

Lil Spark

October 6, 2020

There is busyness...and learning all about me. Sofia (age 11) is growing wings even as she must be rooted to a chair and tethered to her Chromebook like an astronaut to the space station control panel. Emerson (age 9) explores his station by pushing every button, link, and option. He is the navigator into other worlds using the power of his sounds and his voice. Sofia knows what she is missing in the absence of "beside the lockers" chatter, secrets, and coded text messages. Today Emerson had to do a science experiment flinging drops of water at a wall to measure the impact of Covid-19 transmission...and why the needed distancing. He does understand the science but also knows the sorrow of not playing with his best friend without measuring, masking, or monitoring where they are. It used to be called free play and before that recess!

So, when all the assignments have been checked off as done/submitted where do their imaginations escape to? Sometimes, it's the treehouse outside to continue their Zombie Apocalypse adventures of survival. Sometimes, it's into a good book snuggled under the furry blankets in their own darkened rooms. Sometimes, it's into the Lego room to MasterBuild a vehicle or design a new hairdo or outfit for Barbie or an American girl doll. That's the outer world description of the busyness. Go deeper---follow the tunnel into the caves of the mind... into the heart...what's the passcode?

withcare (no caps, no spaces)

and now as the lock opens, the tumblers click...

there is a prolonged exhale ~~~

A different place and rhythm,

More like a creek instead of crossword puzzling.

Approach slowly.

And there within a bubble of glass is a wee figure..wide-eyed and inviting.

He tends a small candle that illuminates the entire glass orb.

I pause...and pause...waiting for an invitation to approach.

It seems like time is s t r e t c h i n g and I am being awakened and woven into the literal threads of light



Is this the wee muse who sparked Edison and his contemporaries to find a way to keep a flame protected from the elements...and to have it available at will?

OR

Is this the wizard, keeper of ideas, who inspires a poem, a musical composition, a gown of silk, or the design of a gravity-defying architectural structure? He seems to sense both my impatience and my ponderings. In my invisibility I am utterly transparent! Then with a wink the bubble vanishes and what remains is a steady, warm glow. I hear the whisper, "Why have you come?" Without hesitation I blurt, "Curiosity!" A pause stretches between us...

"And your question?"

Standing very still and barely breathing so as not to blow out the flame, I ask, "Is it possible to have my own flame? How do I earn it?" The Wayshower seemed to grow taller (his body, not his shadow) as he responded.

"You already have your own light. It is nestled deep within you in the left ventricle of your heart."

"Please say more."

"This is the cavern, oh, I think you call it a chamber, that holds oxygenated blood about to be pumped out into the interstate system of your body. That's the physical part. It's like a pilot light in your oven."

"OK, I get that but recently it's felt like my pilot light is out!"

"So somehow you knew to find me. My name is Lil Spark. My job is to lend a spark so you can relight your own pilot light."

"What's the cost?"

"Really it's an exchange. I relight yours and then your responsibility is to relight someone else's who's been waning or has had their spark blown out."

November 20, 2020

My pen seemed lost to me, dried up, or even lost to itself in the sea of media, vote counting, recounting, and shock at a man who continues to steal the Imagination of a Nation. I find my spark again and use its light to find my pen. We must write, dance, sew, knit, cook our way through this maze of dead ends. This tangle has choked most of us enough!! We are firm in our resolve to reclaim ourselves and civility. We have come slowly to understand that a huge portion of our fellow citizens remain lost down the rabbit hole and we are deeply aware we cannot retrieve them. It would be more dangerous than diving into Arctic waters to save a drowning person who is numb, and in their delirium believes their 'captain' will bring them to safe harbor.

Pen nudges for that is quite enough ink to spill out for negative fearful ramblings. I am reminded of the respond-ability of having a spark. How will I tend it so it may grow into a story, or a hand-sewn pillow, or a batch of warm cookies? I know at once I will share it with Edie for she too tends a spark and what we share becomes a glow in our hearths and radiates light, warmth, and hospitality.

What if our sparks ignited others? It may be like the ripples on a calm lake that are then the bubbles in a runoff stream, then the river, tributary systems, ebbing its way to the ocean. This is how we'd like it to spread but that is NOT the way of sparks. We're being asked by the Wayshower to tend the spark, and then light someone else's. This becomes intentional interactions always mindful not to let blustering spews extinguish the flame. Breath...slow and easy...becomes the fuel. Kindness and patience create the orb to hold the flame as it is passed to another tender. The cost/risk benefits may include the building of a new framework, the renovation of an existing system, and/or the nourishing of a friendship that may have previously been lost on the stormy seas of political warfare.

This is slow work and is similar to following - exploring a long- lost treasure map.

Take 1 step at a time.

Should one trip up, land in a sucking bog, or become lost...Reach for the North Star.

Realign, clean off the orb, and proceed withcare.

We know what has been lost so now IS the time to claim what can be found and shared. We may just build the heart of our Nation.

Sparks to Light... from sea to shining sea.



Laura Piedmont

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