

Let This Darkness Be a Bell Tower” by Rainer Maria Rilke

Translation by Joanna Macy and Anita Barrows

Quiet friend who has come so far,

feel how your breathing makes more space around you.

Let this darkness be a bell tower
and you the bell. As you ring,

what batters you becomes your strength.

Move back and forth into the change.

What is it like, such intensity of pain?

If the drink is bitter, turn yourself to wine.

In this uncontainable night,

be the mystery at the crossroads of your senses,
the meaning discovered there.

And if the world has ceased to hear you,

say to the silent earth: I flow.

To the rushing water, speak: I am.