

Sharing, Inc.

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Dear Sharing Friend,

"Once riding in old Baltimore,
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee.
I saw a Baltimorean
Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small,
And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but he poked out
His tongue, and called me, "Nigger."

I saw the whole of Baltimore
From May until December;
Of all the things that happened there
That's all that I remember." *

How can I, as a white person, possibly comprehend the damage incidents like the one described in this poem, do to the soul of a young child?

Doctor Martin Luther King Junior once spoke of the pain he experienced when he had to explain to his young daughter why he couldn't take her to the Amusement Park just advertised on television. Entrance to Fun Town was denied to any African American.

My friend, Annyce Campbell raised her nine children in the all-Negro town of Mound Bayou, Mississippi. She postponed taking her children into any of the surrounding communities in order to spare them experiences such as the one described above.

Earlier this month I went to see the new movie, "**The Great Debaters**" for the first time. It is an excellent movie set in rural Texas in the 1930s. It **had a huge impact on me**, physically as well as emotionally. Throughout most of it I was actually shaking. When it was over I couldn't move. I had to sit silently for a long time trying to absorb some of the powerful feelings it aroused in me: feelings of anger, pain and shame, as well as awe at the bravery and courage evidenced throughout the story.

It reminded me of what my African American friends -- their parents, grandparents, and great grandparents all the way back to the 1600s, when they were first brought to this country in chains in the bowels of sailing ships -- have had to endure in this democracy, this land of the free and home of the brave.

It also reminded me of the one-day trip I made a few years ago to Atlanta, Georgia. I went there to see an exhibit of photographs appropriately entitled "Without Sanctuary" which was at the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site.

This exhibit brought to light one of the sickest and most sinful periods in our American history. Between 1882 and **1968** at least 4,742 Black American citizens were lynched -- **not because they had committed or were suspected of committing a crime**, but because they were Black and couldn't find a safe place to avoid a "lynch mob". They couldn't find **sanctuary**. Many had been tortured, mutilated tarred and feathered and burned. People would actually come from near and far, sometimes even by the bus-full, to watch this sadistic theater.

My soul has only been able to absorb a fraction of what I felt and saw there. But of all the horrifying images I viewed, **one person** from **one photo** stays foremost in my mind's eye.

She was a white girl about 10 or 11 who looked much as I did at that age. She was standing at the front of a small crowd of men, women and children gathered around a tree from which the corpse of a human being was hanging. **She had a gleeful smile on her face.**

As I stood in front of that photograph, I realized with a sickening feeling that if I had been born a few years earlier, in Texas instead of New Jersey, it **could have been me** grinning in that picture!

I struggle to understand the context of her life in a small town in the rural south in the thirties. I know there was a pervasive culture of lawlessness and racism. Many law enforcement officers, lawyers, and even ministers participated over many years to one degree or another in these heinous crimes. **That young girl had been taught by example** that a Black person's life wasn't worth anything -- but that her life as a white person was **good and honorable and upright**. And she perhaps taught her children that same warped perception.

Racism is different today then it was in the thirties. It has gone underground. Over the course of the last 35 years I have come to understand racism, **not only** as something out there in a specific act, but also as something that **lives within me, in part** as the invisible advantages that come with white skin, **and also**, as something **deeply imbedded** in the systems and institutions of our society.

On March 21st I anticipate with joy taking my 37th Good Friday Walk. As always I will walk with Jesus, and "with a lament in one ear and a song of joy in the other." I will walk in solidarity with those whose mourning is fresh, all who work for justice, those who take care of the suffering ones, and all who care about, pray for and contribute to this wonderful work of the Spirit known as Sharing.

If you've never participated in a Good Friday Walk, either with a large organized group, or with just one or two others, why not **make this your year?** The combination of walking on the day Jesus did, hurting, though not as much as he did, knowing that one's sacrifice brings tangible relief to others as his did will make the experience one of the spiritual highlights of your year.

At least 94% of money raised by the Walk goes directly to carefully chosen groups in Mississippi and Alabama. These groups; the Federation of Southern Coops/Land Assistance Fund, the House of Joy in Okolona, MS, the Kemetec Institute in Mound Bayou, MS and the Twenty-first Century Youth Leadership Development Project in Selma, AL are guiding and mentoring African American students whose families are economically poor.

* "Incident", by Mr. Countee Cullen for a young boy named Eric Walrond

*Shalom,
Kay Doherty*

Sharing Christmas Love Sharing Christmas Love Sharing Christmas Love

Love

Thanks to a generosity of time, talent, and treasure Sharing was able to send to five locations in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi

Christmas

- 266 beautifully dressed Black dolls
- 141 gorgeously boxed baby blankets
- 153 basketballs
- 23 small sports balls
- 28 knitted baby balls

Sharing Christmas

Sharing Christmas Love Sharing Christmas Love Sharing Christmas Love

In Memoriam

Lately I've been feeling surrounded by death. During the past year or so Sharing and I have lost, as far as I know, twenty four friends/supporters, including my dearest friend. Paradoxically, (or not), this has brought the **preciousness of today** even more present to me.

Mary Ahearn, Rev. Dan Allen, Jack Andrews, Marion Bruneau, Albert Chmela, James Colvin, Lucile Craig, Mary Jane Gregg, Pat Jackson, Ruth Libby, Phyllis Lindsay, Jimmy Lydon, Beverly Meehan, Bernice Miller, Jeff Power, Bernadine Rechner, Murial Smith, Walter Smith, Rev. Harry Soper, Kathy Thomson, Andy Thurson, Charlanne Van Wormer, Ozzie Wales, Bill Wirkala

I want to share with you my morning mantra that has emerged from my reflections on death/life.

"Open wide the windows of your heart."
Welcome the day with humble, grateful awe.
Begin to gently gather its time into your being.
Intend to add to it those things
that are meaningful
that increase love, joy, happiness, justice
that diminish sorrow, pain, suffering.