

Deo gratias proter verba tua. . .
Thanks be to God for your words. . .

Correspondence of Frater Alessondro del Bene
to Meister Eckhart
written in the fall of 1327
found in the archives of Monastero San Tomaso, Bellona, Italy

Translated by Ron DelBene

about Meister Eckhart

Frater Alessondrus Magistro illuminatissimo Eckhartensi
salutem cordialem dicit.

Brother Alessandro sends cordial greetings to the most illuminated Meister Eckhart.

Deo gratias propter verba tua quae
venerunt ad me per sermones tuas.

Thanks be to God for your words which have come to me through your sermons.

My dear brother in God, by divine providence, your most inspired work has reached me here. I have been reading your sermons which touch my heart and mind so deeply that at times I cannot sleep, lest I lose my own thoughts that have been provoked by your words. Upon reading your words, I can no longer yearn for the world to come, but am impelled by your teaching to enter more fully into the world at present for it is there that salvation and oneness with our God is found.

I am humbly sending you some small fruit of my meditations upon your words. May Our Lady Wisdom bring to both of us a greater desire for compassion and justice in this world in which we find ourselves.

Alessandro Del Bene

I say, however, that if this will returns to its original source from itself and from all creation even for a moment, this will is again in its true nature and is free. And in this moment all the lost time will be regained.

In hoc apparuit caritas dei in nobis. PRESENTLY NUMBERED SERMON FOURTEEN

THE GREAT FLOOD

Tears well up artesian
flowing over
flooding water over my words
which sputter
and stutter.

Struggling to breathe
my unspoken feelings
shout out
“Help!”
“We’re drowning!”
“Save us!”

Bobbing up and down
slapping at the water
flailing faster and faster
until – finally
they give up

turn over
and
float on their backs
letting the current
carry them
to new wombs
from which
new words are born.

PROPHET

Double barreled word shot
full of seed already
moistened in the humus
of our listening heartmind.

WHEN

When will my work be big enough for my soul?

When I was still in the core, the soil, the stream, and the source of the God-head, no one asked me where I wanted to go or what I was doing. . . When I return to "God" and then do not remain there, my breakthrough is more noble than my flowing out. I alone bring all creatures out of their spiritual being into my understanding so that they are one within myself.

No lite timere eos, qui corpus occidunt, animam autem accidere non possunt. PRESENTLY NUMBERED SERMON THREE

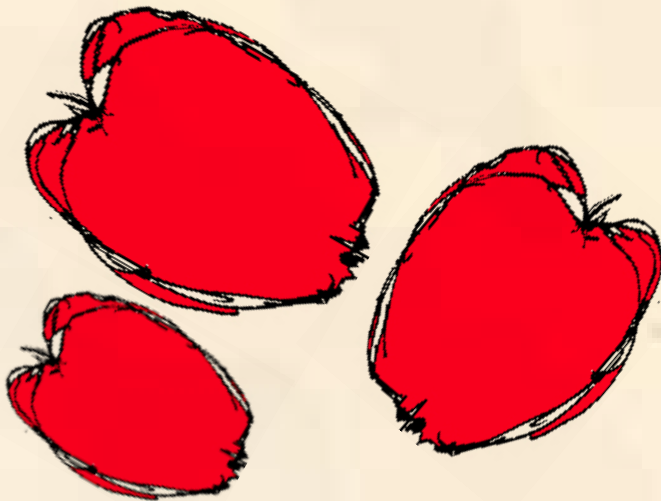
CELEBRATE LIFE!

Take off your shoes!
the grounding green
and humus brown
offers life to your soles
and your soul.

Relax into your roots!
who hear the aches
of water deep down
yearning to empower
stems and leaves
petals and pistils.

Gather pollen!
place to place
drip-dropping life
space to space
apple-seeding across the land.

Celebrate life!



THE NILE

Overflowing
the banks of consciousness
my river
runs wild and
the land becomes more fertile
for the planting of tomorrow.

BEING ONE

Today in my moments of reflection on my place in God's creation, I became LIFE – teeming with all that inhabits the sea and sky and soil. The fire of the candle on my reading table so inflamed my mind and heart in understanding your words that they were etched there by Lady Wisdom's chisel.

The prophet, however, does not know because of his astonishment what he should call the Holy Spirit because of the Spirit's quick and wonderful deeds. Therefore he calls him an "intoxication" because of his quick emanation, for the spirit flows just as completely into the soul as the soul empties itself in humility and expands itself to receive him. I am certain of this: if my soul were as ready and if God should find as much space in it as in the soul of our Lord Jesus Christ, he would just as completely fill it with this "river."

fluminis impetus laetificat civitatem Dei: sanctificavit tabernaculum suum Altissimus. PRESENTLY NUMBERED SERMON TWENTY-SIX

THE WATER HAS NEVER FEARED THE FIRE

Tender tidals
wave to me
and beckon me
to swim against
them.

