

Gethsemani Abbey – November

By Tom Stewart

I like it here on the gray days.
 Some people prefer the blue ones,
 Or the red and orange and even violet ones of morning and evening,
 But not me.
 I prefer the gray.
 It's easier for cameras to capture the blue (or red or orange or violet).
 One can look at a snapshot and exclaim, "How beautiful!"
 Or, more wistfully, "Looks so peaceful."
 But the gray,
 The gray requires work.
 A camera can't catch:
 The seeking or alerting cry of a solitary hawk;
 The scattering, squawking, silhouetted birds – bulleting from their perches across the sky
 When the Abbey bells chime;
 The surprise of red (or is it brown?) in one or two otherwise bare tree branches.
 Not really, it can't.
 The gray days beg you to be here. Present. Absorbing. Feeling.
 Reminding me of another gray day a long time ago when I was here.
 And my heart blazed.
 And my soul turned blue and red and orange and violet.
 And everything else.
 I like it here on the gray days.

Tom Stewart is an Associate Professor for Western Kentucky University's Department of Educational Administration, Leadership, and Research. His research interests include studying effects of contemplative leadership and mindfulness in schools and classrooms; employing the Enneagram to improve communication and school culture, and to build higher-performing school leadership teams; more effective classroom and school-level formative assessment and standards-based grading; and coaching practices that enhance reflective practice and instructional leadership.



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