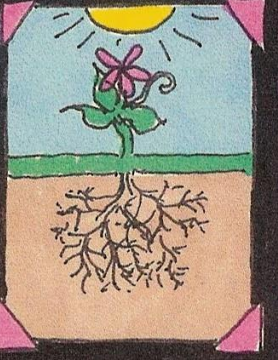
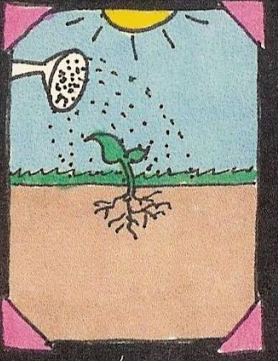
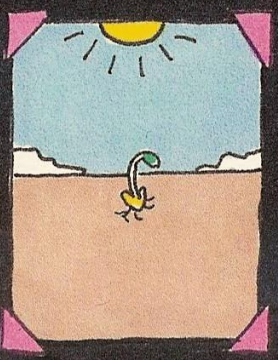


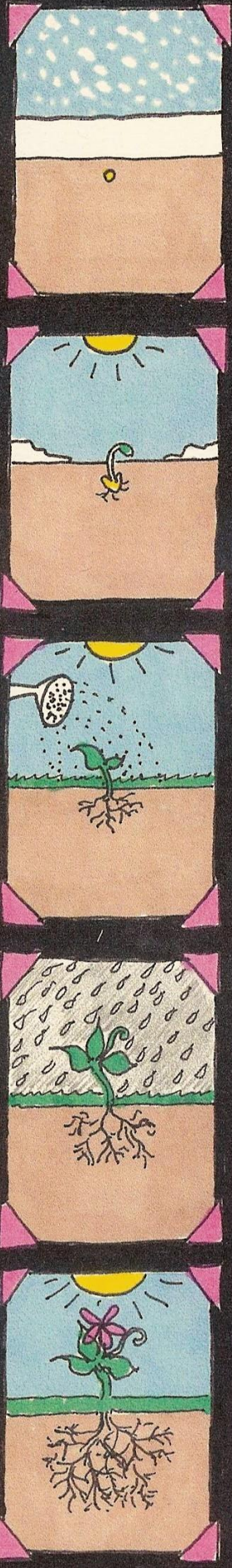
April 16

People often respond to one another in predictable ways, to the extent that we use the expression “pushing someone’s buttons” – from the language of machines – to convey how automatic these responses can be. It can be frustrating in a relationship to find our own buttons pushed and to hear ourselves saying the same words in the same way until an entire conversation of years ago has repeated itself anew between the same two parties.

Meanwhile, if we keep responding to one another in the same way for years on end, other vital parts of ourselves never come to the surface or enter into the relationship.

Sometimes when I am with friends or family amid strangers, the familiar people whom I know so well reveal sides of themselves that I have never seen. Some stranger will cause my husband of thirty-one years or my sister of fifty-





five years to exhibit a new facet in my presence. They turn out to know things I didn't know they knew; they have a sense of humor beyond the usual ways they have of making me laugh; they say thoughts that have never been expressed to me; they have had experiences that I did not know were meaningful to them.

The Persian poet Hafiz wrote a poem about the way we treat one another. It begins:

Why

Just ask the donkey in me

To speak to the donkey in you,

When I have so many other beautiful animals

And brilliant colored birds inside

That are all longing to say something wonderful

And exciting to your heart?

Let's open all the locked doors upon our eyes

That keep us from knowing the Intelligence  
That begets love  
And a more lively and satisfying conversation  
With the Friend.

(From Hafiz, The Gift, translated by Daniel Ledinsky)

During the Lenten season, I want to be more conscious of the fact that there is more to the people around me than meets my eye, especially to the people I think that I “know.” I want to welcome these new dimensions and to look with the eyes of Love.



Jan Seabaugh