



Our Sacred Texts

What written words stay with us and guide us?

Several of our brothers share some of the sacred texts that live in their hearts.

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Gay Spirit Visions

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 339, Decatur, GA 30031-0339

Voice mail: 404-658-0221

E-mail: info@gayspiritvisions.org

Website:

www.gayspiritvisions.org

Council of Trusted Elders

Michael "Ma'el" Varnum,
Presiding Elder

Bruce Parrish,
Elder of Finance

Jennings Fort,
Elder of Communications

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The 2006 Gay Spirit Visions Council Members

consists of the Council of Trusted Elders plus Craig "Craigalee" Cook, George Miller, Arnold Peluso and Kim Pittman

Advisors: Martin "TreeWalker" Isganitis, Andrew Ramer, John Stowe

Journal Committee:

Jennings Fort, *Editor*

Mike Goettee, *Design & Production*

Submission Queries:

jenman@mindspring.com

Please put "GSV *Visionary*" in the subject line.

Address changes & advertising queries:

visionary@gayspiritvisions.org

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ELDER'S PERCH

Good Day Brothers,

I am honored to be serving as your Presiding Elder. I want to begin by telling you how I came to this position. I joined GSV in 2000 when friend, Darrell Grizzle, brought me to my first Fall Conference.



BY MICHAEL
VARNUM


That first experience was, well... WOW! As many of you have experienced, it is a heart opening, mind blowing and catalytic life-altering event. I was hooked from that moment on. During my second Conference I was fortunate enough to have Treewalker in my small group and, at this point, I knew that I had to become involved with the organization. He invited me to the annual (at the time) Planner's Retreat. I was now serving on the Council. My first year on the Council, I took a leap of faith (in myself and by my fellow council members) and served as the Fall Conference coordinator. I had never done anything like this before. Sure, in my mundane life I've been in management positions but this was a beast of a different sort all together. I took that leap of faith and flew with it. Looking back I have to say that I surprised myself (and I think a few other people) by how well everything flowed together (Thank you, Spirit). My first experience on the Council was so wondrous, that my heart begged to be set free and to play with my brothers again. After such a positive conference experience I decided to serve again for the

following year. I was then asked to serve as fall coordinator again. I accepted joyfully. I've been serving in that capacity ever since.

Then a year ago, after the loss/transition of our dear brother King (whom, may I say, I learned a great deal from), I was asked to step up and serve the greater brotherhood as Presiding Elder-elect. As I served this year as The Lady in Waiting (as our Queen Mum calls it), I did a lot of looking back at all that GSV has taught and given me over my time serving on the Council. I have been *blessed* with so many countless gifts and honors, that have enriched my life and made me a more loving, caring and compassionate man. Yes, I admit freely that serving on the Council has changed my view and experiences at the retreats and conference. But it has all so enriched me in ways that being just a participant could never have done. The Council has given me opportunities to grow and love in ways that would have taken much longer in my mundane life.

I invite you to step out of your everyday existence and do something that scares you, pushes you and *sets you free*.

I would like to leave you with this thought: how has serving your fellow brothers and sisters enriched your life?

Blessings to you, my brothers. 

Michael "Ma'el" Varnum currently lives in Marietta with his best friend. He is dating a most wonderful man and awaits the long, warm summer.

Gay Spirit Visions

Our Mission Statement

We are committed to creating safe, sacred space that is open to all spiritual paths, wherein loving gay men may explore and strengthen spiritual identity.

We are committed to creating a spiritual community with the intent to heal, nurture our gifts and potential, and live with integrity in the world.

We are committed to supporting others in their spiritual growth by sharing experiences and insights.

To fulfill these goals we facilitate annual retreats and conferences, sponsor social events, publish a newsletter, and maintain Internet-based communications for men who love men.



STRAWBERRY GIRL

My favorite book has always been J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Everybody knows the story by now. The tale about innocent little hobbits on a terrible journey to save their world is one of the best stories I know. I've read it about five times and each time thrills me. When the

BY JENNINGS FORT



first movie, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, came out, King Thackston e-mailed me once that he thought the men of GSV were like these hobbits, on a journey for good in the world.

