

Spiritual Direction Forum UK

supporting and resourcing spiritual directors
promoting and protecting good practice
advocating and encouraging creative development

run by spiritual directors for spiritual directors

Telling it slant - with David Runcorn

Thursday 3 July 2025 7pm



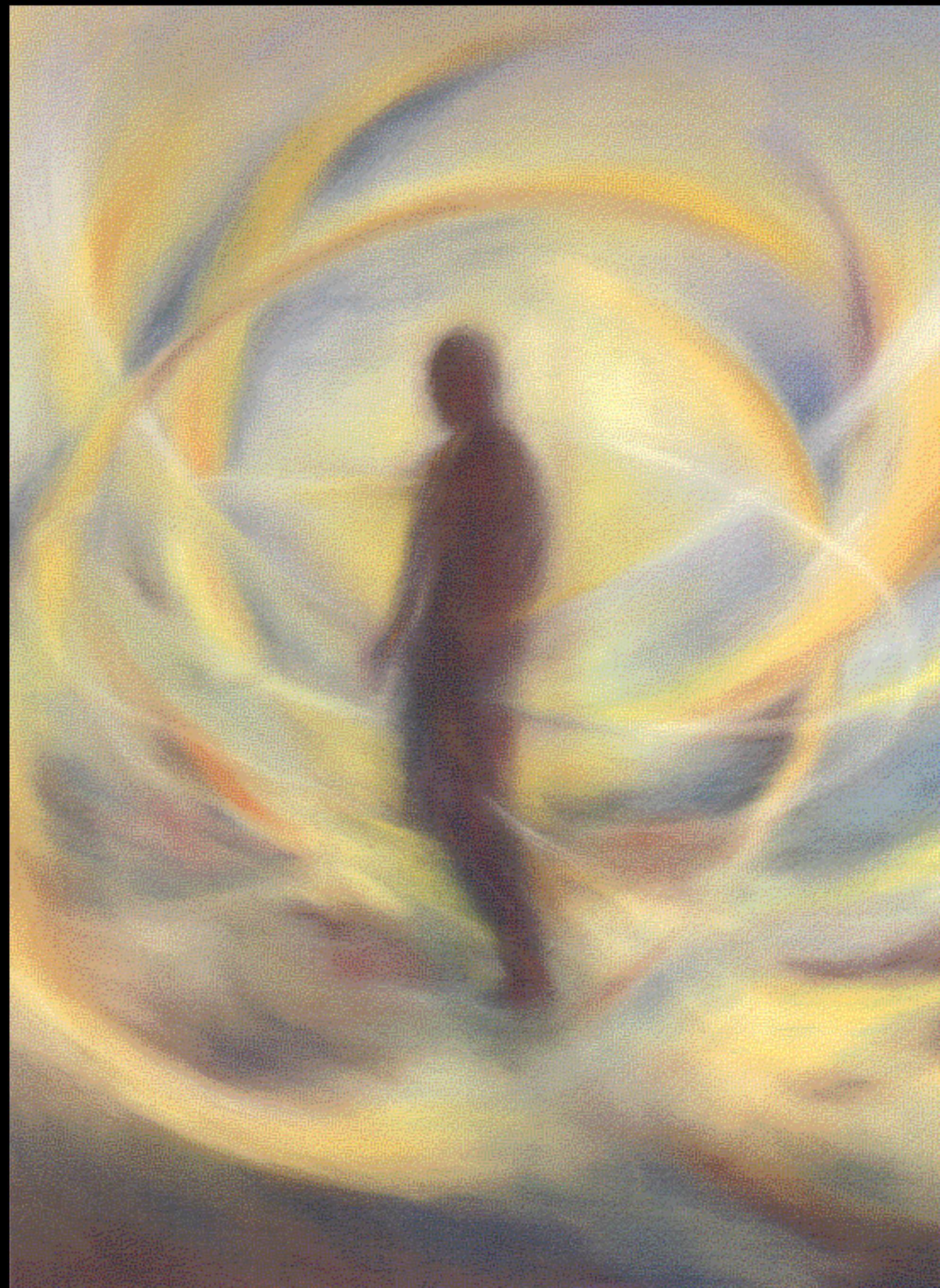
Spiritual Direction Forum UK



Part 1:

