

Blessing That Becomes Empty As it Goes

This blessing
keeps nothing
for itself.
You can find it
by following the path
of what it has let go,
of what it has learned
it can live without.
Say this blessing out loud
a few times
and you will hear
the hollow places
within it,
how it echoes
in a way
that gives your voice
back to you
as if you had never
heard it before.
Yet this blessing
would not be mistaken
for any other,
as if,
in its emptying,
it had lost
what makes it
most itself.
It simply desires
to have room enough
to welcome
what comes.
Today,
it's you.
So come and sit
in this place
made holy
by its hollows.

You think you have
too much to do,
too little time,
too great a weight
of responsibility
that none but you
can carry.
I tell you,
lay it down.
Just for a moment,
if that's what you
can manage at first.
Five minutes.
Lift up your voice—
in laughter,
in weeping,
it does not matter—
and let it ring against
these spacious walls.
Do this
until you can hear
the spaces within
your own breathing.
Do this
until you can feel
the hollow in your heart
where something
is letting go,
where something
is making way.

Jan Richardson is an artist, writer, and ordained minister in the United Methodist Church. She serves as director of The Wellspring Studio, LLC, and has traveled widely as a retreat leader and conference speaker. Known for her distinctive intertwining of word and image, Jan's work has attracted an international audience drawn to the welcoming and imaginative spaces that she creates in her books, online blogs, and public events.