

I Was Talking With God

by Darryl Price

the other day when he said out of the blue, You know, I've thought about giving up many times myself. Why didn't you, I asked as cynically as possible. There's always some little something that touches my heart, and stops me, he said, quietly and calmly. And with that, he turned into a firefly and flew up and away. But just then a zooming bird swooped down and caught him in its beak and carried him off to a nearby tree. The bird hopped out on a branch and started preening itself. What

have you done, I cried in alarm! The bird flew down to the long grass at my feet and said, I had a bite to eat and it was really quite delicious. But, but, but that bug you ate was God! No, that WAS me, this is me now. Humans are always so greedy for all the answers. But, he continued, if I gave you the quick answer to every question it would be like giving you the key to a riddle before you solved the mystery for yourself. That's cheating. There's no fun in that. And fun is a very

important part of all creation. Trust me. But what about all the sorrows, I shouted, determined to stand my ground. How fair is that? I'm not deaf, he said. Well, many people think you are deaf, at least in one ear. That's because they are afraid of themselves in the mirror, he answered. And abruptly turned into a large Tiger Swallowtail butterfly landing on my finger. Look up, he said, and I could clearly see his face pushing itself in a silly way through a huge white cloud and sticking

out his tongue. Suddenly, there was this beautiful young woman standing right next to me in tight tan summer shorts and new blue runners; shall we take a walk then, she said. Sure, I mumbled, unable to stop staring at her teeth. Why are you doing this to me, I asked. I told you, she said, you touched my heart. You mean I'm the

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little thing? Seems so, she smiled. How did I touch your heart? Weren't you thinking of giving up on your writing today? And after all this time; she shook her

head. Didn't you say, weren't you the one, and I quote, "I just can't feel anything worth feeling or writing about anymore?" You can't talk to the universe that way without expecting a visit from someone, someone who loves you by the way, she added, and I blushed. Your ancestors pushed a good cause and case for you. Yeah, but that was my own private misery, I said. So greedy, so selfish, all the fucking time, over and over, she spoke and sighed, and I indeed did feel very, very, very

small in that moment. She faded then disappeared and a giant of a tree, whose enormous branches hung over the walking path, barked at me in a gruff, peeling voice, just what makes you think you can refuse your gifts without there being any significant consequence to your life? Everything affects everything else everywhere. It's more than just luck. Your actions, your thoughts, your quitting, your refusal to show grace under pressure, will come back to shit on us all in some

way, big or small, noticeable or invisible. You don't reject the impossible dream and live to tell about it. This is no dress rehearsal, pal, this is the real thing! Deal with it. Remember us all or forget the natural magic of life and go back to sleep. Just then a jolly clump of nearby orange mushrooms spoke up: oh, don't listen to him, ignore that big bully, follow your heart. Do what you've got to do. Feel what is right and follow the feeling. As before God was walking beside me again, sounds

like good advice to me, he said, but love and coercion don't go together, so please don't ask me to make that or any other decision for you. It's yours and yours alone, so to speak. That's what makes it come alive inside you. He waved goodbye and was gone, the sky was

turning endlessly bluer than anything I'd ever seen before in my whole life, you could feel it on your face, and in your eyes and ears. Then I woke up. Still alive, still on the couch, the collar of my green sweater pulled up.