Spiritual Direction as parable making

Telling it slant - with David Runcorn



Breakout groups

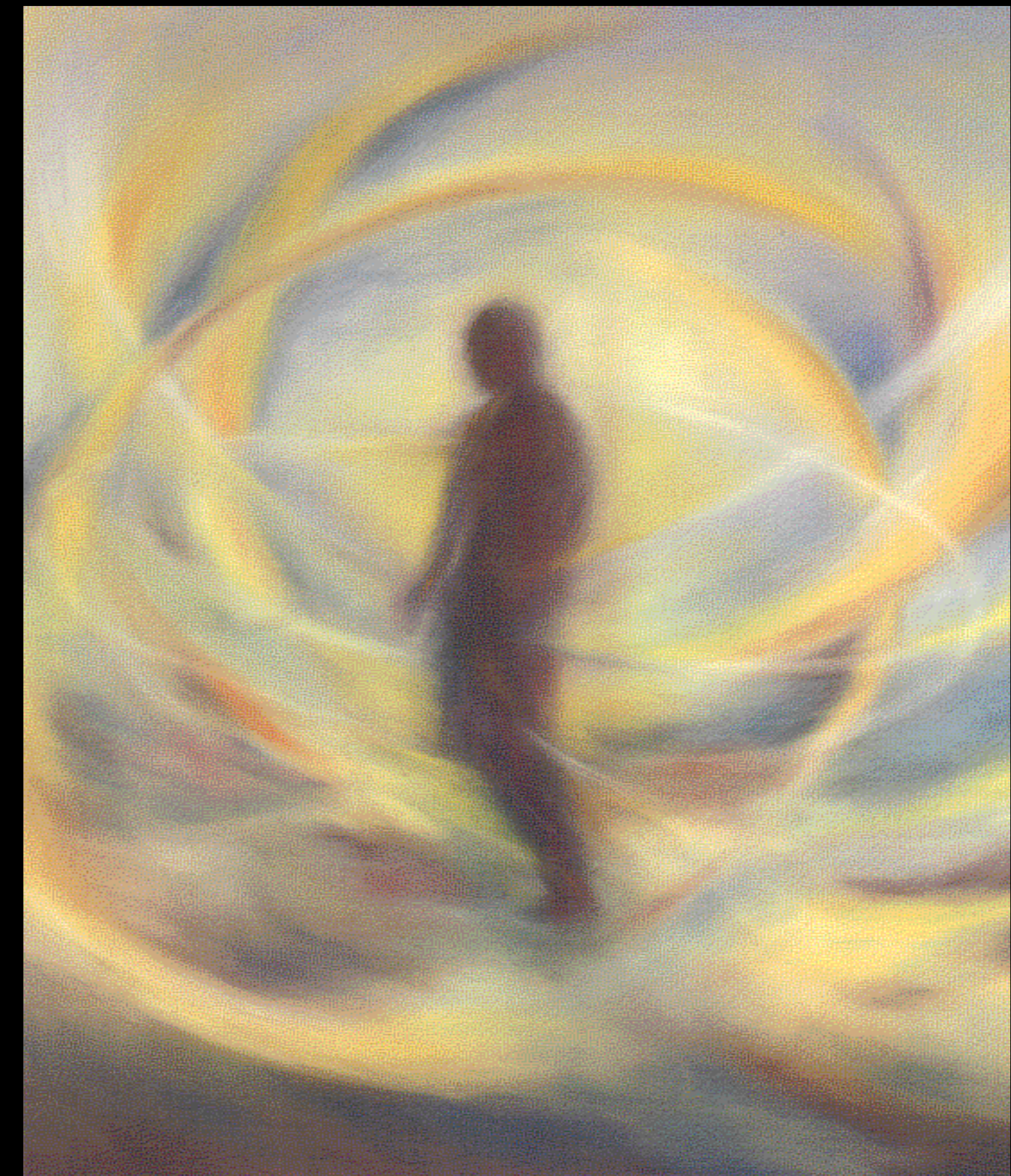
Where you recognise any of this in your work of accompaniment?

How does it leave you feeling? Without judgment, just notice your inner responses to this.

Are you prone to the 'heresy of explanation'?

What do you think it means to contain *un-knowing* in spiritual direction?

Are there other issues or questions this is raising for you?



