

Words out of Silence

60 Days in Solitude

Bok

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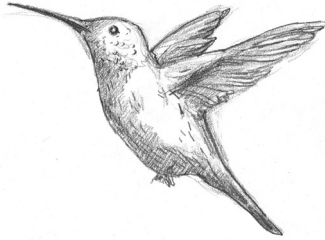
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Without thought, you would always be here and now.

There would be no way to be anywhere else.

You must come to understand the nature of thought.

Why? Because thought happens.

Bok



Sixty days can feel like a long time.

Sixty days ALONE can feel like a really long time.

Sixty days ALONE in SILENCE can feel like... ETERNITY.



April 22nd

Dear A,

I leave for my 60-day retreat tomorrow. I'm nervous. I don't feel ready, but then I think, will I ever feel ready? I doubt it. Just have to jump in, I guess.

I am passionately interested in self-realization, as you know. My mind can't quite grasp the nature of it, but I've had a number of extraordinary experiences that have left an unforgettable taste in my mouth. Everything else in my life now turns back to this search. All is a means to this end. Every moment.

The idea of doing a long solo retreat has been growing in me for some time. Having done silent retreats with various spiritual teachers for about a decade now gives me some comfort, but 60 days alone in silence feels like a whole new level, and with that comes a whole new level of anxiety.

I plan on meditating when I first wake up, but other than that, I want to follow the whim of the moment. This is a little risky I think, not to have more structure, but I really want to notice, as I become more sensitive, where the body/mind/spirit moves me. I am bringing a book of Rumi for inspiration, and also the white orchid that you gave me, to remind me of your beauty.

Apparently, my little cabin is called "Most Secret" and is on the side of a hill overlooking a forest of pine trees

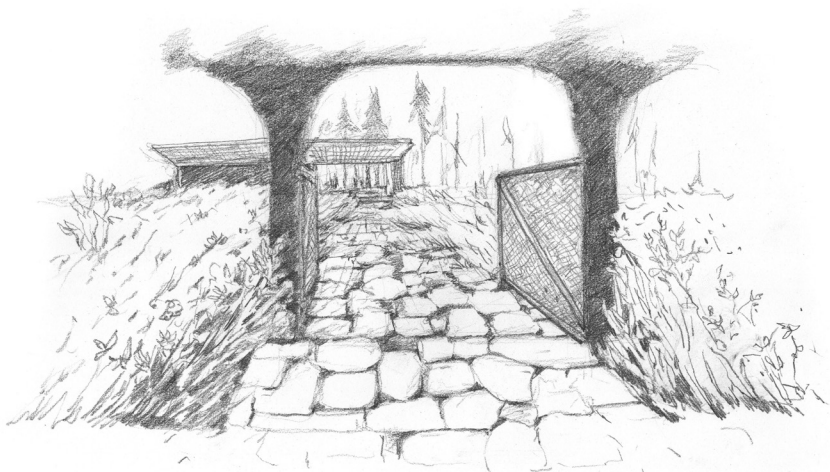
and redwoods. It's one of a group of isolated cabins used specifically there for individual retreats. Down the hill from the cabin is a large creek that I can take my daily walks by, or climb back into the wild hills where deer and mountain lions co-exist.

My gracious hosts tell me the only time I'll be aware of them is when they ring the meal bell, alerting me that my food is ready by the washrooms. Other than that, it's just me in the mirror.

Wish me luck!

With Love, Bok

On the morning of April 23rd, I drove into the mountains just east of Santa Cruz, California and arrived at the Vajrapani Retreat Center late in the afternoon.



I parked my car and ascended a long set of wooden stairs to a tiny cabin at the top of the ridge. As the sun set, I reluctantly closed the cabin door to begin my sixty-day silent retreat.

Retreat



Day 1

I close the cabin door.
Not a word for 60 days.
I am alone.
Nausea. Overwhelming nausea.
I am gripped with fear.
I don't know if I can do this.
I'm sure I can't.
What was I thinking?
If I don't face this fear right now, I am done.
I sit.
I take out a pen and paper.
Why am I here?

Why AM I here?



To LOSE myself in the mystery of existence

Day 2

It's only the second day.
I want to go home.
There's nothing to do here.
No yoga classes.
No teachers to focus on.
No group meals.
There's nothing to do.
There's simply nothing to do.
Whenever I have this thought,
the unknown looms
and I feel the urge to puke.
Why am I here?

Why AM I here?



To FIND myself in the mystery of existence



Day 3

When out of nowhere,
the breath makes itself evident,
and you desire nothing more than to listen to yourself
breathe,
something has fallen away,
for now.
This is a place of peace.





Trust the breath
It has no agenda
The breath is true
Through and through

☾

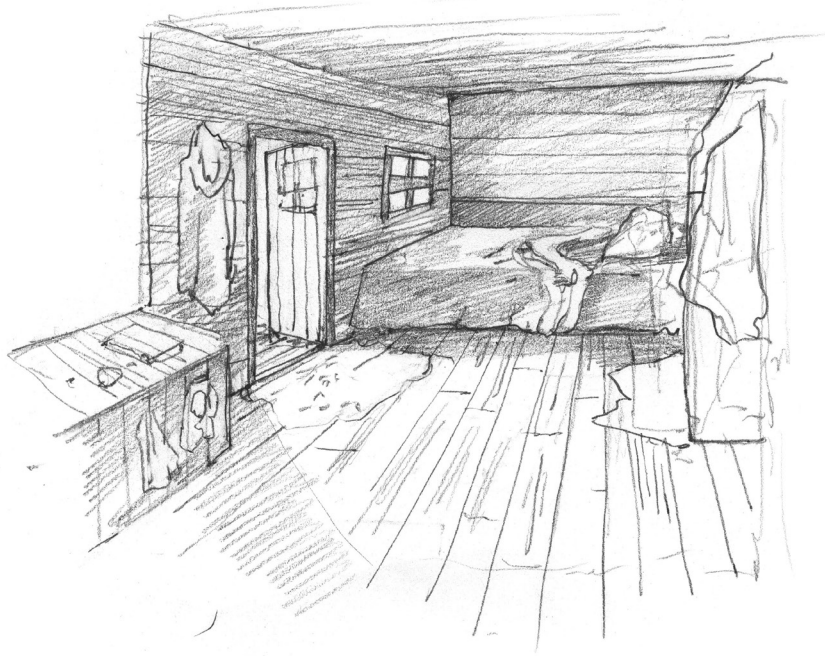
Breath is like my meditation belay.
It allows me to climb high with confidence
AND
It allows me to let go and fall without fear.



Day 4

I am here
I am still
I am at your mercy
Show me the way





I'm writing, I think.
I hear birds, I think.
The temperature is perfect, I think.
Only because I think.
Otherwise, who knows what's going on.

Day 5

Don't fool yourself thinking,

"I wish I had more time."

Even here in retreat,

where there's nothing to do,

I still think,

"I don't have enough time."

Amazingly, this thought still arises
and the anxiety right along with it.





I can't ever know what's best for another.
What's best for me is I don't know.
I think I know what's best for me
I think I know what's best
I think I know
I think
I



The “I” thought is powerful enough to create a “person”.

Day 6

I'm on retreat.

I should take advantage of this time and do something.

Guess what?

I don't want to do anything.

Is there time for that?



Just breathe, inquire, listen.