Another book that I loved is *Strawberry Girl* by Lois Lenski. This is a children's story of a little girl in Florida whose family struggles to make a living by growing strawberries in the wilderness in the early 1900s. I first read this in the fifth grade and saw a little of myself in this girl who loved helping her parents make things grow and felt a special connection with nature. Like the hobbits, Strawberry Girl has her own adventures and both books live a sweet place in my heart.

This issue of *Visionary* features "Our Sacred Texts," written words that have special spiritual meaning for us. Several of our brothers share the holy books, poems and printed thoughts that have spoken to them, fed them and accompanied them on their journeys.

As one of my sacred texts, *Strawberry Girl* would come back to me in unexpected ways.

In the seventh grade I didn't realize that many of my classmates weren't too tolerant of sensitive boys.

In a new class of students, a teacher, discussing books that we might read, suddenly held up a copy of *Strawberry Girl*. "Here's one," she said. "Little girls are supposed to like this."

"Well, I liked it!" I said without thinking and immediately realized what I'd done. Laughter exploded around the class and even the teacher joined in. This, combined with the rest of my personality, gave the bullies, male and female, complete validation that I was the class sissy. So I continued a long, unfortunate journey of my own until I could leave junior high and begin high school.

My experience with *Strawberry Girl* wasn't over yet, though.

After talking about this with my partner, John, he bought me a copy of *Strawberry Girl* for Christmas. I read it and remembered. She came alive again and so did my love for this book. So now I realize that even though little girls may like this book, little sissy boys can like it too. And so now I, a grown-up gay man and still a sissy, can say that I have a happy ending with this book. Like the hobbits and Strawberry Girl, I'm glad to continue my journey as I am.



GSV potlucks in Atlanta, are held the fourth Saturday of the month at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. **GSV potlucks are drug- and alcohol-free events.**

GSV Heart Circles are held the second Sunday of every month at 7:30 p.m., hosted by Wendell Johnson and Lem Arnold. For location and more information, contact Wendell at louis8@hotmail.com or Lem at lem1951@mindspring.com

March 25 – GSV Potluck. Hosted by Jim Hackney and Scott Haight, 1181 Mica Lamp Ct. SE, Atlanta. Contact Jim and Scott at 404-624-4524 or scottatiga@aol.com.

April 22 – GSV Potluck. Hosted by Phil Robst, 3030 Park Lane, Chamblee, Ga. Contact Phil at 770-986-1205 or phil@robst.com.

May 27 – GSV Potluck. Hosted by Michael Goettee, Roy Smoot and Marty Harris, 3263 Wynn Drive, Avondale Estates, GA. Contact Mike at maxglitz@mindspring.com or 404-292-5825.

June 24 – No potluck scheduled.

July 22 – No potluck scheduled.

August 26 – No potluck scheduled.



Gentlemen, please note that we don't have hosts for the months after May. Hosting a potluck is a simple and effective way to serve GSV. Please let us know if you can host. Contact Ben Linton at benlinton4@bellsouth.net.

Help us realize the vision for GSV

Over the past 16 years, Gay Spirit Visions has tried to remain true to its mission of creating safe, sacred space that is open to all spiritual paths, wherein loving gay men may explore and strengthen spiritual identity. Since our first annual Fall Conference in 1990, we have added a yearly Spring Retreat and Winter Meditation. In the Atlanta area we introduced monthly potlucks and heart circles. And, of course we continue to publish our journal, *Visionary*, as well as main-

taining Internet-based communications.

Now, the Council of Gay Spirit Visions would like to ask: *As a supporter of GSV, how would you like to see us evolve over the next five years... 10 years? What do you like about GSV? What would you change? What would you add? Are we overlooking ways to develop new projects, scholarship programs or events? In what specific ways would you like to see us grow?*

For those of you who have supported us and

grown with us over the years, here is an opportunity for you to help shape the future of GSV.

We have created a special mailbox, for your feedback and ideas. Please e-mail your feedback and ideas to: suggestions@gayspiritvisions.org. Please limit your comments to approximately 100 words. The deadline for submissions is March 10.

Namaste,

Michael "Ma'el" Varnum

Presiding Elder, Gay Spirit Visions

9th annual GSV Spring Retreat

See insert in this issue of Visionary for retreat details and registration!

Join us for heart circles, drumming and more with lots of free time for spontaneous celebration...