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Part 2:

‘Now we see dimly’

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Tell it slant

Mashal Parable Parabole Curve ball

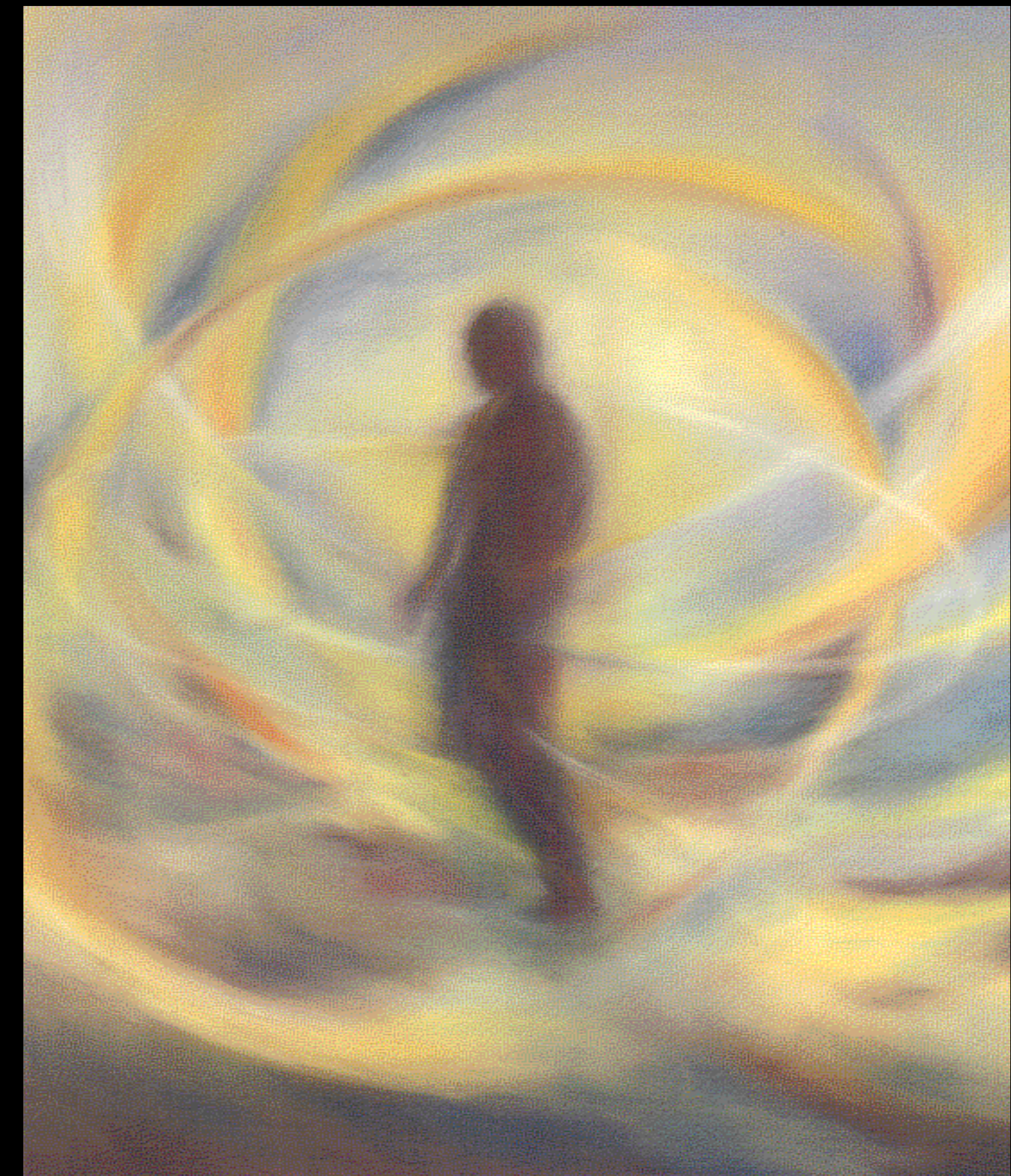
De-centring

The heresy of explanation

Containing *unknowing*

Accompaniment as a work of shared
parable making ...

Inhabiting the space faithfully



Kataphatic - according to image.

