

# The Light Comes Pouring Through

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28 April 2023



4.30.2023. An excerpt from John Main OSB, “From Isolation to Love,” *THE WAY OF UNKNOWING* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), pp. 44-46.

We meditate because we know with absolute certainty that we must pass through and beyond our own sterility. We must transcend the sterility of the closed system, of a purely introspective mind. We know, with an ever greater clarity, that we have to pass beyond isolation into love. . . .The deeper the degree to which we turn in upon ourselves, the more complex will be the degree to which we become fixated on our own self-consciousness. The result is like being trapped in a hall of mirrors where we constantly take the image for reality. And all we have are images of ourselves.

[W]hy is meditation so different? . . . [It is because we] have to make an act of faith, a total act of abandon. In other words, we commit ourselves to meditation, and to the mantra as a way [of] letting go of self-consciousness. It is at this point that sterility is transformed into poverty—a poverty that we embrace totally—a state of complete simplicity, complete vulnerability and complete abandon. And self-consciousness gives way to consciousness. We become aware of what is beyond our own horizons . . . .We see everything bathed in the infinite love of God.

*After Meditation*, “The Artist,” Stanley Kunitz (New York: Norton, 1995), p. 63.

His paintings grew darker every year.

They filled the walls, they filled the room:

eventually they filled his world—

all but the ravishment.

When voices faded, he would rush to hear

the scratched soul of Mozart

endlessly in gyre.

Back and forth, back and forth,

he paced the paint-smeared floor,

diminishing in size each time he turned,

trapped in his monumental void,

raving against his adversaries.

At last he took a knife in his hand

and slashed an exit for himself

between the frames of his tall scenery.

Through the holes of his tattered universe

the first innocence and the light

came pouring in.

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