

By Way of Night



Meditations on St. John of the Cross'
"The Dark Night"

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Table Of Contents

Introduction	3
BOOK ONE	3
First Meditation: I.1	3
Second Meditation: I.2.....	4
Third Meditation: I.3-4	6
Fourth Meditation: I.5.....	7
Fifth Meditation: I.6-7	8
Sixth Meditation: I.8	9
Seventh Meditation: I.9.....	10
Eighth Meditation: I.10.....	11
Ninth Meditation: I.11	12
Tenth Meditation : I.12	13
Eleventh Meditation : I.13.....	14
Twelfth Meditation	15
BOOK TWO	16
Thirteenth Meditation: II.1-3.....	16
Fourteenth Meditation: II.4	17
Fifteenth Meditation: II.5	18
Sixteenth Meditation: II.6-7	19
Seventeenth Meditation: II.8-9.....	21
Eighteenth Meditation: II.10	22
Nineteenth Meditation: II.11-12	23
Twentieth Meditation: II.13	24
Twenty-First Meditation: II.14-16.....	25
Twenty-Second Meditation: II.17-18	26
Twenty-Third Meditation: II.19-20	28
Twenty-Fourth Meditation: II.21-22.....	29
Twenty-Fifth Meditation: II.23	30
Twenty-Sixth Meditation: II.24-25.....	31
References	33
Copyright Notice	33

Introduction

By Way Of Night is a series of meditations on St. John of the Cross' spiritual classic **The Dark Night**.

These meditations are meant to provide a structure for prayerful reflection to accompany the meditative reading of **The Dark Night**. May you find the depth of St. John of the Cross' teaching become real for you as you meditate with his spiritual wisdom and guidance.

Book One

First Meditation: I.1

“We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection. We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin...If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as (being) dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 6:4-6,8,11)

His Parental Love

In dying to self and all things,
Her soul had fled by way of night;
This dark purification brings,
Escape from sense and appetite.

Devil, flesh and world couldn't touch
Her soul enrapt in the Divine;
He holds her with a steadfast clutch --
Spirit with spirit intertwine.

His love yields life with peace and joy:
Her love for Him drew her away,
From all that could rot and destroy --
He shielded her from sure decay.

In looking back from whence she came,
She marvels at His tender care:
His gentle touch and loving flame,
Preparing her for perfect prayer.

From nursing tot to child grown,
She grew through the unseen unknown.

May the tender love of God draw us to Himself through the
night of purification.

Second Meditation: I.2

“He then addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. ‘Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, ‘O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity--greedy, dishonest, adulterous--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.’ But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, ‘O God, be merciful to me a sinner.’ I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for

everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 18:9-14)

The Fall of Pride

The fervor of the beginner
Will sometimes build a false pretense
Of self as saint and not sinner
Pride in disguise forms a defense.

This pride boasts of the heights of prayer;
Jewels of false virtues adorn.
Should someone disprove, if they dare,
They soon face pride’s disdain and scorn.

Assuming self to be advanced,
Signs of weakness are swept away
With ev’ry fall, her hope is lanced --
Faith is lost in the disarray.

But God, in His wisdom, who drew
Fresh springs in barren desert stone,
Can form humility anew --
To help her prostrate at His throne.

She seeks to serve Him silently --
Her faults are foremost in her mind;
She suffers each fall patiently,
Knowing the Lord will lead the blind.

She learns to seek the lowly place;
Hiding in Him draws down His grace.

May the Spirit lead us in the ways of humility so that He may
dwell with us in Truth.

Third Meditation: I.3-4

“I say, then: live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh. For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want. If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit.”
(Galatians 5:16-17,25)

Hunger Pangs

The hunger of the beginner,
Pangs for consolations galore;
Though He provides what's best for her,
Her heart's unmoved -- expecting more.

Desires for feelings and things,
Can weigh her spirit heavily.
The freedom which detachment brings
Will help her find true levity.

The pleasures of consolation
Disturb the spirit and its prayer;
She strives not to heed elation,
Or other movements that stir there.

To move past this sensory state,
The night will purify her love;
Her spirit will not hesitate,
To yield wholly and reach above.

He will remove greed and desire;
This night is a passionate fire.

May the pure love of God supplant the lesser loves that
predominate our hearts.

