



STARR KING
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Music & Poetry

Hayward, CA, Wednesday Evening Group, Kathryn LaMar, 03 January 2018

CHALICE LIGHTING

1 min

If I had my life to live over again, I would have made it a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once a week; for perhaps the part of my mind now atrophied would have thus been kept active through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature.

Charles Darwin

SILENT MEDITATION

2 min

The first sound of the gong brings us to silence. Please take time to center yourself, and temporarily push aside whatever might be preventing you from participating fully in tonight's session. If you wish, meditate on the roles that music and poetry play in your life. The second sound of the gong returns us to each other's presence.

CHECK-IN / FEEDBACK

38 min

What's going on in your life? How did you weather the holidays? Made any New Year's resolutions?

OPENING WORDS

In the beginning was a sound. For Hopi people this sound was a creating song, for the native peoples of Australia the sound was caused by beating the original seas with a reed. For the people of India the whole universe hangs on sound upon which all of human activity is dependent. Christian scripture says that in the beginning was the word--when spoken, a sound.

Elinor Artman

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READINGS / QUOTES ON MUSIC & POETRY

10 min

Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.

T. S. Eliot

How I wept, deeply moved by your hymns, songs, and the voices that echoed through your church! What emotion I experienced in them! These sounds flowed into my ears, distilling the truth in my heart. A feeling of devotion surged within me, and tears streamed down my face--tears did me good.

St. Augustine

From the beginnings of literature, poets and writers have based their narratives on crossing borders, on wandering, on exile, on encounters beyond the familiar. The stranger is an archetype in epic poetry, in novels. The tension between alienation and assimilation has always been a basic theme.

Jhumpa Lahiri

There's a reason poets often say, 'Poetry saved my life,' for often the blank page is the only one listening to the soul's suffering, the only one registering the story completely, the only one receiving all softly and without condemnation.

Clarissa Pinkola Estes

When power leads man toward arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations. When power narrows the area of man's concern, poetry reminds him of the richness and diversity of existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses.

John F. Kennedy

The whole problem can be stated quite simply by asking, Is there a meaning to music? My answer to that would be 'Yes.' And can you state in so many words what the meaning is? My answer to that would be 'No.'

Aaron Copland

I find in my poetry and prose the rhythms and imagery of the best--I mean, when I'm at my best--of the good Southern black preachers. The lyricism of the spirituals and the directness of gospel songs and the mystery of blues are in my music or in my poetry and prose, or I missed everything.

Maya Angelou

Poetry may make us from time to time a little more aware of the deeper, unnamed feelings which form the substratum of our being, to which we rarely penetrate; for our lives are mostly a constant evasion of ourselves.

T. S. Eliot

If I should ever die, God forbid, let this be my epitaph: THE ONLY PROOF HE NEEDED FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD WAS MUSIC

Kurt Vonnegut

What is a poet? An unhappy person who conceals profound anguish in his heart but whose lips are so formed that as sighs and cries pass over them they sound like beautiful music.

Soren Kierkegaard

I can't understand Urdu, Bahasa or Russian, but when the Pakistani Faiz, the Indonesian Rendra and the Russian Rosdentvinsky declaim, I can feel the living throb of rhythm and music, the warmth and passion of their poetry, as do the hundreds, not a mere roomful, of poetry lovers in the audience.

F. Sionil Jose

The spiral in a snail's shell is the same mathematically as the spiral in the Milky Way galaxy, and it's also the same mathematically as the spirals in our DNA. It's the same ratio that you'll find in very basic music that transcends cultures all over the world.

Joseph Gordon-Levitt

Many great works of art, poetry, and music are inspired by astral memories. The desire to do noble, beautiful things here on Earth is also often a carryover of astral experiences between a person's earth lives.

Paramahansa Yogananda

Cultures have long heard wisdom in non-human voices: Apollo, god of music, medicine and knowledge, came to Delphi in the form of a dolphin. But dolphins, which fill the oceans with blipping and chirping, and whales, which mew and caw in ultramarine jaz-- a true rhapsody in blue--are hunted to the edge of silence.

Jay Griffiths

To be creative means to be in love with life. You can be creative only if you love life enough that you want to enhance its beauty, you want to bring a little more music to it, a little more poetry to it, a little more dance to it.

Osho

Jazz is a music of conversation, and that's what you need in democracy. You have to be willing to hear another person's point of view."

Wynton Marsalis

After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music.

Rev. Bramadat

All deep things are song. It seems somehow the very central essence of us, song; as if all the rest were but wrappings and hulls!

Thomas Carlyle

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR THE SHARING

- What spoke to you (positively or negatively) from the readings?
- What does your favorite poem/song mean to you.
- Do you associate any particular music or song with key events in your life?
How do you feel when you hear it now?
- What draws you into a song or a poem? In what way does music or poetry add to or change the meaning in your life?
- Are there ways you express yourself, like writing/reading/reciting poetry; singing, composing, or playing an instrument? Do you have any regrets or longings around your ways of expressing yourself?
- How do music/poetry both affect and reflect your emotional states?
- Has there been a time when music or poetry has added to your sense of spirituality, or been influential in a particular spiritual experience?
- What is the importance of music or poetry readings for you during the Sunday morning worship service?

BREAK

10 min

SHARING ABOUT MUSIC & POETRY

45 min

Please share the poem or song you brought, and tell us why it is particularly meaningful for you. If you did not bring a particular piece to share, talk about your responses or reactions to one or more of the questions for consideration.

DISCUSSION/FEEDBACK

5 min

CLOSING SONG: When I Go (Dave Carter & Tracy Grammer

4 min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZk1CvsDSZc>

[Lyrics at end of program]

CLOSING WORDS

1 min

Sound is a nutrient for our spirit as well as our body. It is how we express ourselves to the world. And sound in the form of music accompanies us throughout our lives, celebrating our brightest moments, sensualizing our romances, and offering comfort for our pain. For many of us, music is the bridge between the inner world and the external, between the invisible world of dreams and passions, and the concrete world we can see and touch. How music touches us is at once personal and universal.

Randall McClelland

WHEN I GO, (Dave Carter)

**Come, lonely hunter, chieftain and king, I will fly like the falcon when I go
Bear me my brother under your wing, I will strike fell like lightning when I go**

**I will bellow like the thunder drum, invoke the storm of war
A twistin' pillar spun of dust and blood up from the prairie floor
I will sweep the foe before me like a gale out on the snow
And the wind will long recount the story, reverence and glory, when I go**

**Spring, spirit dancer, nimble and thin, I will leap like coyote when I go
Tireless entrancer, lend me your skin, I will run like the gray wolf when I go**

**I will climb the rise at daybreak, I will kiss the sky at noon
Raise my yearning voice at midnight to my mother in the moon
I will make the lay of long defeat and draw the chorus slow
I'll send this message down the wire and hope that someone wise is listenin' when I go**

**And when the sun comes trumpets from his red house in the east
He will find a standin' stone where long I chanted my release
He will send his morning messenger to strike the hammer blow
And I will crumble down uncountable in showers of crimson rubies when I go**

**Sigh, mournful sister, whisper and turn, I will rattle like dry leaves when I go
Stand in the mist where my fire used to burn, I will camp on the night breeze when I go**

**And should you glimpse my wandering form out on the borderline
Between death and resurrection and the council of the pines
Do not worry for my comfort, do not sorrow for me so
All your diamond tears will rise up and adorn the sky beside me when I go**