

A Fistful of Stars: Communing with the Cosmos

Gail Collins-Ranadive

Milt Hetrick, Contributor

Little Bound Books (Oct 9, 2018)

Softcover \$12.95 (84pp)

978-1-947003-97-2

In the center of each cottonwood twig there is a perfect five-pointed star, a reminder that everything is made of “star stuff,” including ourselves. Gail Collins-Ranadive, a Unitarian Universalist minister and peace worker, shares her musings on the place and purpose of humans in this dynamic, expanding universe. The wisdom of mystics, she writes, is increasingly seen to merge with the startling revelations of quantum physics.

“Now we are in the liminal space between stories,” she writes. “While this can be disorienting and distressful, it can also be a deeply creative place.” It’s also a dangerous place, its beauty distorted by greed and a ruthless lust for power, but apparently it hasn’t always been this way. Collins-Ranadive notes that, for prehistoric cultures, cooperation, not competition, was the norm. Even in nature, thriving ecosystems have more to do with cooperation than was previously thought.

In this light, Collins-Ranadive’s perspective on the concept of sin is intriguing and sets us firmly in relationship both with ourselves and with all the interdependent web of creation. “Sin,” she writes, is “what you do to keep yourself from fulfilling your destiny,” and “evil” is “when you prevent others from living out theirs, whether they be trees or creatures or other people.” From this perspective, it becomes apparent that Western culture has sinned greatly, that it is begging to be transcended, and that we are the ones who must do it.

How? By shifting our perspectives, Collins-Ranadive writes, to see the transcendent within the ordinary. That shift happens when we give ourselves over to something much larger than the paltry, limited human ego—over to the Cosmic, or Divine, Self, which has the eyes to see, as the Gospel of Thomas declares, that “heaven is spread upon the earth.”

KRISTINE MORRIS (September/October 2018)

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