Fourth Meditation: I.5

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”
(Matthew 5:5)

“But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth...Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.” (Colossians 3:8,12-15)

Fruit of Frustration

The anger of the beginner
Spawns from a sense of dejection,
Impatience with self as sinner,
And dryness-fueled frustration.

Judging herself without mercy,
She loses touch with what is true;
Undermining humility,
And thwarting growth of real virtue.

She asks for the grace of meekness:
To shield her from her heart’s tirade;
To yield patience from her weakness;
To end her ungodly charade.

The night will yield meekness anew,
With patience that will persevere;
Loving mercy will then shine through,
As hurt and anger disappear.

The night reveals her at her worst;
Trials conquer resentment first.

May the Spirit provide an abundance of grace to strengthen
our patience that we may persevere through the night with
peace.

Fifth Meditation: I.6-7

“He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.’ Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?’” (Matthew 16:23-26)

To Clutch The Cross

A stranger is the beginner,
To fasting and obedience;
Accustomed to her own pleasure
And ways, she craves independence.

Her will is tied to her own goals,
To comforts, and to vain esteems;
Avoiding what is best for souls --
The cross with its rough, heavy beams.

Love and the self are contrary;
Her will can only serve one cause.
Embracing love, she is wary --
The self will die with all its flaws.

To clutch the cross -- the choice is clear;
Her will must submit to His way.
His way is truth and life, not fear --
For Him, she chooses to obey.

She follows Him, clutching the cross:
Love is the gain; self is the loss.

May the Christ of Calvary lead us to embrace the cross -- our
means of victory.

Sixth Meditation: I.8

*“Brothers, I could not talk to you as spiritual people, but as
fleshly people, as infants in Christ. I fed you milk, not solid
food, because you were unable to take it. Indeed, you are still
not able, even now, for you are still of the flesh. While there
is jealousy and rivalry among you, are you not of the flesh,
and behaving in an ordinary human way?”* (1 Corinthians 3:1-
3)

Weaning

At first, the infant is held near,
Nourished at her Mother’s warm breast;
Held securely, she’s freed of fear,
Cuddled, consoled -- she finds deep rest.

In time, her Mother sets her down,
Preparing her for her first foods;
Upset, unsure, with fussing frown,
She pushes back and swings her moods.

The spoon of mush is bitterness;
The nourishment’s hard to swallow.
Her stomach groans of emptiness;
Contentment’s changed to fear and woe.

So is the soul in the first night:
Prayer loses sweet consolation;
All is bitter -- nothing tastes right;
Cuddles change to desolation.

Her Mother's milk will not sustain
Her past first steps in this terrain.

May the parental love of our Lord provide the grace we need
to be sustained through the uncertainties and anxieties of the
night of the senses.

Seventh Meditation: I.9

“Be still before the Lord; wait for God.” (Psalm 37:7)

Waiting For The Spoon

Her Mother trains her patiently,
To hold her mouth open and still;
Her food glides in effortlessly,
And, deep within, she has her fill.

It tastes subtle and delicate;
Like manna, it sustains her soul.
At first, bland to her coarse palate,
She could not taste its vital role.

From suckling to a passive gape,
She learns to wait for Mother's spoon;
So too, new ways of prayer take shape --
The mind and heart slowly attune.

He feeds her spirit in this prayer;
Her hungry senses slowly fade:
His grace will fashion and prepare
Her soul while her senses are stayed.

Old ways of senses, left behind,
No longer sate nor stir nor bind.

May God, in His paternal care, help us to still our hearts and
minds and wait patiently for Him.

Eighth Meditation: I.10

“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’” (John 4:13-14)

Wellspring

A wellspring swells from deep within:
Its water pure and cold and clear;
Its Source is tranquil and hidden;
It quenches the soul that draws near.

At first she tries to dig or drill,
As thirst has parched her like dry sands;
But the spring stops, blocked up and still --
It only flows through open hands.

The heart and mind, at total rest,
In silent, tranquil, loving peace,
Knows that the spring flows at its best
When the soul’s stilled without a crease.

To still the soul and persevere
In prayer opposes former means,
Where, actively, she’d engineer
Discursive thoughts and imaged scenes.

This transition, doubtful and slow,
Prepares her for His love's inflow.

