



*Pardes Hannah*  
*The Jewish Renewal Community*  
*of Ann Arbor, MI*

[pardeshannah.org](http://pardeshannah.org)

How can I imagine tonight — the darkness setting in.

Has the moon risen, too?

Is the sky a purple glow of cloud cover and streetlights? Or is Orion sparkling on the roses? How can I imagine tonight after a year when all I could do was see one day ahead? How do I remember a year when all I could imagine was a mystery? The sun shines bright in a perfect blue sky as if it will last forever... lingers in the angles of autumn... and then, as if by magic, the sun sets. Why am I surprised?

Why am I surprised, the nights before tonight, that I have so little to offer. Just an eddy of mismatched thoughts, of fragments, of no sense. No voice. Of I or we. Of One or two. Of community or chaos. Of now or then. No rhythm of ebb and flow; of ebb and flow. Of

Wait. Listen gentle breath. Rise and fall.

Here again. Kol Nidre. Hinei ani. And here we are. The Earth still solid to our feet, our seats, our heavy eyes. Atoms, mostly space, resisting, reacting, active while we rest our souls buried safely under the blankets of the year. Under covers that have offered safety, but weigh now heavy. We tremble beneath, — like Meg, it's not just the weather that makes us shake. It's the weather, on top of everything else.[1] And this year, everything else is, well, a lot. There's no metaphor to contain the souls lost and lost again, the freeze that put lights out, the heat that melted mighty glaciers, or the rain that raises floods. The countless acts of anger. The nearness of dear ones. The distance of near ones. The heartbreak of separation and hidden faces. We asked to be in the attic yet fear the wind. The noise. The widening chasms between those others we barely knew before and know not now. Our words cannot contain the brokenness. Our hearts can. Our words cannot contain the wholeness. Our hearts can.

I've longed for tonight. The quiet opening to a day of at-onement. A space to breathe. Deeply. The Divine. Feminine. Masculine. Divine fluidity. To feel the gentle rocking that lingers after the twelve-foot swells have said their peace. To sense the quiet and see whales dance after the bore tides gush in. Oceans meeting inland shifting mighty river flows from north to south to north.

Tonight, in safety, we re-call, re-member, and re-view the waves we watched go by. The waves that crashed behind us. On top of us. The waves we surfed. The active relaxation at the end of our makeshift boards; misplaced tension and we fall and bounce back, soaked and salty, ears half plugged, limbs flailing and eyes uncertain if its safe open. Made at once buoyant and turbulent from a thousand tiny bubbles tickling the skin. Where am I now? Still out at sea? On a boat I cannot steer? Would I have it any other way? [2]

Where are we now? The mind stretches to see. It sees what lies around. It sees the ground. It catalogs our present. And the mind, walled, has no ladder. The Heart stretches. It feels. It contains. It beats and senses Truth. It rises and returns. And has no destination. Kavannah and human deeds stretch our bodies. Move us out, or in, or in between to where we go next. [3]

And in between, is breath. The rise and fall of connecting, letting go. The ebb and flow. The darkness seeking sparks of light. The sabbath candle casting shadows. We take solace in the dialectic patterns of our faith. Our search for God; God's search for us. [4]

Tonight, in the safety of the night, rocking, resting in motion on the melodies, we wrestle rough seas or gentle ones. We remove the covers, one by one. And doing so we see, we feel, we touch, we savor the interconnectedness of our hearts. Aborning to the

interconnectedness of our inner selves and outer selves, to our children and our ancestors who themselves rise up, return, or catch a current to a far off shore. Electrons and La'alaphim quietly carry our imperfect humanity today, to yesterday, and to tomorrow. I am contained in what Is, what Was, and what Will be. We are contained in what Is, what Was, and what Will be.

Tonight. The sun set. To rise on an eastern shore. Over a glassy sea. The glass mirrors the mountains and the sky. It holds the sun. It hides the darkness deep in ocean's heart.

Until a breath

Tonight, together, sends ripples across the surface. Exposing the dark. Makes mountains tremble while they still stand strong. An ebb. A flow. A gentle surge of love sending rhythm through the light.

[1] A Wrinkle in Time

[2] Mary Oliver

[3] Art Green

[4] Abraham Heschel