



## Vision and Viewpoint

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### A Wisdom in Natural Rhythm

Life is not lived on a continuum. Not even the spiritual life. We do not find God on a laser beam, bright and cold and straight. We have times of great, dark incubation. We have times that are barren and arid and bleak. We go through periods when life feels more like death than like gestation. But it is always gestating. It may even be in the dark times that we grow the most. “Springtime God ... we need your persistent love to disturb ... our heart’s rigidity,” Kate Compston wrote.

I love the image of a “springtime God.” Isn’t God always the growing season in us? Isn’t everything that happens in life simply seeding something to come—and isn’t all of it God? But if that’s true, the question is, then, Are all our thoughts new seeds of life to be pursued? Because if so, then I am being called on and I am, as usual, reluctant to go.

I watch our garden come and grow year after year. I don’t know a thing about flowers or bushes or shrubs to this day. But I know when the back part of the garden will go white. And the front part will go bright orange. And the leaves on the rare old beech will turn gold. Each of them touches something different in me. Each of them releases something in me that nothing else does. I am learning to live my life according to the calendar of that garden. “A wisdom still abides in the natural rhythms of the earth, if we are still and open ourselves to it,” Kimberly Greene Angle wrote.

There is a wisdom in natural rhythm but we long ago abandoned it to technology and electricity. Now there is no stopping, no ending. Only quitting. I long ago fell prey to it and forgot how to stop and wondered how to quit. So now two unnatural rhythms try for the marrow of my soul: fatigue that is chronic and frustration that is terminal. I am determined to defeat them both.

We have become human hamsters on a twenty-four-hour wheel. We work and run and talk at all times. The dark never overtakes us. The silence of the day never sets in. And we wonder why we can’t find God. We are never still enough anymore to listen to the voice within that will tell us how. We fail to understand that every season of life has a message of its own. We want bland and steady, certain and successful, over challenge and hope, trust and faith.

My God is definitely a God of the seasons. I prefer that God in spring and fall—when things emerge and things mellow—but I have learned more from the God who is the heat of my day and the icy obstacles of my life. From that God, I have learned the depths of the self.

—from *Called to Question: A Spiritual Memoir*, by Joan Chittister