May the gentle, peaceful love of God flow tenderly into the
stillness of our souls.

Ninth Meditation: I.11

*“O God, you are my God -- for you I long! For you my body
yearns; for you my soul thirsts, like a land parched, lifeless,
and without water. So I look to you in the sanctuary to see
your power and glory. For your love is better than life;”*
(Psalm 63:2-4a)

“For our God is a consuming fire.” (Hebrews 12:29)

Consuming Flame

The absence of the Living Spring,
Languished and parched her heart and soul;
How harsh and deep was this thirsting --
Broad cracks in the prairie dust-bowl.

The underbrush of the senses,
Withered away in the harsh drought;
Her heart was freed of pretenses,
As appetites were weeded out.

This dried-out underbrush now feeds
The Living Flame, which sparks and flares,
To clear the land of brush and weeds --
Enriching the place it prepares.

In time, the seeds of new virtue
Will flourish by the Living Spring;
Sheer grace recreates all anew --
And yields love's bounteous blessing.

To free the heart of its desire,
His love is a consuming fire.

May the Living Flame of Love consume all that is not of
God in our hearts and prepare us to receive Him fully.

Tenth Meditation : I.12

“I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace... living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body’s growth and builds itself up in love.”
(Ephesians 4:1-3,15,16)

The Truth Of Self

She embraces her poverty --
Her faults and weaknesses, which hold
Her grounded in reality:
Mild and meek and self-controlled.

This meekness keeps her vision clear;
To see her place before His might.
This self-knowledge then forms a mirror --
In her darkness, she sees His light.

Self-reliance is left behind
As self-distrust sharpens her will.
Cancerous pride, which undermined
His grace, no longer makes her ill.

Truth underpins love in her soul:
From her faults, her neighbor looks good;
His grace, unfettered, makes her whole,
As His mercy is understood.

Through self-knowledge, His wisdom flows;
To humble hearts, His grandeur shows.

May the light of Truth illumine our poverty so that we may
see ourselves and Our Lord as we truly are.

Eleventh Meditation : I.13

“O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a child quieted at its mother’s breast; like a child that is quieted is my soul.” (Psalm 131:1-2)

Abated Breezes

Beneath the breezes of desire,
Her heart’s deep waters ebbed and flowed:
Yearning, churning, ever higher;
Splashing and thrashing -- never slowed.

With night, the breezes slow to still,
The churnings of the waters cease;
The debris settle out until,
The depths are cleared to placid peace.

The subtle lights that penetrate
The waters’ new found purity,
Illumines all that lies innate --
Revealing the depths’ Mystery.

Balanced and pure, love soon abounds --
Freed from the churning of desire;
His peace now settles and surrounds
Her heart of molten sapphire.

The heart He stills and recreates;
Peace reigns as desire abates.

May the profound peace of Christ recreate our hearts as
reservoirs of His love.

Twelfth Meditation

“Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (James 1:2-4)

The Chase

Temptations and trials pursue,
Her doggedly throughout this night:
Like hungry wolves stalking virtue:
Howling, growling -- just out of sight.

The strong can outpace and endure
The evil that nips at their heels;
The weak, who struggle to stay pure,
Find Mercy’s aid in their appeals.

She works hard to maintain her pace
Heart and mind focused on her goal:
An athlete who will win this race,
As endurance strengthens her soul.

Through the fear and uncertainty,
She strives not to offend His heart;
Whose perfect love and purity,
Has been her coach right from the start.

She must struggle and not succumb;
The greater race has yet to come.

May the profound peace of Christ recreate our hearts as
reservoirs of His love.

Book Two

Thirteenth Meditation: II.1-3

“Yet, O Lord, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands.” (Isaiah 64:7)

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh.” (2 Corinthians 4:7-11)

Transition Years

She has outgrown her fleshy ways:
Maturing...not yet formed as planned;
His love flows gently as she prays --
She is soft clay within His hand.

As clay, she is still soft and weak;
Her sins are set deeply, like stain.
Until the kiln scorches each streak,
Impure, her spirit will remain.

Her pliable spirit relies
On Him, to shape her depth and form.
When done, the consolation dries --
Like a hushed wind before the storm.

