

Soul and Role
(4-7-10)

Introductions:

- Name, role, and how is your spring quarter going?
- What is your favorite spring memory as a child or young adult?

Touchstones:

- Reminder of our norms for creating a container for our time together. A container that both holds tangible elements of structure while allowing for individual expression.

Today's Theme:

- Current condition of your work world; soul and role
- Poetry as the truth told at a slant, storytelling of one's selfhood
- “Purification”; fertilizing rebirth and new beginnings with the refuse of our personal/professional winter.
- Rituals of “spring cleaning”

Reflective Dialogue:

- What word image or phrase captured your attention around the theme of ritual and fertilizing growth from the pain/disappointment/sins of winter?
- Journal prompts that grabbed the attention of your heart?
- Other noticings

General offerings for the group:

Closing:

- What would you like to carry from this gathering back to your work world at DU?

*Soul and Role Touchstones

- Bring 100% of self
- There is always invitation, always opportunity; never invasion
- No fixing, no saving, and no advising
- Openness to learning from others
- Speak for yourself; tell your story
- Listen to the silence
- Confidentiality

A PURIFICATION

At the start of spring I open a trench
in the ground. I put into it
the winter's accumulation of paper,
pages I do not want to read
again, useless words, fragments,
errors. And I put into it
the contents of the outhouse:
light of the sun, growth of the ground,
finished with one of their journeys.
To the sky, to the wind, then,
and to the faithful trees, I confess
my sins: that I have not been happy
enough, considering my good luck;
have listened to too much noise;
have been inattentive to wonders;
have lusted after praise.
And then upon the gathered refuse
of mind and body, I close the trench,
folding shut again the dark,
the deathless earth. Beneath that seal
the old escapes into the new.

Wendell Berry

Prompts for reflection:

1. Do you practice any rituals to mark/honor the transition from winter to spring in your personal or professional life? What do you find most rewarding about yearly participation in the observance of winter turning into spring?
2. If you dug a trench into the ground of your professional identity/work place, what items from the winter of your work world would you gather up and bury away there? Your lost words, broken professional relationships, missed meetings, rejected publications, missed learning opportunities, anger directed at students, disappointments in colleagues...
3. What would it feel like to know that the items of loss are composting, breaking down, and returning back to their elemental state? What will become of these raw bits of potential?
4. What if anything is waiting to burst forth from beneath the seal of the dark deathless earth and into the newness of your personal/professional life?