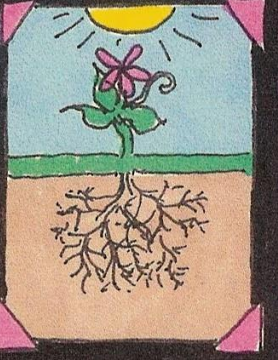
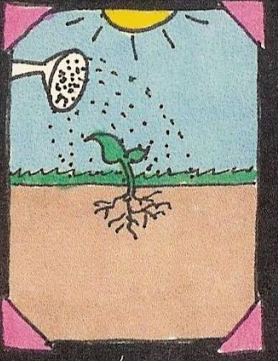
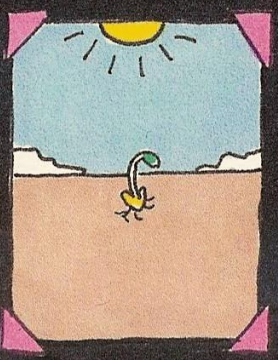


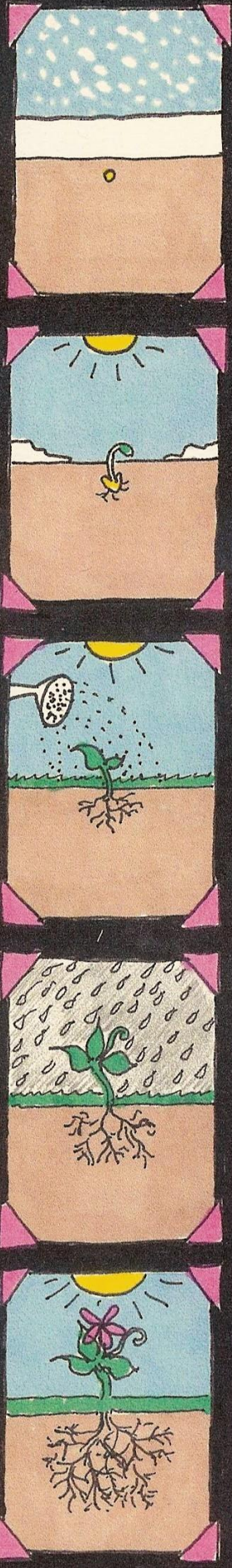
March 22

A couple of years ago, the tape player in my retirement-aged car retired. The music that I used to stave off both sleepiness and road rage no longer available, I reluctantly opted for the only remaining entertainment choice, the radio. Talk radio ranged from informative and thought provoking to infuriating. Music stations ranged from sleep inducing classical to pounding headache in 60 seconds or less. Even the mild mannered folksy Mennonite college station I spent most of my drives listening to started to play more electrified raucous tunes with undecipherable lyrics.

Still I listened, until the day I lost the station just outside of Rochester on a drive to Purdue to pick up my son for fall break. I looked for another station but found only static. I turned the radio off.

For the next hour and a half, I just took in the farm fields, tiny towns, undulating flocks of





birds, clouds. Everything moved at its own pace. No soundtrack. Just a quiet acceptance of everything around me. I once heard of god referred to as a “still small voice” and it occurred to me that I might be drowning that voice out with the background clutter of the radio. It was profoundly calming and the closest to personal prayer I had come for a long time.

I haven't entirely weaned myself from the CD player at home but I've tried to set aside “quiet time” on a regular basis beginning with cooking and eating meals. I try not to think of it as giving up music or entertainment. I prefer to think of it as adding silence.



Chris O'Brien