

CANADIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL ENEWS



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JULY 2018

An Invitation To Support Online Francophone Ministry



Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana has a dream. He wants to create an online Francophone ministry, based in Saskatoon, SK. *La Communauté Sans Frontières-Unitarienne*

/Universaliste is a ministry venture sponsored by the [Saskatoon Unitarians](#) to serve the Francophone community in Saskatoon and beyond.

The project's inception started with the arrival in Saskatoon of Rev. Fulgence Ndagijimana, a Unitarian minister who fled Burundi, due to persecution, for Canada. When he settled in Saskatoon, he started to explore the possibilities for ministry in this new culture and context. Saskatoon Unitarians opened doors for him and got him started on the process of Ministerial Fellowship, so he was part of the professional body of other ministers, to learn, and to have a community of support and accountability.

Saskatoon Unitarians offered an internship year, where part of the requirements placed Rev. Ndagijimana in the Clinical and Pastoral Education (CPE) program at Saint Paul's hospital in Saskatoon. This work put him in contact with organizations that serve Francophones, especially Francophone immigrants, and allowed him to be a pastoral presence in the Francophone community. At the end of the internship, a worship service was held in French, and Saskatoon Unitarians continue to hold worship services in French once a month.

As a result of exposure to some Unitarian Universalist ideas, people wanted to know more and the fact that most of the UU documents are in English was a barrier. The situation was also


of interest for many people who live in Canada but do not have easy access to materials about Unitarian Universalism in French.

The seed of an idea developed to create materials in French, to translate some of the existing documents and to centralize documents scattered in different places for people to access them from a website. *La Communauté Sans Frontières-Unitarienne /Universaliste* was born.

Once the resources are available, they can be used by people anywhere, making it possible to serve people beyond Saskatoon. The larger vision is that this ministry will be able to serve the Francophone population who are interested in Unitarian Universalism the world over.

The project will fund the development of a website, services in the community working with immigrants and refugees, the minister's time, and the procurement of communication equipment.

The project will build on what already exists in some congregations such as the Unitarian Church of Montreal, the UU Fellowship of Ottawa, and the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC), as well as the expertise of many UUs in Canada who are bilingual and are willing to be part of the project.



*En tant qu'universalistes
unitariens canadiens, nous
envisageons un monde dans
lequel notre interdépendance
nous appelle à l'amour et à la
justice.*

Canadian UU Vision

The Saskatoon congregation has made a significant commitment to this project by sponsoring it until such a time when the ministry can be incorporated and have its own charitable status. They have made their building available for use for the project and have generously provided the organizing committee of the "*La Communauté Sans Frontières- Unitarienne Universaliste, CSF-UU*".

When this project is funded and running, it will reach UU Francophones in Saskatoon, Canada and with the longer vision of which this project is a part, isolated UU Francophones anywhere in the world.

The project's goal is to raise \$15,670.

Become a dream-maker - support this creative and new initiative by being a Chalice Lighter in the CUC's Northern Lights program. This is a unique fundraising program jointly sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada (UUMOC) and the Canadian Unitarian Council. It provides opportunities for Canadian Unitarian Universalists to directly support growth projects in UU congregations and communities across the country.

In 2018, Rev. Ndagijimana was the recipient of the Northern Lights award. To become a Chalice Lighter, [sign up online here](#) - you will be contacted by Rev. Ndagijimana later.

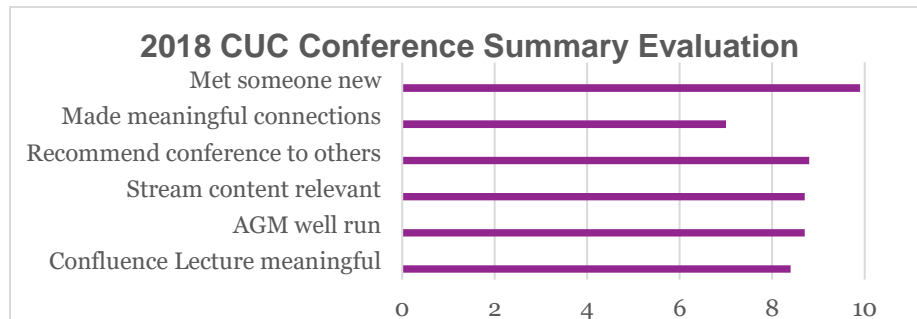
We are Canadian Unitarian Universalists

We are called to love & justice through our interdependence on each other & the world around us. We aspire to be deeply connected, radically inclusive, actively engaged, theologically alive, & spiritually grounded.

