

# 'If Only You Could See'

Reflection for Week of August 10, 2020

These months of crises have opened our eyes to see the interconnectedness of all life in new ways. What difference has this made?

Suggested Music: [Open My Eyes, Lord – Jesse Manibusan \(click here\)](#)

## Monet Refuses the Operation

Doctor, you say that there are no haloes  
around the streetlights in Paris  
and what I see is an aberration  
caused by old age, an affliction.  
I tell you it has taken me all my life  
to arrive at the vision of gas lamps as angels,  
to soften and blur and finally banish  
the edges you regret I don't see,  
to learn that the line I called the horizon  
does not exist and sky and water,  
so long apart, are the same state of being.  
Fifty-four years before I could see  
Rouen cathedral is built  
of parallel shafts of sun,  
and now you want to restore  
my youthful errors: fixed  
notions of top and bottom,  
the illusion of three-dimensional space,  
wisteria separate  
from the bridge it covers.  
What can I say to convince you  
the Houses of Parliament dissolve  
night after night to become  
the fluid dream of the Thames?  
I will not return to a universe  
of objects that don't know each other,  
as if islands were not the lost children  
of one great continent. The world

is flux, and light becomes  
what it touches,  
becomes water, lilies on water,  
above and below water,  
becomes lilac and mauve and  
yellow  
and white and cerulean lamps,  
small fists passing sunlight  
so quickly to one another  
that it would take long,  
streaming hair  
inside my brush to catch it.  
To paint the speed of light!  
Our weighted shapes, these  
verticals,  
burn to mix with air  
and changes our bones, skin,  
clothes  
to gases. Doctor,  
if only you could see  
how heaven pulls earth into its arms  
and how infinitely the heart expands  
to claim this world, blue vapor without end.  
-- Lisel Mueller, from *Second Language: Poems*



When they came into Bethsaida, a group brought a blind man to Jesus, and they begged him to touch the man and heal him. So Jesus guided the man out of the village, away from the crowd. He spat on the man's eyes, touched them, and asked, "What do you see?" The blind man said, "I see people, but they look like trees — walking trees." Jesus touched his eyes again; and when the man looked up, he could see everything clearly.  
-- Mark 8:22-25



## For Your Reflection:

Now that you have seen how lines of demarcation are blurring in the life of the world and perhaps in your own life, would you accept or refuse "the operation" to restore your vision to a previous time? Why?

How has your own life been changed because of the vision you have been given during these difficult months?

## Concluding Prayer

Glory be to God whose power working in us can do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine. Glory be to the One who removes what separates and expand our hearts to claim and love this weary, wounded world. May we allow our hearts to open wide. Amen.