The kiln's fire will purify,
Her spirit's deeply-ingrained dross
With Flame: whose heat is harsh and dry;
Whose blaze consumes all on Its cross.

He forms His vessel from the least --
A chalice for the wedding feast.

May the Heavenly Potter shape us into the vessel He has
planned and prepare us with loving grace for the kiln that
awaits.

Fourteenth Meditation: II.4

*“Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed
by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is
the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect...Let
love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; ...
Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.
Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer.”*
(Romans 12:2,9,11,12)

Sheer Grace

The partial musings of her mind,
And old affections of her will,
Without support, are left behind --
In dark sorrow, she treads uphill.

She longs to reach the Divine Source:
Of Wisdom to renew her mind;
Of Divine Love, to fix the course
On His will where'er it may wind.

By sheer grace, the transition's made:
To His wisdom, with it's new light;
To His love, strong and without jade;
As she passed through privation's night.

Her intellect, Wisdom's infused;
Her will, Love's strengthened and distilled;
Her memory is not bemused --
Love's tender compassion has filled.

Reaching a higher resting place,
Her soul cries out: "Ah! The sheer grace!"

May the sheer grace of the Spirit transform us into His image
through the privation of the night of the spirit.

Fifteenth Meditation: II.5

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth... but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it says: 'Awake, O

sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.” (Ephesians 5:8-9,13-15)

Oppressive Brightness

The brilliance of the Divine ray,
Dazzles her intellect's weak eye;
Reason's blinded in the foray --
Only with faith will she get by.

The detail of her soul's defect,
Shows clearly in the Ray's strong light;
Contemplation has this effect:
Self-knowledge is itself a night.

Self-knowledge is a heavy weight;
Oppressive is Truth in this night.
The soul suffers much in this state --
The contrast of contraries fight.

With grace, the defects will be purged;
In time, only the Truth will reign.
Until this new state has emerged,
The soul's purgation provokes pain.

Yet God's will is merciful love;
By means of night, she'll rise above.

May the light of Truth purge all that is not of God in our
partially-formed intellects.

Sixteenth Meditation: II.6-7

“And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour

Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Elo-i, Elo-i, lama sabach-thani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'" (Mark 15:33-34)

Imprisonment

As dark deepens, all hope is panned;
Fear and abandonment soon reign.
Her substance slips away like sand;
All that remains is grief and pain.

The sentence for her sins is served,
Before His right judgment and scorn;
The punishment she has deserved,
Is dealt as she falls down, forlorn.

Abandoned, imprisoned alone,
Deep in the dungeon of this night,
Her spirit cries with wail and moan;
Her soul besieged with pain and fright.

For what seems like eternity,
This night exceeds all she has seen.
She gains a deep humility;
Love's purified -- her heart's made clean.

This prison yields profound rebirth --
Her purgatory here on earth.

May the Merciful Jailor provide the strong remedy needed
for the cleansing of the deepest impurities found in our souls.

Seventeenth Meditation: II.8-9

“I learned both what is secret and what is manifest, for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me. For in her there is a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, unpolluted, distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible, beneficent, humane, steadfast, sure, free from anxiety, all-powerful, overseeing all, and penetrating through all spirits that are intelligent and pure and most subtle. For wisdom is more mobile than any motion; because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things. For she is a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her. For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness.” (Wisdom 7:21-26)

Purging The Past

Old ways are like mud on the panes
Of glass that form her memory;
Expired knowledge, like dark stains,
Distorts her view with history.

The light of Christ is pure and clear;
Passing through all, it's not contained.
Within this light, truth will appear,
In minds transparent and unstained.

This clear knowledge exceeds what could
Be reached with reason's keenest mind.
Within wisdom, what's understood,
Leaves all natural reason blind.

As infused wisdom supersedes
Her memory's old ways and norms,
Familiar knowledge recedes --
This clash causes her mental storms.

The clamor of the storms can last
Till memory is purged of past.

May the brilliant light of Christ cleanse our memories to
prepare the way for Wisdom.

Eighteenth Meditation: II.10

“The Light of Israel will become a fire, Israel’s Holy One a flame, that burns and consumes his briars and his thorns in a single day. His splendid forests and orchards will be consumed, soul and body;” (Isaiah 10:17-18)

The Scorched Log

At first, the log is dried by cure;
The cool flames consume the bark;
The foul smoke lifts what’s impure --
Leaving the log blackened and stark.

