

Greetings from Your Editor

The deadline for this issue of *The Rose in the World* was a few weeks before the presidential election, at the height of autumn and before there was a winter chill in the air. Many of the submissions were sent to us long before that date, some had been waiting since last year to find a home in this issue. As I perused the many offerings, I was struck by the poignant and fitting journey on which they took me. It is a journey I hope to recreate for you, our reader, in the pages that follow.

We begin in the fall. As the weather gets cooler, the leaves turn bright with color and begin to fall. This is a time of transition and remembrance. At this time of year, we celebrate the lives of those who have passed, honor the ancestors, and begin to prepare for the winter months ahead. It is a time of change. This year, more than most, was rife with transitions. Whomever you voted for in the presidential race, the result was a massive upheaval that we must confront if we are to begin to move forward. For many, this was a time of grief, disappointment, and anger.

There were also many deaths this fall, including celebrity icons passing on and leaving their legacies behind them. Perhaps you had personal or professional changes and loss. This time of year, those moments seem somehow more harsh against the cold, stark canvas of the coming winter. The days are getting shorter and shorter, the sunlight fades more and more. This is the first theme that presented itself in this issue of the *Rose*. From there we move into the fullness of winter. We move to the end of the year, the last month of the calendar, and we begin counting the days to the holidays and the new year.

This is the season of Advent.

This is a time of waiting.

This season is filled with holidays and holy nights from many different cultures all over the world. It seems as the light dims, we are offered a time for reflection, a time to pause and look back on all that has happened this past year. The dark light of the soul shines from within the depths. Advent means “coming into being or use.” This is what this season gifts us, time to just be. Though this can be difficult, it should not be brushed aside.

Many of the offerings given to you, our readers, in this issue of the *Rose*, take this season into account. Our authors recall tough times and difficult personal experiences, some even make commentaries on the state of our society in this moment. In the end, they all seem to suggest that the beauty of these difficult times is that there is support and healing to be found even in the darkest moments. There is always a light in the darkness. As the late Leonard Cohen said, **“there is a crack in everything, that is how the light gets in.”**

The poems and stories presented to you here illustrate that process of cracking open. Just as a bird grows within its egg, waiting to be hatched, our grief, loneliness, and anger begin to give way in this process of gestation and waiting. The longer we sit with these difficult emotions, the more the tension grows, until finally, one day,

we find we can no longer sit in the dark. We must follow the light that is breaking through.

Although it can seem as though Advent is just a lead up to Christmas; that December is just the end of the year, this season offers us so much more. It is true that by the end of this month, finally, 2016 will be over and 2017 will be upon us. However, this time of quiet anticipation is a gift in and of itself. In the lighting of the advent candles every Sunday or in the act of opening a new door each day on the advent calendar, we learn to cherish the present moment and all that it brings. This anticipation should not be rushed or forgotten.

This issue of *The Rose in the World* takes us into this realm as well. There are enough articles included (counting the *Rose's* Dream for the World and this editors note) to serve as a daily devotional throughout the month if you would like to use it that way. You may also choose to read it cover to cover in one sitting. Either way the stories will take you through the difficulty of the fall, to the

reverie of winter, and then to the healing light of the sun returning around Yule. Our authors find this third step of healing by traveling many different paths. Whether through recording dreams, going to church, gathering with dream group, going to spiritual direction, through laughter, or by taking quiet moments to see the divine in our everyday life, healing begins. This healing is also a part of waiting. This anticipation can offer us a new perspective. It is rich and nourishing, it is the seed of hope.

This is where the gold lies.

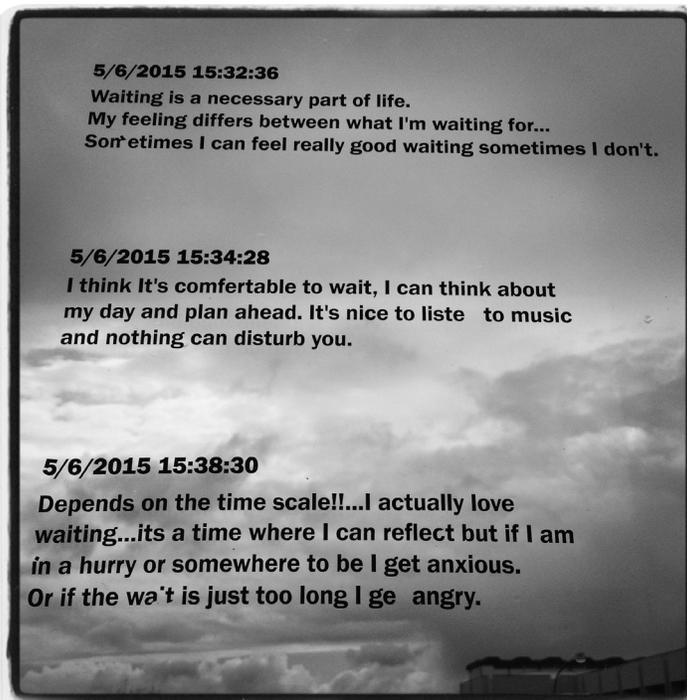
In the shadows, the light is finding a way to break through. The final leg of the journey that this *Rose* has to offer is one that leads to wholeness, to the gold within. This is the culmination of the Advent experience, after all

that waiting, we come into Being and find ourselves anew.

I sincerely hope that this issue takes you on this night sea voyage: from the experience of change and loss, to a time of reflection and remembrance, into a period of healing, and finally back to the light, to the Sun, the Son, and the Self. This is the story of a lifetime, the parable of a year, and the chronicle of all humankind. At the end of this grand adventure, once we have found our inner gold and as the sunlight returns and the days grow longer, we begin to see that inner gold reflected in the world around us. This time of winter waiting has given us the greatest gift of all. The gift of being wholly in the world.

So, **I wish you all a beautiful New Year, a Merry Christmas, a Happy Chanukah, a Joyous Kwanza, a Happy Mawlid an-Nabi, a Festive Pancha Ganapati, an Enlightened Bodhi Day, a wonderful Yule,** and the celebration of any holiday or holy night which brings you peace and love this time of year. Most of all I wish you a holy, healing winter and a divine Advent.

~Sarah D. Norton



Photograph I took of quotes on a glass partition of a bus stop while waiting in the cold in Reykjavik, Iceland