We seek to welcome you: your whole self, with all your truths & your doubts, your worries & your hopes. Find out what it means to live your deepest values out loud. Join us on this extraordinary adventure of faith. [Find a congregation near you.](#)

2018 CUC National Conference Survey Results Reveal Successful Gathering

The survey results for the CUC's recent National Conference are in — thank you to everyone who participated. The results continue to be analyzed to build on what went well and what can be improved. Here are some of the feedback highlights:



- 99 percent of respondents met someone new at the Conference.
- More than two thirds of young adult respondents strongly agree they were able to make meaningful connections with peers.
- 87 percent of respondents strongly agree the Annual General Meeting was well run.
- 84 percent of respondents strongly agree Rev. Karen Fraser Gitlitz's Confluence Lecture was relevant and timely.
- 87 percent of respondents strongly agree the content of the stream they participated in was relevant and useful.
- 88 percent of respondents would recommend attending the conference to others.

Among areas to be improved upon, many cited a desire for greater accessibility and less time spent travelling between locations next time, and the hope the conference could be more accessible financially. CUC staff are continuing the debriefing process and will take all responses under consideration. It's certainly a good sign that participants want more people to be able to attend and be more fully involved in the national UU community.

Mark your calendars for the next National Conference in Halifax from May 15 – 17, 2020 hosted by the Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax. Stay tuned for more details as the event draws nearer.



HALIFAX 2020

First Unitarian Church Of Hamilton's Social Justice Initiative Receives Shining Lights Award

When it comes to congregational social justice work, there is never any shortage of causes seeking attention, nor opinions about which ones should get it. Rarely, however, are there adequate resources to serve every need. This was the situation the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton found itself in for many years, until it decided to narrow its focus, hiring a minister, Rev. Carly Gaylor to help with this process.

"That was the intention, that was why Carly was hired", says Gail Rappolt, Hamilton's Social Justice Outreach chair. "To help us create something that would feel like it belonged to the whole congregation, rather than small things that only really involved a handful of people".



The new social justice focus in Hamilton had grown out of the church's mission statement, approved in 2012, "To nurture each other, serve the community, and inspire action that heals the world". The board, in turn, began the process of ensuring the church could live out its mission statement, a decision Rappolt says was crucial to the project's success, since social justice work was no longer seen as an isolated aspect of the church's work.

"What we learned was, it's critical that this is driven by the church leadership and/or the minister. It has to be seen to be part of the work of the church as a whole", she says.

And indeed, the church as a whole became readily involved, with congregational consultations yielding a list of 108 possible projects. Small groups from within the congregation eventually helped whittle this list down to 13 possible themes, but Rappolt says in retrospect the Outreach Oversight Committee recognizes it would have made more sense to focus on passions rather than projects.



Following up the initial consultations with small group meetings of interested congregants and a whole

congregation meeting, the committee ultimately went to the congregation with a list of three proposed projects: offering OWL (Our Whole Lives) sexuality education training and support and outreach to the LGBTQ community; supporting affordable housing; and "adopting" a local organization. Seeking feedback from the congregation about which ones they favoured, the committee learned all three had roughly equal support, and decided to move ahead from discernment to implementation.

It wasn't long after this decision, however, that the Syrian refugee crisis began to dominate the airwaves, a moment epitomized by images of three-year-old refugee Alan Kurdi's lifeless body lying on a Mediterranean beach. Pressure soon arose within the Hamilton congregation to act on the refugee crisis, an understandable response that could have delayed the careful planning for the three action projects.

"We had to find a way to be respectful but to stay the course on what the congregation had agreed to", says Rappolt, "cause I think we could have lost the entire year's work.... And that was very sensitive".

Almost three years later, even as new social justice issues continue to pop up, Hamilton has stayed the course with its three projects, and although there have been challenges, among them the ongoing threat of burnout and a perceived lack of communication, there have also been rewards.