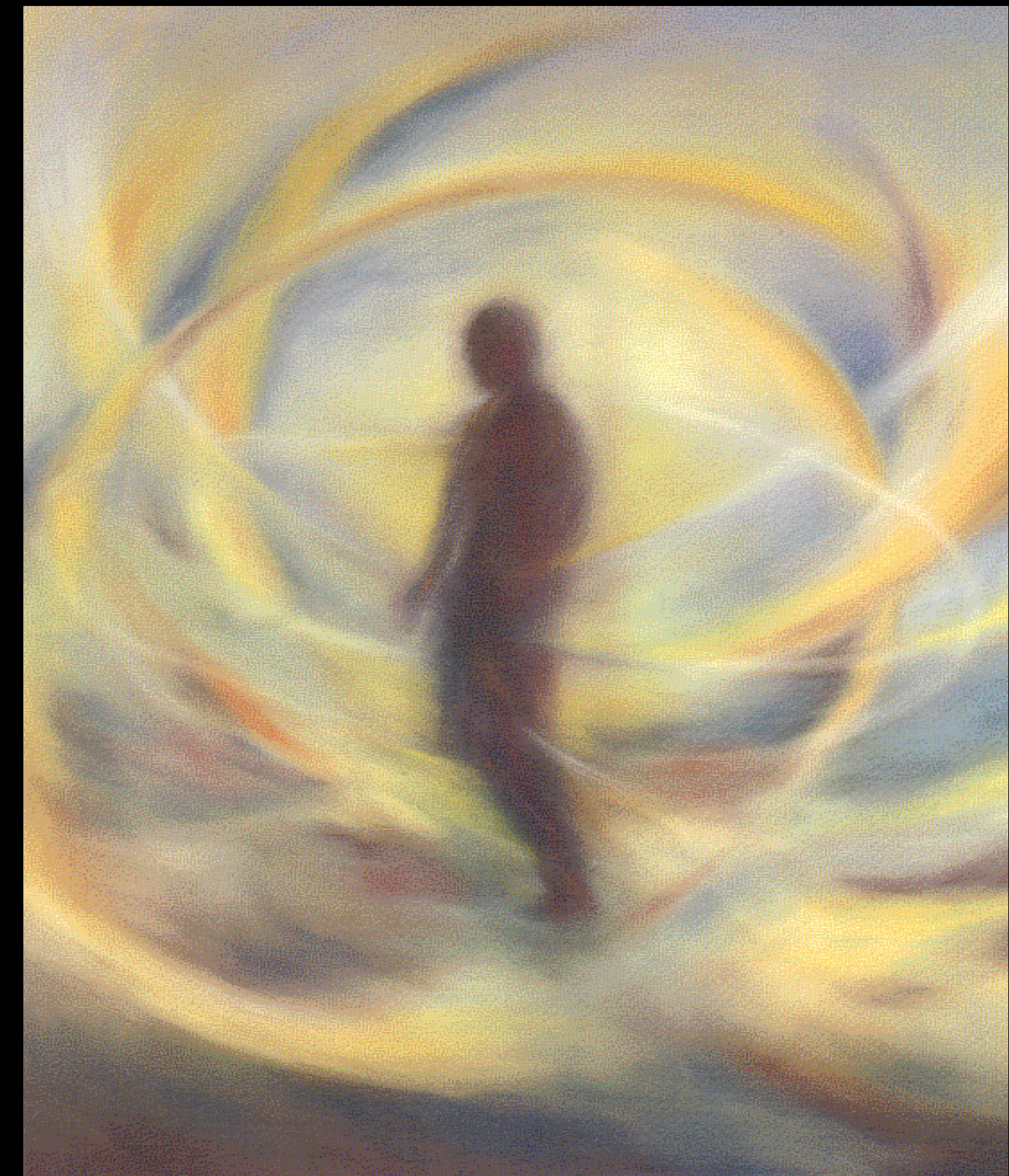
Apophatic - *beyond* image

The Apophatic gift to a Kataphatic world

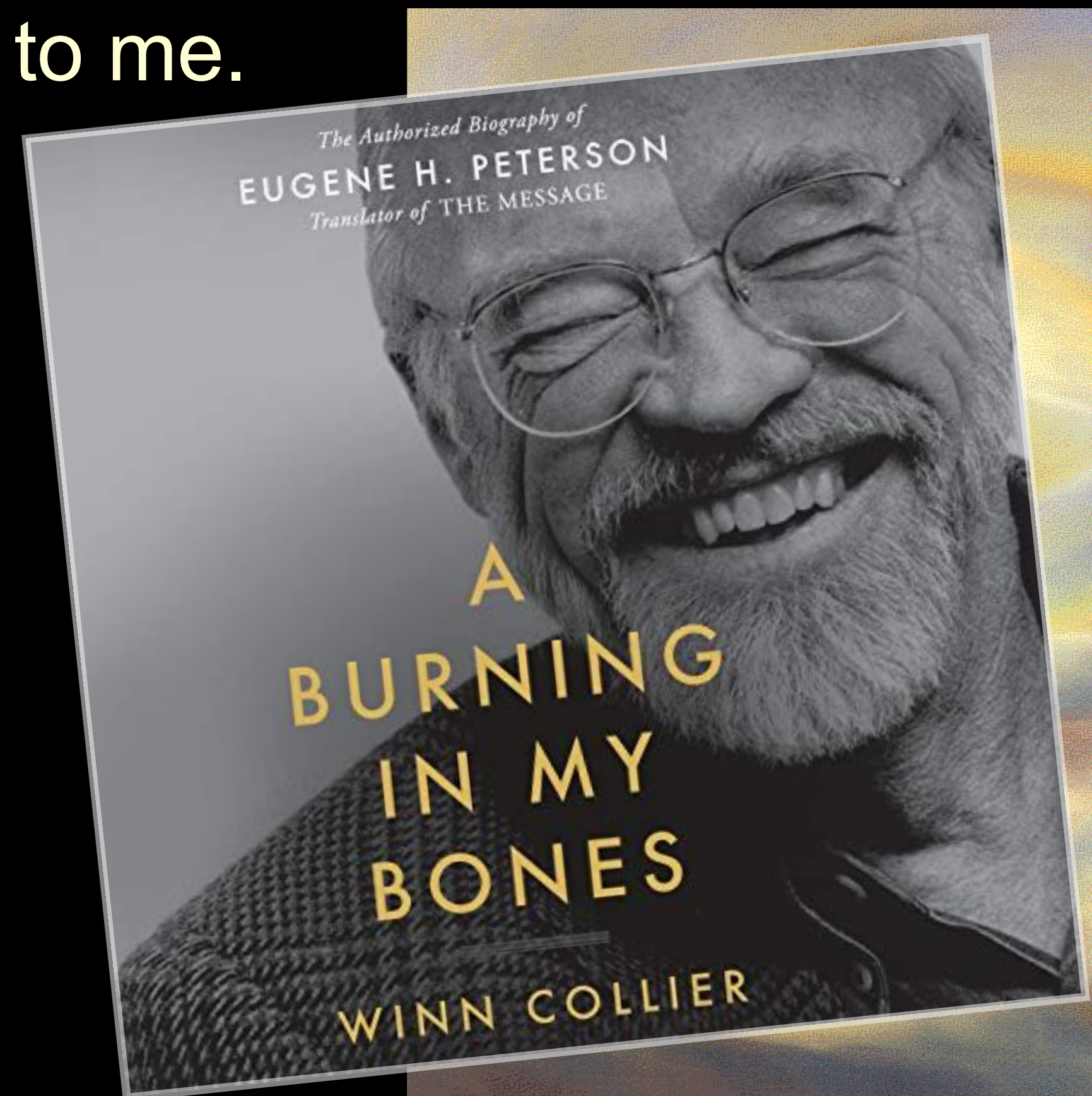
- The redeeming of language and imagination.
- guarding us against presumption, idolatry and control
- honouring God's hiddenness and freedom.

'It is not surprising in a technological culture like ours that is obsessed with purpose and achievement, God has often been reduced to a useful predictable idol, or always experienced as absent.' Jean-Jacques Surmond.

- a way of renewal.



“I always assumed that as I got older, my faith would get firmer. That hasn’t happened. Jan [his wife] preceded me in this. A few years ago she began voicing doubts, a sense of what she called “absurdity”. Not crippling doubts, but no longer the childlike trust that she was accustomed to. And then it began happening to me. Not a crisis kind of thing but a nibbling at the edges. Instead of more, less. At least less of what I expected. Sometimes it occurs to me that it is my expectations that need converting but so far that hasn’t happened.”
(p289)

