



Keeping The Smoke Hole Open, by Martin Shaw

In Siberian myth, when you want to hurt someone, you crawl into their tent and close the smoke hole.

That way God can't see them.

Close the smoke hole and you break connection to the divine world. Mountains, rivers, trees.

Close the smoke hole and we become mad.

Close the smoke hole and we are possessed by ourselves and only ourselves.

Close the smoke hole and you have only your neurosis for company.

Well, enough of that. Really, common. We're grown-ups. Let's take a breath.

We may have to seek some solitude, but let's not isolate from the marvelous.

High alert is the nature of the moment, and rightly so, but I do not intend to lose the reality that as a culture we are entering deeply mythic ground.

I am forgetting business as usual. No great story begins like that.

What needs to change? Deepen? What kindness in me have I so abandoned that I could seek relationship with again?

It is useful to inspect my ruin.

Could I strike up an old relationship with my soul again?

You don't need me to tell you how to keep the smoke hole open. You have a myriad of ways.

We are awash with the power of words --_virus, isolate, pandemic --_and they point toward very real things. To some degree we need the organizational harassment of them.

But do they grow corn on your tongue when you speak them?

Where is the beauty-making in all of this?

That is part -- part -- of the correct response. The absolute heft of grief may well be the weave to such a prayer mat.

Before we burn the whole world down in the wider rage, could we collectively seek vigil in this moment?

Cry for a vision?

It's what we've always done.

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