...And, for the first time, a pre-retreat **FLAG-MAKING WORKSHOP.**

April 7-9, 2006

The Mountain Retreat and Learning Centers near Highlands, NC

Register for the Spring Retreat with a credit card by calling The Mountain at 828-526-5838 or download a registration form on the GSV Web site: gayspiritvisions.org

Deadline for Early-bird discount is March 8.

For more information: See the GSV Web site, gayspiritvisions.org.

E-mail us at info@gayspiritvisions.org or leave a voice message at 404-658-0221.

Jeff "Tigrr" Jacka will hold the workshop on Friday, April 7, beginning at 9 a.m sharp.

All materials included, with hands-on instructions for dyeing and sewing one set of flags.

On Friday evening and Saturday there will be opportunities for learning the basics of flagging meditation/spinning with your new flags. All levels welcome!

Tigrr has been flagging as a spiritual practice for many years.

Cost: **\$50 per person** to cover materials.

A maximum of 15 spaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Register for the workshop by contacting Tigrr at tigrr@heartbreath.org.

Registration deadline for the flag-making workshop:

Friday, March 24. This registration is *only* for this workshop. Retreat registration is also required.

There seems to be a lot of interest, so sending in a deposit early will reserve your space.

Note: If you'd like to arrive Thursday evening (whether or not you're attending the flag-making workshop), you can register with The Mountain for an extra cost of \$58 which covers Thursday night lodging, Thursday dinner, Friday breakfast, and Friday lunch.

GSV NEWS BRIEFS

Gay Spirit Visions contributions to The Mountain

The Staff and Board of Trustees at The Mountain express their thanks for the recent outpouring of financial support from the brotherhood of GSV. Forty-seven of our brothers contributed over \$10,000 during this challenging time for The Mountain.

Tom Warth, President and CEO since the first GSV gatherings at The Mountain, has described to the GSV Council his appreciation for the many years of support and pride in the commitment of GSV to continue to create a community of peace, justice, civility and compassion.

GSV Youth Project continues in 2006

The GSV brotherhood conducted a scholarship program in 2005 to bring gay men ages 21 – 30 to the Fall Conference. It was overwhelmingly successful with nine delightful men accepting the invitation to join our circle.

Because we recognize that the next generation is the future of our brotherhood, the Council is pleased to offer this program again for the 2006 Fall Conference. We ask that you help in recommending gay men ages 21 – 30 who have not attended a Fall Conference to apply to be considered.

The Council committee will communicate with the person to describe our mission and the Fall Conference activities.

Please send us the names of candidates or have the person contact Chase Robinson at gchasejr@aol.com.

Please update your address for the Visionary mailing list

It's important that you send us any address changes for our mailing list by letter or by e-mailing info@gayspiritvisions.org.

If you change your address, the post office will forward mail for one year. But after that, we receive a notice and can't send you our publications. With no new address, we must remove you from the mailing list.

Please keep us up-to-date!

GSV Looking For a Web Master

Do you have Web site management skills that you would like to donate to GSV?

GSV is looking for someone to maintain the site and add some creative flair.

If you're interested, please contact Jennings Fort at jenman@mindspring.com.

THE JOY OF TEXTS

Queer Texts

The theme of GSV Fall Conference VI, held in 1995, was “Awakening the Elder Within.” Our keynote speakers were Mark Thompson and his partner, Malcolm Boyd. I still remember Malcolm saying that we cannot allow the fundamentalists to own the Bible, that we have to reclaim it, read it, interpret it and use it ourselves.



By ANDREW RAMER

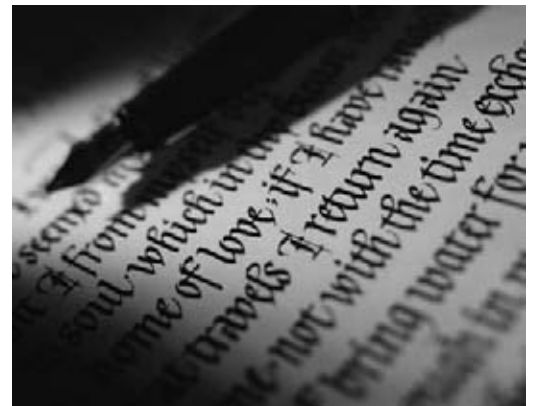
There’s an old Jewish saying that every person ought to have two teachers, one living and one dead. It doesn’t mean that every person ought to have one living teacher and one spirit guide, although some rabbis did. It means that every person ought to be guided by one living teacher and by a book written by someone who is dead. Books have always been among my teachers. In fact it’s texts, and the modern expression of texts, that empowered me to come out.