Then the log’s core catches the flame;
The last impurities are scorched;
Fire and log become the same --
Heat and light shine from what was torched.

God’s love ignites senses and soul;
Consuming the impurities.
A new creation is the goal --
Transcending her iniquities.

The Living Flame longs to instill:
Faith's light to show her Wisdom's ways;
Love's warmth to hold and free her will;
Hope's rays to set her heart ablaze.

This controlled burning must be done
That log and Flame may glow as one.

May the Living Flame enkindle our hearts and souls so that
we may be radiate His Love in union with Him.

Nineteenth Meditation: II.11-12

“I will bring the one third through fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will test them as gold is tested. They shall call upon my name, and I will hear them. I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they shall say, ‘The Lord is my God.’” (Zechariah 13:9)

Forging Her Will

The fragments of her affections,
He gathers from where'er they lay;
The furnace of her afflictions,
Burns the impurities away.

Her Craftsman, with the greatest skill,
Extracts fragments of love from dross;
He forges her singular will,
In the dimensions of the cross.

His love unites heart, mind, and soul;
With all her strength, she serves His will:
This great commandment is her goal;
The zeal to serve provides her fill.

A tension of passion and purge,
Maintains her will beneath the flame.
In this furnace of plunge and surge,
The cross of Christ's her only claim.

Beneath the cross, she looks above;
Forged in the Living Flame of Love.

May the Divine Craftsman teach us to love and embrace Him
with all our strength through the cross He has fashioned for
us.

Twentieth Meditation: II.13

“And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment...Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.’” (Luke 7:37,38,44-47)

Magdalene

Still clothed in old garments of sin,
She falls, prostrating at His feet;
Though new wine's not for old wineskin,
The urge of love's longings replete.

With bitter tears, her contrite heart,
Washes His feet of her weak dust;
Her soul is cleansed, but kept apart,
From Him at whom her soul is thrust.

With deepest esteem for her King,
Caressing His feet with her hair;
Yearning for Him, her whole being,
Lurches from love to deep despair.

In time, she will behold anew,
And love freely without a stain;
In fresh wineskins, He will imbue,
His Spirit like a fine champagne.

Her love yearns deeply with daring;
His flame advances with flaring.

May our deep yearning for the Beloved draw us ever closer
to Him in love.

Twenty-First Meditation: II.14-16

“And he said, ‘Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord.’ And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.” (1 Kings 19:9-13a)

Silencing The House

Her house shudders with creaks and groans;
Lights flash, sounds blare, smells reek, tastes burn.
“How can He draw”, her soul bemoans,
“Silence from this chaotic churn?”

Even with all her senses stilled,
Appetites beg and passions yearn,
Affections pull -- this noise has filled
Her faculties, which cannot spurn.

Though she may put her house to bed,
Beloved's grace puts all to sleep;
That He may guide her soul instead
Of her members, this dark is deep.

Her soul, blinded, He guides outside;
In sheer silence, they slip away.
In time, the Bridegroom with the bride,
Will join in heaven's sweet soiree.

She returns to her house once more;
With all this noise, her life's a chore.

May the Lord of our souls silence our senses, appetites,
passions, and faculties and draw us in silence unto Himself.

Twenty-Second Meditation: II.17-18

“We speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory...But as it is written: ‘What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him,’ this God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit scrutinizes everything,

By Way Of Night

even the depths of God...no one knows what pertains to God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the things freely given us by God. And we speak about them not with words taught by human wisdom, but with words taught by the Spirit, describing spiritual realities in spiritual terms.” (1 Corinthians 2: 7,9-13)

Journey Through Mystery

He takes her on a way unknown,
In bright light to a distant place;
Through dark waters -- no path is shown:
Blinded, darkened, carried by grace.

No words can convey what's found there --
No simile nor metaphor:
Divine Wisdom and Love so fair;
Beatitude beyond all lore.

The levity of her ascent,
Channeled by grace through mystery,
Yields gravity for her descent --
Back to her place and history.

Returning to her self -- so weak,
The weight of flesh burdens her soul.
Left stammering -- she cannot speak
Of Him whose love has made her whole.

In her journey through mystery,
Her soul's enrapt in secrecy.

