, this terror. It is the shaking of the body in response to the mind's flood, the images of the past misunderstood continuously. It is the body remembering pain and feeling that it is near again, and it is the hope that unreal things be real, dashed, in the clear light of all things remembered. Fear is just there when you are human, like the planet's air or its sunshine. Fear is as much a part of you as anything else you find in yourself, and it is inevitable. I will say, so what that you are terrified—have you not been terrified before and acted anyway? Can you not see that to be terrified is no reason to stop living, or stop pursuing the truth? So you shake when the demons come; fine, but still let them come. You cannot transcend fear, you can simply notice it and know with all the certainty you can muster that fear cannot hurt you, that it is as certain as breathing, the threshold to every pertinent experience, the reason, even, that something is worthy of your attention. How would you know where to look if you didn't have your fear pointing the way? But you know exactly what to do because your terror shines a light on your memories. It cannot hinder you. What can fear do to you that you have not already

done to yourself in your self-imposed paralysis, in your refusal to forgive? Look at it for what it is, the sensation that accompanies all deep experiences, the doorway into the painfully known, into the past, and, so, into a true future. It has no power over you, S. It cannot keep you bound. Only you can do that to yourself.

Q: So my vow is, I'll never let them destroy me again, so the deconstruction of that vow is to let myself be destroyed or killed, and so I do that...as well as I can, and then this deep sadness comes up...for all the things that I see that I'll lose in the dying process, and then if I stay with that I end up in emptiness. ...It feels right, I. says it's right, and my question is about any aids in helping me stay the course.

Are you on course tonight?

Feels like it, yeah.

How do you know?

What I do is I go through those steps, I sit here and feel, okay, here I am,...willing to let anybody here destroy me, and then that loss, that sadness comes up so strongly...and I don't have any particulars about what the loss is about,...and then I can sort of feel the edges of that emptiness or the quietness that emptiness is for me start to come up.

What is important in maintaining your position and your progress is to not lose touch with the outlines of that emptiness, not even in the midst of activity. You can follow your own destruction down into this place of quiet emptiness, but it is better, in a way, if you just stay always with one hand touching that consequence, that vast expanse of absolutely nothing with which you are left after the dying and the losing is complete. You come out of it and then seek your way back through the channels you know. But, in fact, the great fear to you is that you will have to live in the emptiness, that it won't be a matter of coming and going, it will be a matter simply of what is true and what is not. You sense that in some way that emptiness is real, and all of the things you have lost, and even the losing itself, just signposts on the road to the real. Don't travel anymore. In emptiness, you are already home. In quiet lack you find the thing with which you must come to terms. You have broken the vow already; do not reconstitute yourself. Don't leave. It is more important now than ever.

Q: ...So my experience during the last intensive was of just intense heartbreak,...karmically, [around] my daughter, and it just kind of ripped my heart out. My vow was never to...have my heart ripped out

like that again, and since then everything's been progressing fine, but my challenge seems to be, now, to soften and let my heart open again to things in the world so that I put myself in that type of a jeopardy. And I find myself defended against that, not readily willing to open to the things that used to get inside me, whether it's music or flowers or whatever. So I just wanted to hear what you might have to say about that.

What do you save yourself from by keeping your heart closed? What exactly?

It just feels like the repetition of that same pain that I just felt a week ago,...the possibility of that same pain, I guess. ...I'm finding that I love so many things in this world I thought I just didn't even care about before, and...it seems like, in all those, I could find a similar type of heartbreak, and there's a part of me that doesn't want that heartbreak again.

You felt that heartbreak a week ago. What was that like?

It was the most excruciating pain I've ever felt. I felt like I was going insane and then it just left me shaking.... Since then it's been reverberating...to a lesser extent,...not nearly as intense.

A great deal of the agony of that experience was unrelated to heartbreak and a product entirely of your resistance to ending your confusion about that heartbreak. The intensity of the experience was true to the heart's shattering, but the nature of some of it came more out of protest than out of surrender. And this is frequently the case the first time we break around something so excruciating. And this is very good news, what I'm telling you, because this last experience of yours is really the worst it can be, simply because your resistance to it is only bound to lessen. What happens as the resistance lessens is that the pure experience just of the heartbreak begins to appear, and each time you feel this event you have the chance to feel it more purely, more essentially, as it is. And it is not, I assure you, anything that anyone would call agony. It is with great intensity that this experience will continue to appear in you, but there is no reason it needs to be with great suffering. The next time you feel it, it will also be hard, but not as hard as it was before. I'm telling you this so you understand precisely what is happening in you, and how this process moves, and how your experience of it actually transforms as you become more willing. When you begin to notice that even this heartbreak is only an enormous amount of intense sensation, the breaking of a knot you tied with your own hands, the releasing of your own lightness, then you will not object anymore to all the other things in the world trying so hard to make their way into your open heart. It is because this, the most devastating thing, perhaps, you

have ever felt, is, itself, freedom, relief, and actually painless, that I can tempt you to open yourself to other, lesser, smaller things. You lost a daughter, but not, it turns out, in any way that actually matters. If you had defiled her innocence, you would not find it in you. If you had crushed her life, you would not find yourself so inarguably alive. And if you had brought about some intolerable pain, some unforgivable sin, then you would not find, now, that there is no such thing as intolerable pain or unforgivable sin, because every pain is tolerable and every sin already forgiven. This, the most excruciating of memories, is nothing more than an event in your consciousness, proving to you your own innocence and utter indestructibility.

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