“I think it has opened us to the community, both individually as people and as a congregation,” says Rappolt. “I think as a congregation we’re much more conscious of what’s going on in our community, of other faith groups also involved in social justice work. I think most people would say they see us living our mission statement”.

For these achievements, Hamilton was awarded the CUC’s first ever Shining Lights Award. This award celebrates innovation and sustainability in congregational initiatives and programming, and the winning congregation will share their successful processes with other congregations to imagine how they might do similar work in their own settings.

For more information or to learn about Hamilton’s process, contact your CUC staff at congregationalife@cuc.ca.

Philip Symons Receives CUC Social Justice Recognition Award

It’s been said of Pete Seeger that if ever there was a progressive cause he didn’t sing about; the record doesn’t show it. By the same token, there’s scant evidence of any progressive because Philip Symons hasn’t taken up over the years (and as a member of three choirs, he’s sung about many of them as well).

Symons has been active at both a congregational and a national level and worked on causes both local and global, all of which earned him the CUC’s 2018 Social Justice Recognition Award. The award recognizes a Canadian Unitarian for outstanding contribution locally and nationally in an area of social justice work.

Symons’ commitment to social justice goes back decades, before becoming a Unitarian. He joined the Social Responsibility Committee of the Unitarian Church of Victoria prior to joining the church itself. He soon became an active member of both the church and later Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice (CUSJ), serving as its President for six years and upon retirement from that role, as editor of CUSJ’s quarterly newsletter *JustNews*. He held that position for 12 years, handing over the reins earlier in 2018.

Democratic reform has been a cause particularly close to Symons’ heart, and he’s been active with Fair Vote Canada in advocating for proportional representation. He’s also campaigned for nuclear disarmament and the peace movement, and worked with other churches and organizations in Victoria to tackle issues such as poverty and homelessness through the organization Greater Victoria Acting Together.

Symons’ work is honoured for how he did it as well as what he did, never shying away from responsibilities and, despite the burnout that sometimes accompanies social justice work, always maintaining a calm and even disposition. His work for social justice is something he’s taken pride in



and enjoyed, and while he's remaining active on this front, he also hopes to have more time to devote to pursuits such as writing and gardening. Congratulations to Symons on a well-deserved honour.

2018 Knight Award Presented To E. Lisbeth (Betty) Donaldson

The CUC's Knight Award is presented to a living person who has, as a volunteer, contributed at the national level to furthering the principles of Unitarianism in Canada. The award honours the ideals exemplified by the lives and work of Victor and Nancy Knight. This year's recipient is Dr. E Lisbeth (Betty) Donaldson, a former member of the Unitarian Church of Calgary who now lives in Comox, BC. Donaldson served on the boards and several committees of both congregations, in addition to many other accomplishments.



Women's issues and organizations have long been a key focus for Donaldson. During her time in Calgary, she participated in and led the Prairie Woman's Gathering, as well as facilitating two Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation programs: [Cakes for the Queen of Heaven](#) and [Rise Up and Call Her Name](#). In the 1990s, she won the Unitarian Universalist Women's Association Feminist Theology Award, the first Canadian to have ever done so. She used the financial foundation from that award to develop the award-winning play "Images of the Goddess" and to create a follow up video, which also gained international recognition.

Donaldson was also the last Canadian representative on the Board of the Unitarian Universalist Women's Association, and after the organization stopped offering programs for its members, she helped establish the Canadian Unitarian Universalist Women's Association to take its place. She was the founding president, serving seven years on the board, and remains an active member.

Donaldson has also advocated for choice in dying, serving as chair for more than a decade of the CUC's monitoring group on the topic, and conducting workshops on "What is a Good Death." Her work allowed the CUC to be one of only three groups permitted to make representation to the B.C. Supreme Court on the issue in the case of Carter v. Canada. She remains active on this issue, as well as in the green burial movement.

In receiving the Knight Award, which she describes as a great honour, Donaldson joins [many other distinguished Unitarians](#), including Rev. Charles Eddis and the late Rev. Phillip Hewett, founders of the CUC. As a recipient, she's looking forward to joining other "Knights" as a mentor to the next generations of Canadian Unitarians.