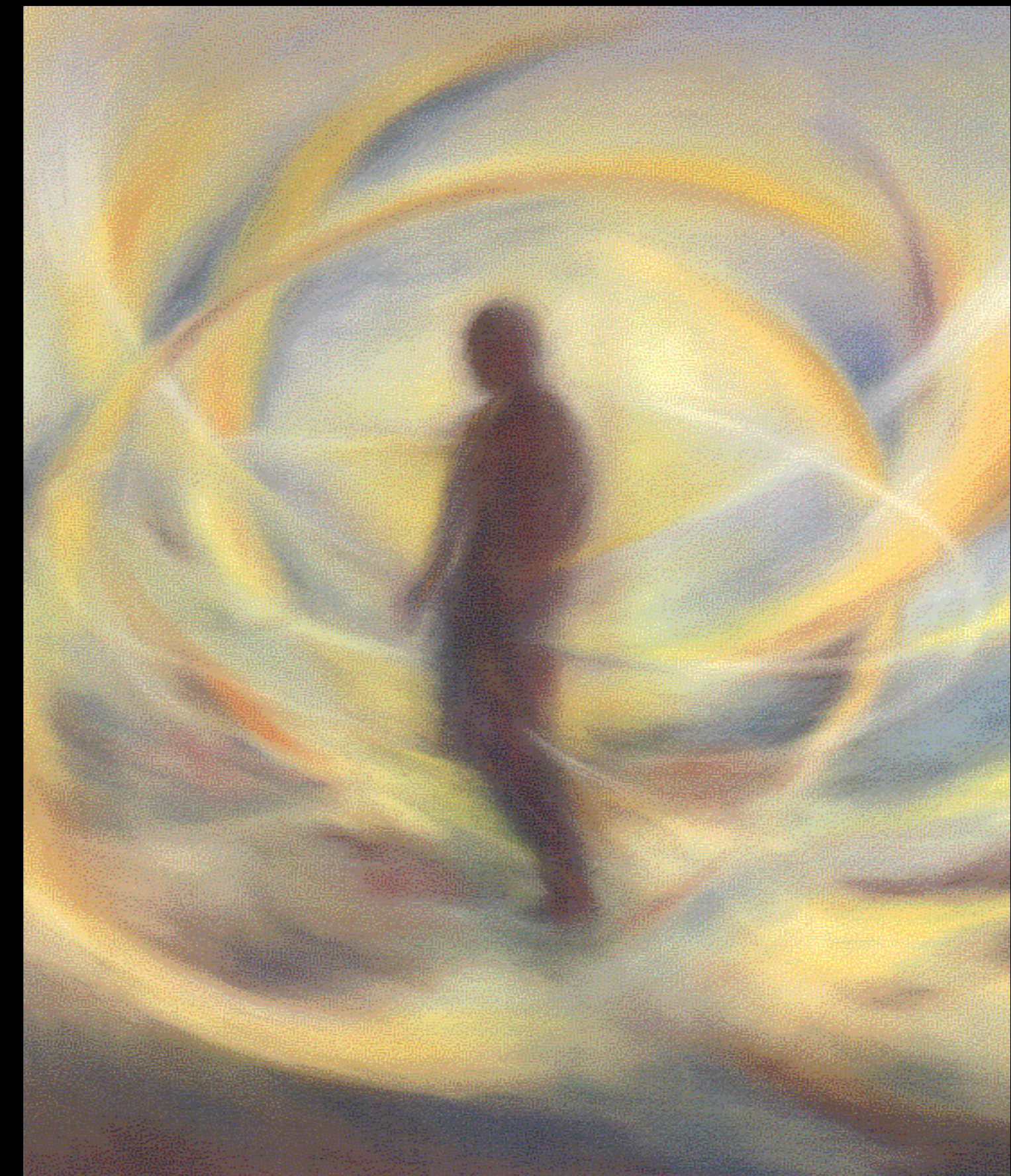


Some responses to being in the dark

1. When you can't see - stop and sit down.
2. Give up trying to run the show.
3. Do not be afraid. Welcome the stranger.
4. Receive 'the sacrament of defeat'. The necessary loss

“O Christ my Lord, again and again I have said with Mary Magdalene, ‘They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him’. And I have been desolate and alone. And thou hast found me again, and I know that what has died is not thou, my Lord, but only my idea of thee, the image I have made to preserve what I have found and to be my security. I shall make another image, O Lord, better than the last. That too must go, and all successive images, until I come to the blessed vision of thyself, O Christ my Lord.” George Appleton