In 1971 I was studying in Jerusalem. One of my teachers was a Modern Orthodox woman who came weekly to the collective house I was living in to teach us Torah, using the commentaries of the medieval French rabbi, Rashi. The first week she trudged up our hill carrying a heavy volume of the Torah with Rashi’s commentary under her arm, and a copy of D.H.Lawrence’s *Women in Love*. I’d heard about Lawrence, but never read him, and, when class was over, I asked our teacher about the book. She told me that a film based on it had just opened in the city. I had to take two busses and walk a long way to get to the theater, alone. In the darkness, watching Gerald and Rupert struggle with their feelings for each other, I came out to myself. Only years later did I discover that the screenplay was written by the gay Jewish writer Larry Kramer.

Before seeing that film, I knew that men could have sex with each other but that wasn’t what I was looking for. I wanted something else that the movie offered a glimpse of, something that I had never seen or even heard about. And even though the men in the film could not connect, I emerged back into the light that day inspired. The inner calling I’d felt for years finally had a name, love and a direction, toward love. But I still struggled to allow myself to move toward something that seemed forbidden by my tradition. It was a verse in the Hebrew Bible that finally empowered me, when we came to it in our study class some weeks later. It’s still one of my favorite verses in the Bible, from Genesis, chapter 12. In it, God speaks to Abraham and says:

Go forth from your native land and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you.

The words in Hebrew for “go forth” are *lech lecha*, and Rashi says that they don’t just mean to leave home, but also mean, “go find yourself.” Hearing those words explained to me that way, in our lighted living room, by a Modern Orthodox woman, was the blessing that I needed. In a flash I realized that I belong to a people whose founder left home to find himself, and that it’s my birthright as his descendant to do the same thing, to leave the path I was taught to follow and come out, not just to myself, but to the world. This is how I learned to read the Bible, thanks to my teacher, Rashi, D.H.Lawrence and Malcolm Boyd. And I’ve been reading it that way ever since.



Andrew Ramer writes a regular column on spiritual practice for White Crane, The Gay Men’s Spirituality Quarterly. His book of queer Jewish stories will be out at the end of this year from Suspect Thoughts Press. He lives in San Francisco.

THE FINER THINGS IN LIFE

Recently I told a story during open mike at the Washington Storytellers Theater here in D.C. The night's topic was "Rum, Cigars, and Rhumba: Stories about the Finer Things in Life." It begins like this: "*The Finer Things in Life: A Study in Alienation and Anguish*, by Kelly Cresap."

BY KELLY CRESAP



Well, how else can I approach tonight's theme? I've got this "don't drink, don't smoke, what-does-he-do" thing going on. Also: Latin-dance-challenged, former Presbyterian from Portland, Ore. My people go for hikes, pray before meals and file their taxes on time.

But I can't blame this on my people. By age 22 I realized that the finer things in life for me meant arts and ideas, to the detriment of almost everything else. Tonight I have only two things to talk about. One is called tantric shiatsu jacuzzi. It's so much better to *do* than to talk about; plus there's all that equipment and it gets messy. That leaves the other thing, a book I read when I was 23. This for me is truly about the finer things in life, but I have to tell you I'm touchy about this, and what I have to say may get me into even more trouble than the jacuzzi thing.

The book came out in 1977. It's a novel about a writer who grew up in the countryside of Devon, England, during the Second World War. He went to Oxford, fell in love with a classmate, and wound up marrying that woman's sister. Twenty years later, after a divorce and a number of temporary girlfriends, he comes face to face with the same woman from

Oxford again, now his ex-sister-in-law, and realizes, in spite of everything, that he still loves her. The book is also about his professional journey from playwright to screenwriter to itinerant novelist. It includes an international cast of characters, a love interest more complex than Anna Karenina or Hedda Gabler, settings in Egypt, Syria, Los Angeles, New Mexico, Italy . . . color, drama, passion, richly textured language . . . a symphony of interwoven motives and desires. So far so good, you're with me? But when I tell you the author, John Fowles, and the title, *Daniel Martin*, some of you will be, John who? Daniel who? That's where the trouble gets started.