Making Meaning in Emerging Adulthood

Asha Philar, CUC Youth and Young Adult Ministry Lead

In June 2018, 25 young adults gathered for a retreat in San Antonio, Texas to connect with others in the 18-25 age group, deepen in their Unitarian Universalist faith, and grapple with some big questions about identity. I had the privilege of being a retreat facilitator for the second year in a row, through a partnership between the Unitarian Universalist Association and CUC.

The retreat is part of the [Meaning Makers](#) program that is designed to help “emerging young adults” connect and reconnect with our faith, understand what it means to be a UU young adult, and make meaning out of the joys, challenges and transitions of their lives.

Being with these incredible young adults is such a joy. Because most participants were raised as UUs, they bring a mixture of innate understanding of our principles, a curiosity to know more, disappointment with the ways our faith doesn't live up to our values, and an admirable drive to push us into the future.

18-25 year olds are often in a state of transition and uncertainty, and Meaning Makers aims to be a space where they can get support, ideas, mentorship and spiritual sustenance for their lives. At the 2017 and 2018 retreats, we talked about UU theology and history, spiritual practices, identity, allyship, and got into deep discussions about the sources of our faith. Small groups lead beautiful and creative worships twice a day, with themes of celebration, letting go, transition, creating together, and community.

Talking to participants about their experience, I heard that they were able to feel more connected with Unitarian Universalism, especially if they didn't attend a local congregation regularly. The retreats and small group discussions that happen throughout the year help young adults grow spiritually in the way that meets their needs at this stage in their lives.

Two Canadian young adults who are in the incoming cohort of Meaning Makers reflect on their time at the retreat in Texas:

“Probably the most influential part of the retreat for me was going over the UU history and theology. I truly feel like I already have a more cohesive idea of what it means to be a UU - I have found myself describing my UU identity more confidently and cohesively since and can talk about my values with others and how they relate to Unitarian Universalism in a way that I couldn't before. A number of times during conversations with friends and colleagues about ethical or moral world issues, I have caught myself starting sentences with ‘As a Unitarian Universalist, I believe that all things are interdependent’ or ‘As a UU I believe that everyone is inherently worth, so...’ or ‘As a UU person I value justice, equity, and compassion in my relationships with others...’ I love that there is a community behind my values now. Whereas before I would've just said ‘Well, I just think this’ now I can say ‘I think this, and there is a community of others who think the same thing and we're all working on that together.’ “

“The retreat in Texas was a lot of new information and faces, but the most familiar thing was the way we were together: the way we talked, the way we listened, participated, and the common respect of spiritual space, even as we were jammed into circles, gonged into meals and crammed into bunks. My religious upbringing happened in spaces like this, where my circles debated divinity and human nature, where democracy was personal, where compassion was not optional. During the workshop on theology, I began to understand that this is actually a religion. Until then, I honestly wasn't sure.”



Meaning Makers has also inspired me to name and claim our faith as a real thing, defined by a unique theology that calls us to help all life flourish, and a history marked by a mix of resistance and support for the status quo. Knowing who we are is important for people of all ages, but I am especially glad we can offer this identity-building experience to young adults who bring so many gifts to our faith community.

If you know an 18-25 year old young adult who would love the Meaning Makers program, please [stay tuned to the UUA website](#) for details and upcoming registration deadlines.

Canadian participants in the “returning cohort”, who completed the year-long program at the June retreat:

Arielle Canning - Hamilton
Micaela Corcoran - Hamilton
Trevor Juhl - Montreal
Olivia Hall - Vancouver
Gabrielle Rockenfield - Kitchener

Canadian participants in the “incoming cohort”, who are starting their 6 month program with Meaning Makers:

Rachel Hearn - Toronto
Doug Ennenberg - Vancouver
Karoline Moore - Vancouver
Jeannette Johnson - Vancouver

An Update on Canadian Religious Education Professionals

Canadian Unitarian Universalist Religious Educators (CUURE) is a collegial group that offers regular opportunities for those doing this work to connect so that they can provide support to one another, help identify barriers to success, and identify successful strategies and approaches. The group will be co-chaired again this year by Katharine Childs and Pamela Smith-Loeters.