Diving deeper and deeper
into the frontal attack,
I am empowered in
the mystery of fire
in the water
burning at the core
of the earth
within me.

I die in the fire's
womb water
and crash against the
rock of life when
birthed from the sea.

I lie exhausted
in the valley of placentafood,
but awake,
breathing freely
in my own lungs
now purified by God's mouth.



ALL AT ONCE

Come, thou gentle breeze
that flies from farthest shore
into the universe of my being –
scared and sacred
all at once –
jump into the fire
and dance the sky bright star steps.

If human beings have something that they do not bestow on others, they are not good. People who do not bestow on others things and whatever bliss is in them have never been spiritual. People are not to receive and keep them for themselves alone, but they should share themselves and pour forth everything they possess in their bodies and souls as far as possible and whatever others desire of them.

Fluminis impetus laetificat civitatem Dei: sanctificavit tabernaculum suum Altissimus. PRESENTLY NUMBERED SERMON TWENTY-SIX

POURING FORTH ONE TO ANOTHER

Today my teacher became me – crawling in my skin, not only through words, but through the very fibers of his flesh and blood. I had excitement being possessed with “How would he say this?” “Did he pause here and look away from the paper?” “What really happened between the time of experience and the time of verbalizing on the paper?” “Did he yearn to capture the words that immediatized during the experience, but never could retrieve them on reflection and had to settle for second best, which becomes the best in retrospect?” “Did he feel what I feel in the creative moment?” “Is there but one great river into which we all swim in those currented moments?”

The words were no longer words but vibrations from the mouth-heart-mind-loin-body-space. They were connected, being shouted, whispered, from a living being, and this shot me into a new way of seeing.

RUN!

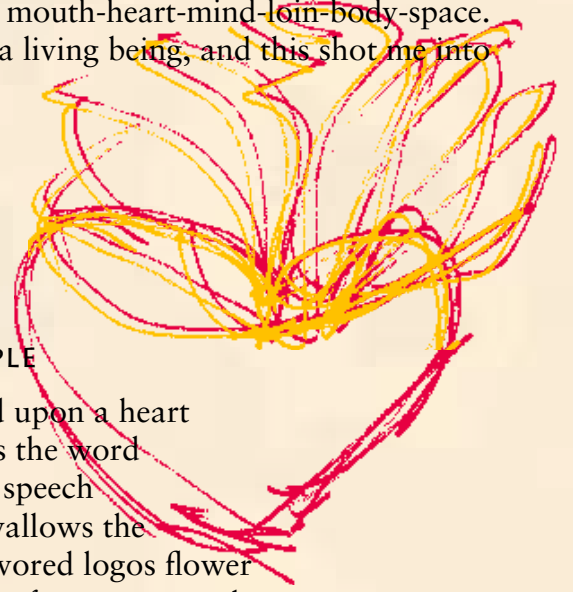
Explain to me
the open door that invites
by grabbing my hand
and running with it across the paper
into words and making.

RUN!

Explain to me
the open door that invites
by grabbing my hand
and running with it across the paper
into words and making

DISCIPLE

A head upon a heart
catches the word
before speech
and swallows the
full flavored logos flower
walking forever onward
head blossomed.



Even all creatures together, in all that they have received, are totally unequal in any comparison to that which is in God, even though all creatures are gladly doing the best they can to express him. . . And so the Father speaks the Son eternally in oneness and pours out in the Son all creatures. They all cry out to come back there where they have flowed out. Their whole life and being is a crying and a hurrying to be back again whence they came out.

Misit dominus manu suam et tetigit os meum et dixit mihi. PRESENTLY NUMBERED SERMON ONE

RE⁷

Re-tell-ing
Re-pair-ing
Re-search-ing
Re-dis-cover-ing
Re-member-ing
Re-mind-ing
Re-me-ing.

EVER

Ever expanding
universe – me
exploding
imploding
ever
again
and
ever
again.

MY OWN CRYING

The tears of my own crying carry me back into the wombs from which I came – earth's, mother's, God's. My own bursting forth and wailing when met with breath and light, the wind and fire of creation, is embedded deep within me. Even now as more fully grown, I curl into position and am born anew and cry to return from whence I came. I am born from below, born from above, born from within, born from without. Now I know that there is but one birthing – eternal.

BEGINNING

Gather me
gently
together
to myself
in newness
of soul
with
all
brothers
sisters
stars
fire.

Gather me
gently.