I'm saying, this novel is not just about one man but is the history of his generation, and a meditation on the 20th century, and also is a journey through history, symbolically, from the beginning of time to the end of the world.

But then there's a man in the back row who's thinking, "Fowles, didn't he write *The Magus* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman*? Now those were good reads."



And I'm saying, yes of course, but this book is . . . well, how can I put it? I stopped believing in God at age 20, and I started believing in this book at age 23.

But then a woman over here is wondering, "Is he giving us a book review, or a diatribe? It certainly doesn't sound like a story." And I want to say, I hear you, and this book is a story, and it's bigger than any story I could hope to tell, and I have never read a better story than this, and (if you'll permit me) I never will read a better story than this. One scene in the book is set at Tarquinia on the coast of Italy. The evening is airless, the sea is phosphorescent, and the hero and his Oxford friends go for a night-bathe, their whole lives ahead of them. Earlier that day Daniel had seen the tomb-walls of the ancient Etruscans and marked that moment as when he stopped believing in progress in the arts. What he says about the vanished Etruscans and their art is what I feel about the novel: "Nothing could be better or lovelier than this, till the end of time. It was sad, but in a noble, haunting, fertile way."

My sadness is compounded by the book's public reception. It sells for a penny on Amazon, and it received barely a sidelong glance in obituaries for the author last November. It may turn out to be a work, like *Moby-Dick*, whose vision waits several generations to take hold. In the meantime, it continues to elicit from me a special vigilance, discipline, reverence, and patience.

Also activism: I started a new book group recently . . .



Kelly Cresap, Ph.D., recently coordinated the first Smithsonian conference on storytelling for personal transformation. He's on the web at www.laughingmuse.com

"The value of many men and books rests solely on their faculty for compelling all to speak out the most hidden and intimate things."

—Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844–1900)

TELLING YOUR STORY

Living by the Word, by Alice Walker

The book itself was prescribed to me like medicine when I was a women's lit student at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colo. Ever since, I have been an adamant admirer of Alice Walker's art and activism. I chose a journal entry written by Alice, circa 1984. It confirmed my exploration in two-spiritedness at that time which had been aroused by traveling to South Dakota with family to support dancers, at the foremost spiritual rite of the Lakota, the Sun Dance. Otherwise, I was not getting the affirmatives that I felt to be true from elders and seemingly knowledgeable folks from other Indian reservations.



— Tyson Sampson

Gay Spirit: Myth and Meaning, edited by Mark Thompson

Angels in America, by Tony Kushner



Gay Spirit: Myth and Meaning was the first book I ever read on gay spirituality and it opened up an entire world for me and still inspires my thinking today. After playing Prior in a production of *Angels in America*, I understood what it meant to go on a spiritual journey as a gay man in contemporary America.

— Scott Dillard

"If," by Rudyard Kipling

In the sixth grade we memorized the poem "If," by Rudyard Kipling. It was the first time I was conscious of expanding words like "Rudyard," "London," "Versailles" and that beautiful flow of rhyme has stuck with me all these years. I was, however, puzzled by the ending line that says that if I experience all those things "I'll be a man my son." The poem "If" will be read at my memorial service.



— Bruce Parrish

"What is it, David?" my mother called to me through my parents' locked bedroom door.

"I'm scared!" I said.

Mother told me to go back to bed and talk to "God" in my prayers and that everything would be OK.

"Dear God, I don't like it here. Help me!" That night God appeared to remain silent, so I continued to repeat this mantra which was one of my first dramatic performances, yet a sincere call from the depths of my gay soul.



This was my first sacred text for this 5-year-old who cried himself to sleep in rural Hickory, N.C., in 1961. When I awoke the next morning, light filled my bedroom and the fear was gone. Joy bubbled up for I had survived the fearful, lonely night of darkness. I can't report that I physically heard God say anything to me during that night. However, I felt deep inside that I was being listened to. To this day, this 49-year-old man still calls out in the dark, lonely spaces in life to that same God who, at first, appears to be silent. However, through many life experiences, an energetic force responds, greater than any God I could conjure up, and a small

voice deep inside says, "Pay Attention! I will send you signs along your journey but you must not fall asleep or you will miss your life. The journey will be personal and full of choices."