Serving with Spirit: Deadlines Approaching To Register for Training

It's summer - and it's a good time to think about sustaining your congregation's volunteers. Explore strategies to increase your volunteer pool and sustain people in meaningful engagement with your congregation.

You can attend this training in person, or online from the comfort of your home or vacation spot! On July 28 in Mississauga (deadline July 18), and August 11 in Saskatoon (deadline August 1).

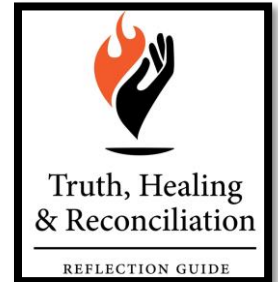


Details and registration on the [CUC website under Events Calendar](#).

CUC's Reconciliation Project Receives \$20,000 US Grant

Many Canadian Unitarians have already participated in the valuable work the CUC's Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation Reflection Guides (THRRG) task force has been doing, with participants stating that the experience have changed their perceptions profoundly. The guides have also drawn interest from other organizations in Canada, as well as ones in the US and UK.

Having piloted guides for various age groups and made them available online, the first phase of the THRRG project is complete. Phase II, *Rooting reconciliation in love and justice guided by Unitarian Universalist principles*, will begin in the fall of 2018 — bolstered by a recently announced \$20,000 US grant from the Unitarian Universalist Funding Program's Fund for Social Responsibility.



11 projects received a combined \$148,000 US from the fund, with the CUC's project tying with one other for the largest amount awarded. Thanks in part to this funding, the project will move into the next phase with a newly-constituted resource team. Phase II will work towards six goals:

- integrating the THRRG project into the organizations and systems of the CUC, including Canadian congregations;
- ongoing updates to the Reflection Guides;
- deepening understanding of what reconciliation means within Canadian society and UU communities in Canada;
- facilitating the process of developing relationships of trust and respect with Indigenous members of our communities;
- embedding reconciliation in the DNA of UU communities; and
- developing a plan for organizational and financial sustainability of the CUC's work in reconciliation.

More details about the project will be available in the coming months.

Congratulations to the THRRG team on this funding announcement. It's a testament to their hard work and unflagging dedication to reconciliation. The members of the team have been:

Rev. Meg Roberts & Rev. Samaya Oakley - Co-chairs

Amber Bellemare - Administrator

Leslie Kemp, Casey Stainsby, Marlene Blake-Seale.

The writing team which secured the UUFP grant was Leslie Kemp, Ann Denis, Diana Smith, Samaya Oakley, Meg Roberts and Vyda Ng.

UNITARIANS CELEBRATE PRIDE

June was Pride month and Unitarian congregations across Canada were busy celebrating Unitarian Universalism's long-standing commitment to LGBTQ2S rights. Whether through marching in parades or participating in special worship services, the month offered a chance to honour the struggles past and continuing.

As Lois Van Leer wrote in *"For Pride: Why do we march?"*

For those who are not able

For those who have been
murdered

For those who are ravaged by
disease

For those who are still beaten,
still taunted, still harassed, still
victims still targets

Why do we march?

Because some truths ain't self-
evident

Because all men ain't protected equal

And we love a good party...



INTERNATIONAL UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONS LOOKING FOR PARTNERS

Rev. Roger Bertschausen, Executive Director of the UU Partner Church Council

The Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC), an international UU organization that supports overseas partnerships, is eagerly looking for new partners. We have a too-long



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
PARTNER CHURCH COUNCIL

waiting list of congregations in NE India, the Philippines and Transylvania/Hungary that are seeking a Canadian or U.S. partner. Right now, the only CUC congregations with active overseas partnerships are North Shore Unitarian Church in W. Vancouver, BC, the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, BC, and the Unitarian Fellowship of London, ON.

Having a partnership with an overseas Unitarian congregation is a wonderful way to broaden and deepen our understandings of our global faith. A Transylvanian or Hungarian partner will help you learn about the roots of our faith and the resiliency that enabled our kinfolk's faith to survive centuries of oppression. A Filipino partnership will help you learn how our faith can thrive in a very different demographic from most North American Unitarian congregations. A NE Indian partnership will provide an example of what a congregation feels like that is thoroughly multi-generational, with youth and young adults in leadership roles in every service.

