

VISIO



DIVINA

*The Wisdom of Contemplative Vision*

## THE BEATITUDE OF SEEING GOD

PATTIANN ROGERS

Pattiann Rogers takes a single Beatitude from Yeshua's teachings on the Mount and lifts it into a whole new category worthy of the poet's and the prophet's eye. Hers is a vision that casts this saying onto the waters of life—the fast moving stream of life and time into which we ourselves have been cast.

This visionary poem strings a garland of flowery light around our hearts as well as our heads. It crowns us with a way of seeing the world that lifts the mundane activities that flow around us into a cosmic stream of light appearing in the poetic vision of Pattiann Rogers.

The work of many poets through the centuries has been both prophetic and visionary. Poetry is meant to lift us out of the dim and mundane seeing that narrowly frames our ordinary sight and to put everything around us into a new perspective. We can begin to see again in a whole new way! Our perspective lifts, our perceptions broaden and we begin to feel again, perhaps, that there is hope in the world, and so our ways of relating to it also change. The goal of poetry is to begin to help us interact with the world (and the people in it) from the perspective of higher light. We are now lured again back into the stream of living to move about the world more freely.

The slip-stream of time that we experience is similar to the words and images sliding and flowing through this poem. If we will let them, they can carry us down that stream of time garlanded by light and hope and with a new sense of what is occurring in the world as we let these watery-words flow.

Her images and metaphors pick us up and cast us into the cavalcading waters of time, not like some solid rock that is cast in and then sinks, but like flowering-beings that float the slip-stream of life on its way to the infinite depths of the divine Sea.

As we move through time, Yeshua suggests, we can achieve a purity of heart that acts like a mirror in whose reflecting surface we see God and ourselves through the eyes of God. Paradoxically, in this light, we see ourselves as God (or as god-like, divine beings). If we can perceive this then there would be a marrying of hearts that lifts us on wings.

This, of course, is what poetry is meant to do. Pattiann Rogers demonstrates its capacity in this poem which is focused on this very subject itself—the slip-stream of poetic words that carry us away from the solid bank of ourselves into the free-flowing waters of metaphor. Reference and reality come together inside this poem and hopefully bloom inside of us, and as a result perhaps, we freed are by this and move back with clarity into the stream which is carrying us inexorably to Light. Can we for one moment simply imagine this possibility?

*Pattiann Rogers is a contemporary poet whose life has been spent exploring the world with her scientist husband, and teaching young poets to write in various colleges and universities. She has published multiple volumes of poetry and currently lives with her family in Colorado.*

## Reflections on Image and Text:

1. *When you read it, how does this poem affect you? Can you feel the stream and the music of its words? Can you see its metaphors like flowers on a moving surface? How does that free your imagination?*
2. *Human being are drawn to moving water. Something of its sound and energy stimulates and awakens us. It is almost magical. When and where have you most felt this? Describe your experience.*
3. *The poem is filled with the metaphor of flowers in a garland. What do you think Rogers means by this metaphor?*
4. *Pattiann Rogers invites us into a new way of seeing, and in that seeing God appears. What do you notice about God's appearance? How does God appear to you?*
5. *Rogers uses the image of wings. How is her use of the image different from the normal way we speak about them?*
6. *What does purity of heart come to mean in this poem? Does it have anything to do with the movement of water or with the poem itself? What do you discover as you hear the poem and view the images?*
7. *As you look at the images prepared for this reading, how do they speak to you and help you explore the meaning of this poem?*

## and for Journaling your Answers:

*This reflection, text and its illumination have been provided by Alison Hine and Lynn Bauman as a means for contemplative prayer.*  
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## A Place for Notes

# LECTIO DIVINA

*The Contemplative Reading of a Sapiential Text*

## SEEING THE GOD STATEMENT

Suppose the statement *Blessed  
are the pure in heart, for they shall see  
God* were placed like a wreath of violets,  
lilies, laurel, and olive, blossoms strung together  
like words in a sentence, a garland  
launched, set out on a flowing creek.

Imagine that wreath carried  
down the frothy rapids, tossed, floating,  
slipping over water-smoothed, moss-colored  
boulders, in and out of slow, dark pools,  
through poplar and willow shadows. It dips,  
sinks momentarily, emerges, travels maintains  
its ring, its declaration and syntax.

At times it widens in a broad, deep  
current, makes sense as a gift.  
The pure become inclusive, spatial,  
generous. God and heart are two  
spread wings of one open reading.

And at times it narrows, restricts.  
Violets and heart entangle  
with God. The blessed braces,  
overlaps lilies and laurel.

The wreath negotiates shallows and backward  
surges, rises and falls, collapses  
around logs, loops ferns, changes shape.  
Occasionally it hesitates, circles itself  
slowly in an eddy: God is any heart  
seeing purity. The heart is a blessed  
ring of blossoms containing God's vision.

If only the athlete dying young  
had been given such a prize.  
If only Ophelia had worn  
such a wreath. If only Judas  
had read this garland.

Still at any point you might  
reach down yourself, catch that ring  
of blossoms lift it up, wear  
its beauty and blooming distinction  
across your forehead. Look into a mirror.  
See what you can see.

—Pattiann Rogers  
*Quickening Fields*  
(Penguin Poets, 2017)

*Contemplating*  
**THE ILLUMINATIONS**







