

The Real Story

It happens imperceptibly
So silently
So slowly
We cannot know the time
Nor place

We cannot name the day
Nor moment
We cannot tell when
We came to know
That to become ourselves
We had to hide ourselves

We had to protect our souls
Sequester our spirits
And learn to doubt our gifts and
What we knew we
Really loved

We are not born alone, empty or lost
We are born into the vibrant web of life
Open to wonder, creativity and
The abundant possibilities of life and learning

Breathing in the joy of exploration and discovery
Singing with the wind
Dancing with the trees
Blossoming with the first buds of spring
We did not know
What we could not, or should not,
Do or be

We were free to play
To wonder
To try out all of whom we might become

Buoyed by our own imagination
And embraced by a palpable
Yet transcendent field of connections
And belonging--
So big it took our breath away

But s l o w l y
New and older voices began to tell
A different story
Began to ask us to live
A different story

They told us that wonder,
Awe and imagination were only
For the young

That we would outgrow them
That the World they called real
Would soon teach us
To change our minds about
Everything

About the joy of exploration and discovery
About singing with the wind
About dancing with the trees
About blossoming with the first buds of spring
About belonging to the World,
Ourselves and one another

And g r a d u a l l y ,
Just as they said we would,
We became the story they told us
The wind still embraced us,
But we had no time for singing
The trees still danced,
But we dared not join them
And the first blossoms of spring emerged
Without us becoming part of their flowering

But as g r a d u a l l y
As we had become lost,
We were reinvited into the World our
Hearts,
Souls, and
Spirits had always known was
Truly **real**

A new story was being told
A story of meaning and mystery
Of wholeness and wonder
Of imagination and connections
Of life and learning

And it was living this story that
Returned me
To who I am
It was living this story that reconnected me to
The natural World,
To the song of the wind
To the dance of the trees
To the flowering of the first buds of spring

It was living this story that returned
Me to myself

And told me that I am not alone, empty, or lost

It was living this story that brought me
Back to life and told me

I belong.

-Stephanie Pace Marshall
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