5. Ask the darkness to teach you what you need to know.

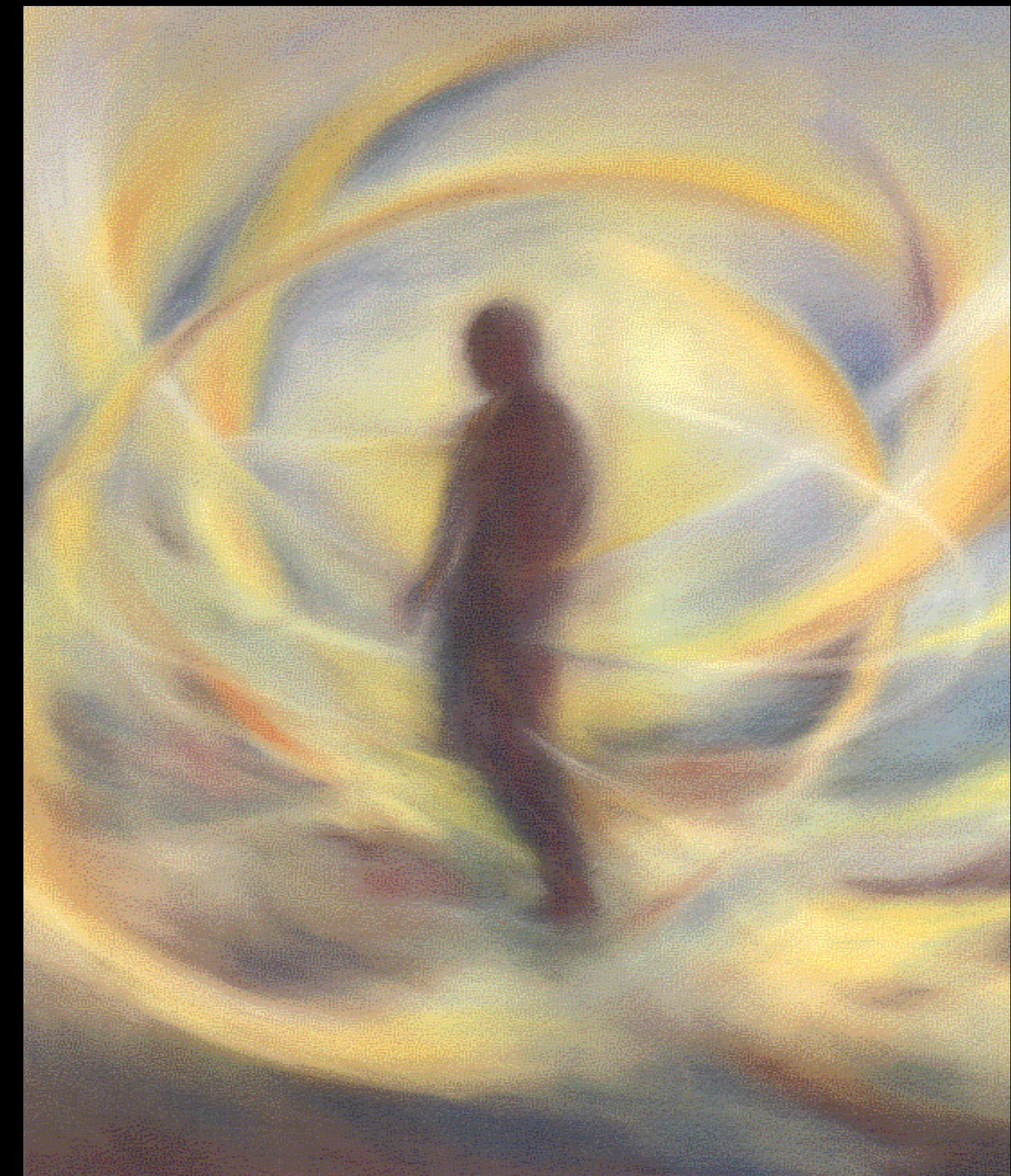


Breakout groups

Are there insights here you particularly relate to or that challenge you?

Have you wisdom you would add from your own experience of accompanying in the dark or through enigma?

Might anything here suggest changes to how you approach accompaniment?
If so, in what ways?



“My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think that I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you does in
fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that
desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the
right road, though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always, though I may
seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will
not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will
never leave me to face my perils alone.”

Thomas Merton