International Unitarian partnerships also give us in Canada and the U.S. an opportunity to sharpen our multicultural competence with people who live globally and who are kinfolk in faith. There is a grace

that the kinship provides. We can make mistakes, learn, and remain connected. Nothing helped the mostly white U.S. congregation I served more in interacting with people in our own community who were not white than our international partnerships with congregations in Transylvania and the Philippines. We learned in overseas partnerships how to walk with others in mutual relationship. We learned to unlearn—or at least began to unlearn—colonialist/imperialist patterns.

Partnership with an overseas congregation is a powerful, illuminating embodiment of mutual relationship. It is not “us” helping “them” on the other side of the world. It is mutual and reciprocal—and it is life-changing for individuals and congregations.

Interested? Check out the UU Partner Church’s Council website at www.uupcc.org. Check out the [overseas congregation seeking partners](#) Send me an email at roger@uupcc.org if you’d like to talk more about your congregation becoming a partner.

UUS GATHER FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2814 registered attendees participated in the Unitarian Universalist Association’s General Assembly in Kansas City, Missouri from June 20-24. Delegates picked “Undoing Intersectional White Supremacy” as a multiyear Congregational Study/Action Issue and endorsed three Actions of Immediate Witness. These are: i) drawing attention to predatory medical fees charged to incarcerated people; ii) pledging solidarity with indigenous “water protectors,” who have been fighting the placement of liquid natural gas pipelines near Native American lands; and iii) demanding immediate improvement to U.S. treatment of migrants and asylum seekers.

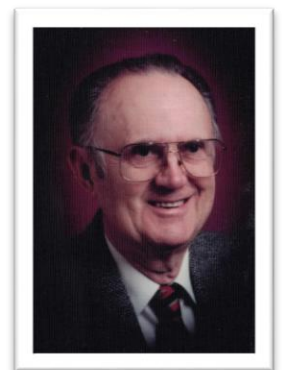


Delegates also voted on a series of bylaw changes, among them ones to bring language in UU bylaws in line with current understandings of gender diversity. [Full coverage of the GA](#) is available at UU World.

IN MEMORIAM: REV. JOHN HANLY MORGAN

Rev. John Hanly Morgan, minister emeritus of the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto where he served from 1960-1973, passed away in Peterborough age 99. Rev. Morgan is survived by two of his four children, nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren, as well as his wife Jeannette, to whom he was married for more than 75 years.

Originally from Indiana, Rev. Morgan served several Unitarian churches in the United States before becoming minister of Toronto First. He was active in many social justice efforts, particularly working for racial justice and peace. He was co-chair of Canadians for Middle East Understanding, and President of the Canadian Peace Council. His family writes: “John was always active in the communities where he lived because he felt that we need to do what we can to put something of ourselves into meeting the needs of the larger community”.



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EARTH

This is our earth.
It falls through heaven like a pearl
in a glass of plum wine.
There are no other earths that I know of.
There are no other skies that we have mapped.
This is our earth.
The Oneness who gave birth to it
remains nameless.
There was no midwife then
to bring us word of the birth-cry.
We only rejoice that it is.
This is our earth.
Ice caps its head. Glaciers clasp its feet.
Warm wind, like the breath of a lover, breathes around its breast.
Mountains thrust up to the clouds, bringing joy.
Storms blow across its shores, bringing fear.
Silvery fish capture sunlight and bring it down
into the deep, as on shore, valleys spread
with ripening fruit. Cities teem with the
poor and disenfranchised in the shadow of
golden towers. Children live and also die.
Highways throb. Monks sit in silence. Mothers
work. Crickets chirp. Teachers plan. Engineers
design. Fathers write letters.
People marry
with and without the blessings of law.
People cry.
They laugh, and brood, and worry and wait.
This is our earth.
There are no other earths.
Before its wonder, philosophers fall silent.
Before its mystery,
poets admit their words are shadow, not light.
And all the great names religious teachers have left to us—
Ishtar, Shekinah, Terra Mater, Suchness, Wakan
Tanka, Gaia—
suddenly refuse to announce themselves.
And so we too fall silent,
entering the time where words end
and reality begins.

[Rev. Mark Belletini](#)