May the Spirit of God enrapt us and sustain us on our
journey into His Mystery.

Twenty-Third Meditation: II.19-20

“Jacob left Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place, and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! And behold, the Lord stood above it” (Genesis 28: 10-13a)

The Ladder of Love

Ev'rything seems like a waste; All that's not God has lost its taste.
--

Oh, where is He, my Lord so fair? I'm still searching -- He's here, but where?

These countless works I'll offer Him; But who am I -- my light's so dim!

For Him, I'll cross the desert first; Without regard for heat or thirst.

This thirst for Him burns in my breast. Hurry, my Lord! I cannot rest.

I'll sprint to Him with greatest speed; He is my strength; on Him I feed!
--

My love for Him's bold and daring; This flame within burns with flaring.

I'm in His arms; to Him I cleave; In this embrace, how can I leave?
--

My soul's consumed beneath His flame; Log and fire are now the same.

The pure in heart behold His face; My soul exists in His embrace.
--

May the Lord of love draw us and guide us in our ascent to Him.

Twenty-Fourth Meditation: II.21-22

“Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)

“For in hope we were saved. Now hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for what one sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with endurance.” (Romans 8:24-25)

“Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, (love) is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”
(1 Corinthians 13:4-8,13)

In Disguise

The white tunic of faith, so pure,
Shields her soul from deceiver's lies;
For Him, faith's trials she'd endure;
Faith is the core of her disguise.

The green chain-mail of hope protects
The senses -- her eyes gaze above
The world's ways and their effects
To look only to Him with love.

The red toga of charity
Beatifies and lifts her soul
To Him who is her verity --
Lifted from self, she is made whole.

Faith clears her mind for wisdom's ways;
Hope cleans her memory of all;
Love lifts her will to Him, ablaze --
Whose perfect love burns to enthrall.

Disguised in these virtues, she leaves
Self and all things -- to Him she cleaves.

May the virtues of faith, hope, and love be our armor and
disguise for the journey through the dark night to our
Beloved.

Twenty-Fifth Meditation: II.23

“You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and fortress, my God in whom I trust.’ God will rescue you from the fowler’s snare, from the destroying plague, will shelter you with pinions, spread wings that you may take refuge; God’s faithfulness is a protecting shield. You shall not fear the terror of the night nor the arrow that flies by day, Nor the pestilence that roams in darkness... No evil shall befall you, no affliction come near your tent. For God commands the angels to guard you in all your ways. With their hands they shall support you, lest you strike your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the asp and the viper, trample the lion and the dragon.” (Psalm 91:1-6,10-13)

Incognito

Under cover of the dark night,
Cloaked in disguise of senses stilled,
She slips away from Satan's fright
To Bridegroom's den where she's fulfilled.

The senses are a giveaway
Of what occurs within the soul;
The enemy drives disarray
In her with hope she'll lose control.

At times the dark spirit assails
Her with horror of heinous deeds;
It seems as though its pierce prevails --
Her soul's left convulsing and bleeds.

Yet the Lord permits this deep purge
To prepare her for His great feast;
From each combat, she will emerge --
Bridegroom triumphs over the beast!

Even the horrors of the night
Prepare her soul for Bridegroom's light.

May the Lord grant us the graces of courage and
perseverance to sustain us through the passing horrors of the
night.

Twenty-Sixth Meditation: II.24-25

*“the daybreak from on high will visit us to shine on those
who sit in darkness and death's shadow, to guide our feet
into the path of peace.”* (Luke 1:78b-79)

By Way of Night

The morning breaks, blazing and bold;
The night has past; darkness is gone.
Her soul, like newly minted gold,
Glitters in the first rays of dawn.

No hint of breeze stirs the still air;
The dew settles, heavy and clear.
Peaceful joy has displaced despair;
Perfect love has cast out all fear.

By way of night, she evaded
Her enemies with senses stilled.
Her faculties, held and faded,
Did not disturb as she was filled.

The blaze of love burned strong and bright
Deep in her soul, on this journey.
Drawing His heart, throughout this night,
Led her to Him and set her free.

Bridegroom drew her, on paths unknown;
By way of night, she found His throne.

May we rejoice in the Bridegroom with love that burns like a
new dawn deep in our souls.

References

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