BOUNDARIES

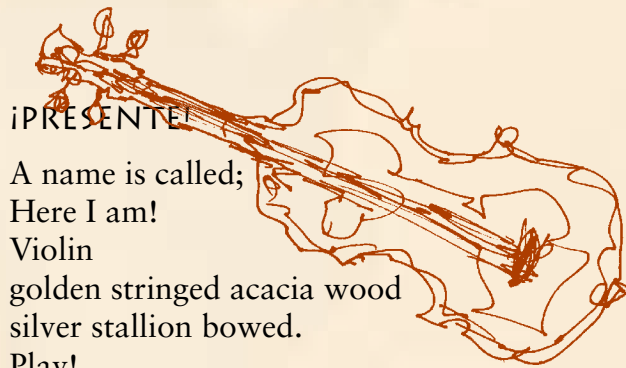
Where
are
the
boundary
lines
in the water
we swim
together?

Listen then to this wonder! How wonderful it is to be both outside and inside, to seize and to be seized, to see and at the same time to be what is seen, to hold and to be held—that is the goal where the spirit remains at rest, united with our dear eternity.

Intravit Jesus in quoddam castellum, et mulier quaedam, Martha nomine, excepit illum... PRESENTLY NUMBERED SERMON THIRTY-FOUR

i PRESENTE!

A name is called;
Here I am!
Violin
golden stringed acacia wood
silver stallion bowed.
Play!



ON MY DOCK

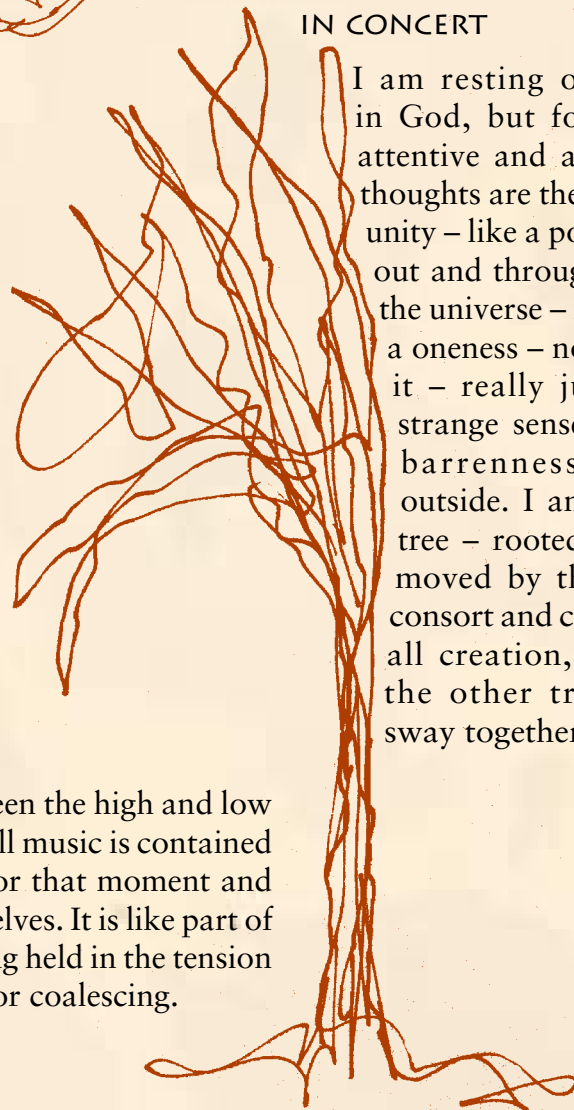
Fisherman and fish
together I am
experiencing life –
casting and caught
eater and eaten.
One.

HELD IN TENSION

It's like I'm being held in tension between the high and low notes of the symphony orchestra and all music is contained within that tension and comes alive for that moment and has a vibrancy beyond the notes themselves. It is like part of an eternal moment – now. It is like being held in the tension of the flaring forth and the yearning for coalescing.

IN CONCERT

I am resting or sleeping in God, but focused and attentive and alert. Other thoughts are there but it's a unity – like a point moving out and through and into the universe – no barriers, a oneness – no words for it – really just one. A strange sense of winter barrenness like the outside. I am a slender tree – rooted and bare, moved by the wind in consort and concert with all creation, especially the other trees as we sway together.



Alessandro del Bene was one of my ancestors living in Bellona, Italy. His signature is authentic. This fictional correspondence was composed as a tribute to Meister Eckhart.



Ron DelBene has been doing spiritual direction and leading programs in the areas of prayer, spirituality and personal development since 1963. Ron holds a Master's degree in Theology and a Doctor of Ministry in Spirituality and Organizational Systems. He has done additional postgraduate work in education, psychology, and counseling. He is an author, poet, artist and Episcopal priest. He was an assistant professor of theology, director of a campus ministry center, and national consultant in religion for an education division of CBS.

Since 1980, Ron's organizational system's leadership has been primarily in churches, empowering them in understanding their mission, goals and structure for effective and creative ministry. Ron and his spouse, Eleanor, reside in Trussville, Alabama, and have two grown children and two grandchildren.

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