

Poems

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Editor's note: Reynold Ruslan Feldman, PhD, is a retired English professor, dean, and academic vice president. Although his specialty was 19th-Century American literature, his real interest—in practical wisdom and character development—emerged late in his career. To date he has published three books on wisdom plus a spiritual autobiography, *Stories I Remember—My Pilgrimage to Wisdom*. He currently lives in Boulder, Colorado, where he edits academic and popular manuscripts, tutors undergraduates, coordinates interfaith-inter-spiritual outreach for the World Subud Association, and has become Cedar Barstow's partner in multiple ways including her husband and world traveling companion. He can be reached at reynoldfeldman@yahoo.com.

Rilke Hoeren mit Siebzig

Das ist schon lange her,
Fuenfzig Jahre, etwas mehr,
Als ich zuerst Rilke hoerte,
Hoerte und auswendig lernte.
Yale-Student war ich dann,
Yale-Student und junger Mann.
Meine Welt war gross.
Dann ging ich los,
Nicht wissend, was auf mich kommt.
Inzwischen bin ich alter Mann.
Frau, Kinder, Arbeit wie nach Plan,
Doch kam es anders als ich dachte.
Das Leben bedingte, was ich machte.
So heute fang' ich wieder an,
Neuer Platz, neue Frau, neuer Name.
Nun geht alles schnell vorbei,
Das Du, das Ich, das Allerlei,
Und doch am Ende geht's uns gut,
Die Seele weiss und macht uns Mut.
Die Welt dreht sicher, ohne Ringen,
Und Gott wird uns nach Hause bringen.

Hearing Rilke at Seventy

It's already long ago—
Fifty years, a little more,
That I first heard Rilke,
Heard and got him by heart.
I was just a Yalie then,
A Yalie and a callow youth.
My world was large.
And then I left,
Not knowing what would happen next.
Now I am old and gray,
With wife, kids, and work along the way.
Yet things happened differently from how I thought,
Life controlled how things came out.
So today I'm starting up again:
A new place, a new woman, a new name.
Things are passing like a flash—
Me and You and, well, don't ask.
And yet in the end it's all all right:
Our souls they know and give us light.
The world turns boldly on its own,
And God will surely bring us home.

— rrf, April 20, 2010, Boulder

Taking the Thermals

In Florida it was the hawks.
Here in Hilton Head
It's the pelicans.
Other birds I'm sure do it too—
Take the thermals.

The hawks wheel in circles
For minutes on end, taking my breath away.
The ones I saw
Simply move their bodies this way and that
To stay the course they are on.

The pelicans, with imposing beaks,
Glide straight ahead in formation,
Paralleling the ocean and the beach.
They know what they're doing too:
Wing flapping not required.

O God, in the time I have left
Teach me to take the thermals,
To relax into your wind,
To glide where you want me to go.

Then when it's time to leave,
Help me to move my body
Oh so subtly,
To complete my earthly round,
Then to fly away,
To fly straight to Thee.

—*rff*, 28/3/2009, Hilton Head