

1. Goshen Friends Meeting Sunday, June 17, 2018

Shadows of my childhood family align along this plain meetinghouse bench in Chester County, where I have come to worship. Once our row was anchored by my strong blue serge-suited father. Now I sit immersed in today's quiet, seeking Source.

Long ago I would touch his round stone watch-fob, slide it in and out of its shallow stitched vest fold, fingering its shape. Was I finding my own place among parents, brother, sisters, gathered seekers? I felt his still body beside my restless small girl self.

Where is my Self this Sunday in my seventy-fourth year? O Father-Mother Spirit, *Abba, Amma*, breathe through me. My father's gold watch chain spanned his chest, rose and fell with his breath, that timepiece enclosed in a deeper pocket. Was Spirit so hidden or within our reach?

We searched other faces and watched the wall clock, brass pendulum swinging, tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock; then I counted thin gray stripes on Daddy's trouser leg, and the firm elders on the solid facing benches. Today, I list my blessings, these stirred-up recollections.

My mother sat amongst her little ones, another support. Her loving arms curled round us; calm hand held mine;

sometimes she whispered careful counsel. Each sibling squirmed yet slowly dropped into the silence undergirded on First Day by familiar, faithful Friends.

Their deep patient waiting enveloped every one of us. Panelled wooden walls framed our souls, and we rested in those circles of connection, of parents, other Quakers. Seated on stiff horsehair cushions, we all eased into some surprising Infinity - and found an hour passed.

In this later century, watching my inward cycles, I beseech You, Spirit of the slow-ticking wall clock, expand my sense of Mystery, infuse our aging adult days with timelessness, transform my memories of older ones overseeing children, reaching into Truth, and let history slip into Presence.