

*SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND SEASONS
OF SPIRITUALITY*

PHS Senior Living Spiritual Care Team

Presenters:

Robin Bacon Hoffman

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Like Bonsai by Susan Werner & Greg Simon

The lady at the greenhouse said, "That would be seven-fifty please"
You drove us down the gravel roads, I held it balanced on my knees
You said we'd keep it inside so the branches wouldn't freeze
And I asked you what would happen
If we let it grow
And you said

Some trees were meant to reach
Reach up for the sky
Some trees we trim to keep them pretty
Like bonsai

Winters and then summers and then I was seventeen
We packed up my fall sweaters and my possibilities
And we cried the day you left me at the university
And it was something I remember
As I watched you turn and go

That some trees were meant to reach, you said
Reach up for the sky
Some trees we trim to keep them pretty
Like bonsai, like bonsai

Some trees we trim back
Some hands we tie
Some wings we clip
Some feet we bind

Nineteen forty-eight it was and you were twelve years old
Dreaming about high school and you asked if you could go
And your mother said
"Even very clever girls are better off at home"

Some trees were meant to reach
Reach up for the sky
Some trees we trim to keep them pretty
Like bonsai, like bonsai

100 Years by John Ondrasik

I'm 15 for a moment
Caught in between 10 and 20
And I'm just dreaming
Counting the ways to where you are

I'm 22 for a moment
She feels better than ever
And we're on fire
Making our way back from Mars

15... there's still time for you
Time to buy and time to lose
15... there's never a wish better than this
When you only got 100 years to live...

I'm 33 for a moment
Still the man but you see I'm a they
A kid on the way
A family on my mind

I'm 45 for a moment
The sea is high
And I'm heading into a crisis
Chasing the years of my life

15... there's still time for you
Time to buy and time to lose yourself
Within a morning star

15... I'm all right with you
15... there's never a wish better than this
When you only got 100 years to live...

Half time goes by
Suddenly you're wise
Another blink of an eye
67 is gone
The sun is getting high
We're moving on...

I'm 99 for a moment
Dying for just another moment
And I'm just dreaming
Counting the ways to where you are

15... there's still time for you
22... I feel her too
33... you're on your way
Every Day's a new Day

15... there's still time for you
Time to buy and time to choose
Hey 15... there's never a wish better than
this
When you only got 100 years to live

Holy Now by Peter Mayer

When I was a boy, each week
On Sunday, we would go to church
And pay attention to the priest
He would read the holy word
And consecrate the holy bread
And everyone would kneel and bow
Today the only difference is
Everything is holy now
Everything, everything
Everything is holy now

When I was in Sunday school
We would learn about the time
Moses split the sea in two
Jesus made the water wine
And I remember feeling sad
That miracles don't happen still
But now I can't keep track
'Cause everything's a miracle
Everything, Everything
Everything's a miracle

Wine from water is not so small
But an even better magic trick
Is that anything is here at all
So the challenging thing becomes
Not to look for miracles
But finding where there isn't one

When holy water was rare at best
It barely wet my fingertips
But now I have to hold my breath
Like I'm swimming in a sea of it
It used to be a world half there
Heaven's second rate hand-me-down
But I walk it with a reverent air
'Cause everything is holy now
Everything, everything
Everything is holy now

Read a questioning child's face
And say it's not a testament
That'd be very hard to say
See another new morning come
And say it's not a sacrament
I tell you that it can't be done

This morning, outside I stood
And saw a little red-winged bird
Shining like a burning bush
Singing like a scripture verse
It made me want to bow my head
I remember when church let out
How things have changed since then
Everything is holy now
It used to be a world half-there
Heaven's second rate hand-me-down
But I walk it with a reverent air
'Cause everything is holy now

Development in the Second Half of Life from Gene Cohen, *The Mature Mind*

Phase I – Midlife Reevaluation

- Mid 30s – mid 60s but usually 40s – 50s
- Brain changes start us on path to wisdom
- A sense of a quest, or less commonly, crisis
- We reevaluate – explore – transition to something new
- We confront our mortality, often for the first time

Phase II – Liberation

- Mid 50s – mid 70s but usually late 50s – early 70s
- Brain: new neurons may cause us to look for novelty
- Liberation, experimentation, innovation
- Sense of personal freedom
- May have more time to experiment
- We may think to ourselves: if not now, when?

Phase III – Summing Up

- Late 60s – 90s
- Brain: increased capacity for autobiography
- Motivated to share wisdom
- Desire to find meaning in life
- Desire to attend to unfinished business

Phase IV – Encore!

- Late 70s – end of life
- Brain: changes promote positive emotions and morale
- Continuation, reflection, *celebration*
- Desire to live well to the end of life
- Desire to restate and reaffirm major themes in our lives

"Last Days," "The Summer Day," and "When Death Comes" are from New and Selected Poems by Mary Oliver (1992)

LAST DAYS

*Things are
changing; things are starting to
spin, snap, fly off into
the blue sleeve of the long
afternoon. 'Oh' and 'ooh'
come whistling out of the perished mouth
of the grass, as things
turn soft, boil back
into substance and hue. As everything,
forgetting its own enchantment, whispers:
I too love oblivion why not it is full
of second chances. 'Now,'
hiss the bright curls of the leaves. 'Now!'
booms the muscle of the wind.*

selection from THE SUMMER DAY

*. . . I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?*

selection from WHEN DEATH COMES

*. . . When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.
When it's over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
or full of argument.*

I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.

*"Messenger" and "When the Roses Speak, I Pay Attention"
are from Thirst, Mary Oliver (2006)*

MESSENGER

*My work is loving the world.
Here the sunflowers, there the hummingbird –
equal seekers of sweetness.
Here the quickening yeast; there the blue plums.
Here the clam deep in the speckled sand.*

*Are my boots old? Is my coat torn?
Am I no longer young, and still not half-perfect? Let me
keep my mind on what matters,
which is my work,*

*which is mostly standing still and learning to be
astonished.
The phoebe, the delphinium.
The sheep in the pasture, and the pasture.
Which is mostly rejoicing, since all the ingredients are here,*

*which is gratitude, to be given a mind and a heart
and these body-clothes,
a mouth with which to give shouts of joy
to the moth and the wren, to the sleepy dug-up clam,
telling them all, over and over, how it is
that we live forever.*

WHEN THE ROSES SPEAK, I PAY ATTENTION

*"As long as we are able to
be extravagant we will be
hugely and damply
extravagant. Then we will drop
foil by foil to the ground. This
is our unalterable task, and we do it
joyfully."*

*And they went on. "Listen,
the heart-shackles are not, as you think,
death, illness, pain,
unrequited hope, not loneliness, but*

*lassitude, rue, vainglory, fear, anxiety,
selfishness."*

*Their fragrance all the while rising
from their blind bodies, making me
spin with joy.*

Gene Cohen's list of "developmental imperatives"

- *To finally get to know oneself and be comfortable with oneself*
- *To learn how to live well*
- *To have good judgment*
- *To feel whole – psychologically, interpersonally, spiritually – despite loss and pain*
- *To live life to the fullest right to the end*
- *To give to others, one's family, and community*
- *To tell one's story*
- *To continue the process of discovery and change*
- *To remain hopeful despite adversity*

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