In the words of Joseph Campbell, "Follow your bliss." The power needed to fuel the journey is through choice, and if choice isn't bringing you joy or bliss, may I suggest a solution. To find a solution for any outside occurrence, take the challenge of a journey inside. One of the great master teachers, Jesus, when questioned about kingdom of God said, "The kingdom of God is within each one of you!" This leads me to believe that everything in life is sacred. Is not the essence of God in all that vibrates? It's a shame that I didn't learn this sacred truth in all those years of Sunday school, church, college or seminary. Truth came somewhere between my deepest darkest moments and my highest and best joy, somewhere in the middle.

So look for sacred signs in all things and events in your life. What are sacred signs? I find sacred, vibrational signs through ceremony, touching others, music, poetry, colors and art, nature and all of its elements, observing the yin/yang of all things. In the movie, "Sordid Lives," the gay character, Ty, says to his therapist, referring to his childhood and going to church, "How do you embrace something that doesn't

Continued on next page



embrace you?" Campbell tells us that if current myths don't work for us, we must create new myths. He warns that not to do so will be the death of our very being.

How do we create myth? One way I find helpful is by telling your story. Your story is sacred, forged in the fires, and sometimes transformed into beautiful, meaningful energy for others. You have the potential to ignite and awaken your brothers and sisters who have fallen into walking asleep. Don't underestimate your personal story and its power.

In these uncertain times I owe it to myself to not give up on my sacred path. I remind myself as I do you, "Just when the caterpillar thought his world was over, he became a colorful butterfly."

From Robert Bly's book *The Soul Is Here For Its Own Joy*, I submit this sacred poem, *The Time Before Death* by Kabir:

Friend, hope for the Guest while you are alive.
Jump into experience while you are alive!
Think... and think... while you are alive.
What you call "salvation" belongs to the time before death.

If you do not break your ropes while you're alive
do you think that ghosts will do it after?

The idea that the soul will join with the ecstatic
just because the body is rotten – that is all fantasy.
What is found now is found then.
If you find nothing now,
you will simply end up with an apartment in the City of Death.

If you make love with the divine now, in the next life
you will have the face of satisfied desire.

So plunge into the truth, find out who the Teacher is,
Believe in the Great Sound!

Kabir says this: When the guest is being
searched for, it is the intensity of the longing for
the guest that does all the work.

Look at me, and you will see a slave of that
intensity.

David "Stargazer" Baker is a registered nurse/massage therapist. With music as his antidepressant, he plays piano/organ, sings in a community choir/chamber choir and teaches stained glass kaleidoscope-making in a local art school. He loves the earth, gardening, self-discovery and has a massage therapy practice in rustic, rural, mountainous western North Carolina.

"The Circle Game," by Joni Mitchell
"I Am, I Said," by Neil Diamond
"Family," from "Dreamgirls"
"Imagine," by John Lennon
"Music in Me Singing," by Ysaye Barnwell

Music has always spoken to me over the years. "The Circle Game" was an important piece for me as it spoke of the yearning for youth to become adult. It speaks of dreams that come to us throughout life. For me, this meant that the journey would always be fresh.

Even the old standard "I Am, I Said" addressed that need in me to become who I am, rather than who I am supposed to be. That is really a theme that is repeated in anything that touches me. I am an individual. I have an identity unique to myself. Often I wonder if others see that or can be comfortable with that. There can be times when I feel an isolation because I do not conform. This is a theme that this song addresses.

There have been songs that express my belief in the ultimate oneness of humanity. That may sound contradictory to what I just said, but I suppose I really believe that, as unique people, we're still members of the same tribe. When we realize the connections, beyond the fads and fashions, it becomes magic. When I first sang with the Denver's Gay Men's Chorus, the song that most addressed this was "Family" from "Dreamgirls." Another song that stated this feeling so elegantly was John Lennon's "Imagine."

A final line that I have to share. It's from "Music in Me Singing," that the Denver chorus did at the GALA (the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses) convention in San Jose: "There is more music in me singing than crimes against my soul." We carry so much strength in us.

