

*Lights of Remembrance*  
a gathering hosted by Accord Hospice of Sedona  
Sunday, December 11, 2022 @ 6pm  
Sedona Real Hotel, Sedona Arizona

Good evening, and thank you for inviting me to be with you to honor our loved ones who are present with us now in different ways.

A dozen years ago when my father moved from assisted living to hospice care, I had the difficult task of packing up his treasured library and reassembling it at my home. Many of the books were by writers who nurtured his spiritual life during and after World War II, such as C.S. Lewis and T.S. Eliot. Now, in the waning weeks of his life, I wondered what brought him inspiration, courage, and hope. Tucked inside one of his books was a short list that revealed a daily rhythm to his morning: shave, weigh himself, and walk down the hall to breakfast. He practiced this routine for as long as he could. Being a man of faith, my dad would also pray each morning with his old and tattered prayer book. One prayer in particular brought him a renewed sense of hope and gratitude. I know this because he wrote it by hand on a piece of cardstock and used it as a bookmark. The prayer was this hymn text by 18<sup>th</sup> century English poet, John Keble:

“New every morning is the love our wakening and uprising prove;  
through sleep and darkness safely brought, restored to life and  
power and thought.”

Whether or not you are a person of faith, each morning we are presented with the gift of a new day. On some mornings we may be filled with gratitude for the beauty and wonder of creation. On other days we may be greeted with clouds of brain fog or waves of loneliness. In remembering our loved ones, we are graced with joys and sorrows because we have loved and can still love. Alongside our loss is the hope of love being renewed beyond our imaginings. As expressed in this poem by Sufi mystic Rumi, every morning, and every moment, we are invited to open our hearts to receive gifts of love in new and unexpected ways.

### The Guest House<sup>1</sup>

This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still, treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice.  
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes.  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.



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<sup>1</sup> Coleman Barks, transl. *The Illuminated Rumi*. New York, NY: Broadway Books, 1997.