— Roger "Blue" Freebe



***The Road Less Traveled*, by M. Scott Peck**

***The Prince of Tides*, and other works by Pat Conroy**

***Victims No Longer*, by Mike Lew**

***Way of the Peaceful Warrior*, by Dan Millman**

***Tales of the City* (series), by Armistead Maupin**

***On Becoming a Man - Half a Life's Story*, by Paul Monette**

***The Two Step*, by Eileen McCann**

The poetry of Mary Oliver



My sacred texts would be more of an amalgam of things. Different things have presented themselves to me at different points during my "awakening" journey during the last 20 years. The list above is a partial list in basically the order that I discovered them.

I would also add my poetry journal and my regular journal in old fashioned composition books. In these, I've written, copied, cut and pasted words, works and pictures that have touched me at different parts of my journey. I'm currently on #14.

— Greg McCoy





CELEBRATING THE BODY JUDAIC

A Body Electric Retreat for Jewish Men

May 11-14, 2006

Easton Mountain Retreat Center

With Michael Cohen and Rabbi David Bauer

This three-day gathering is a rare and wonderful opportunity to apply the language of Jewish spirituality and devotion to erotic exploration and fulfillment in a community of gay Jewish men. Join us for a shabbaton, an extended Sabbath retreat.

We will combine the two "traditions" of Celebrating the Body Erotic and celebrating Shabbat - enjoying ritual, song, text study, erotic touch, breath work - offering new experiences of Kedushah or sacredness.

Open to Jewish men (whether or not they've participated in Celebrating the Body Erotic) interested in deepening connection of their spiritual and erotic lives. All levels of Jewish religious observance welcome, from queer orthodox to those who rarely, if ever, participate in religious traditions.

Look forward to a special Friday night Shabbat dinner and celebration, a Saturday night Havdalah service — marking the end of Shabbat — with song and dance, and a siyyum — closing ritual — on Sunday.

Tuition: \$595, which includes room and board.

Advanced registration required

For more information or to register contact:

Michael Cohen at

917-648-7585.



Silence is the
perfectest
herald of joy.

—William Shakespeare.
Claudio, in *Much Ado
About Nothing*

A scrapbook from the 5th Annual GSV *Winter Meditation*

January 13-15, 2006



Photos courtesy of Lem Arnold

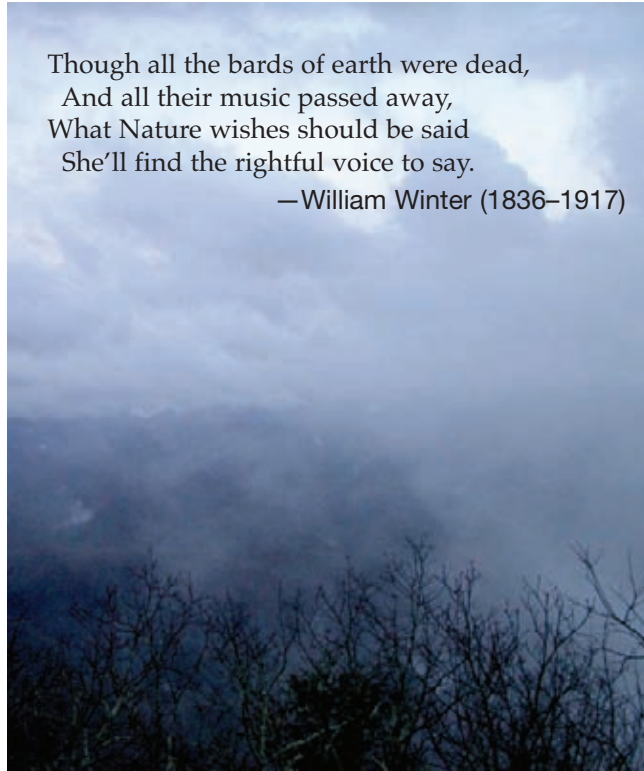




Starting with this issue,
view *Visionary* in color at
www.gayspiritvisions.org



Though all the bards of earth were dead,
And all their music passed away,
What Nature wishes should be said
She'll find the rightful voice to say.
—William Winter (1836–1917)



VISIONARY

GSV
P.O.Box 339
Decatur, GA 30031-0339

FIRST CLASS MAIL