



# **EVERYTHING BELONGS**

**Home and Homesickness**  
with James Finley

Paul Swanson: Psychologist and Minister Dr. Thema Bryant describes healing as a transformative homecoming. It's not a homecoming in the traditional sense of returning home to a physical place, but rather it's about embracing a state of being within ourselves where we recognize how we have disconnected from ourselves and our lives and fully accept our wholeness. The act of accepting ourselves into our wholeness is to be still and still moving, which calls to us the poetry of T. S. Eliot, which kicks off chapter seven of Richard's book, *Falling Upward*. It goes like this, "Old men ought to be explorers. Here and there does not matter. We must be still and still moving into another intensity for a further union, a deeper communion."

In this chapter, Richard writes that home is the self-same moment that we find God in ourselves. We also find ourselves inside God. This is full homecoming. Today we're back in Richard's hermitage reflecting on the themes of chapter seven, *Home and Homesickness*. In this conversation, we explore the complexities of the spiritual journey, the longing for a divine home, and the potential for healing and growth throughout life's stages.

Mike Petrow: From the Center for Action and Contemplation, I'm Mike Petrow.

Paul Swanson: I'm Paul Swanson.

Mike Petrow: And this is *Everything Belongs*. Here we are, Richard, once again on your porch listening to the beautiful sounds of an Albuquerque afternoon in the autumn and today we're going to be talking about chapter seven from *Falling Upward*, *Home and homesickness*. Another one of my favorites. You write, "The goal in a sacred story is always to come back home after getting the protagonist to leave home in the first place."

Richard Rohr: Very good.

Mike Petrow: Yeah. And we've talked already this season about how Western myth and mysticism and mythology all seem to meet at this longing for home. I feel this one real deeply. I have reoccurring dreams for over 10 years of trying to find my way home. And then you even quote Jung who says, "Life is a luminous pause between two great mysteries, which themselves are one." And you said that's what you mean by home and homesickness, but simple question, what is this longing for home and why do we all feel it so deeply?

Richard Rohr: Well, the short answer is it's really a longing for wholeness and for all the connections, for all the relations to be granted and fulfilled. But maybe what I failed to say in that chapter, I don't know, was there's no great myth, at least male myth. Maybe women can correct me on women's stories, but the young male always leaves home. Now, in Jesus, it's mainly traveling. Jerusalem is a long way from Nazareth. That's quite a bit of walking he's done. The Buddha leaves home. Francis leaves home. Home is, well, to use my old language, it's order. Order passing for reorder. But it isn't really, it can't be. You have to go through disorder and the first step into disorder is leaving the usual.

Honestly, and I love my Kansas upbringing, but I couldn't live in Kansas anymore. It's a different set of questions. They're not bad questions. It's mainly that they're too familial, too small, too preoccupied with one another. It's not the big dome of the story. It's all my story, my story, and refining my story. You know the old cosmic egg, my story, our story, other people's story, the story. You need to get out of my story, and you can stay in that the longest if you stay where your family is. And I know that upsets some people, especially mothers

who want to keep all their kids close, but you're not doing, certainly the boy, but I'm not sure not the girl too, if you don't let them leave.

Mike Petrow: Well, in the last chapter, you tee this up when you write, "It takes a huge push, much self-doubt, and some degree of separation for people to find their own soul and their own destiny apart from what mom and dad always wanted them to be and do, to move beyond family of origin stuff, local church stuff, cultural stuff, flag and country stuff is a path that few of us follow positively with integrity."

Richard Rohr: Wow.

Mike Petrow: So even while we have this longing for homecoming, this leaving home is a part of that.

Richard Rohr: It sets the stage because part of the reason you left home was not good and you have to resolve that. Oh, now you look down on your old parents and your family and your neighborhood, but in fact there were some very dear ties there that you need to still appreciate to be whole. I think that happened to me a lot in all the years in Cincinnati where I'd go home to Kansas. And every time we'd see here's what's good about my family, here's what's good about Kansas. You have to have a point of contrast, is the thing. And if you don't have a point of contrast, you either hate your family or you falsely idealize it. That is the only way to do it. You've got to break that addiction to the... The family is the extended self. It's still the self. And I think that's why all men go on a journey. Always. Always.

Paul Swanson: I'm really struck by the way you brought order, disorder, to reorder into this. Because I had never really thought about the leaving home as a chosen disorder. I often thought of disorder as kind of a infiltrating order, but this is a chosen disorder in a way.

Richard Rohr: Excellent.

Paul Swanson: Even though it might be partly unconscious, but you're choosing disorder because there's this mythic sense that the home order is not all that there is.

Richard Rohr: The only way.

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Or even necessarily the best way. I left home at 14 to go to Cincinnati, a boys school called a seminary, where I had all these classmates who just grew up so differently than I did and it was wonderful. Now, I was secure enough from the good order my parents had given me that I could accept them as points of comparison, but I didn't resent them. I'm only thinking of this now. I liked them because they were different. They didn't do it my way. Yeah.

Mike Petrow: I wonder about so many of us leave home or get tossed out, depending on how our journey goes. And I've heard especially friends like myself, who don't have a lot of their family of origin left. People talk about, "There's the family you lose and there's the family you choose." And as we go through life, we encounter people or situations maybe that we've never met, but they feel like home. Richard, when I read *Falling Upward*, it felt like a homecoming to me because it felt familiar.

Richard Rohr: Oh, I'm so glad.

Mike Petrow: What do you think that is of encountering people or situations or even teachings that feel like a coming home, even though they're brand new? What are we touching when we touch those things that feel like home?

Richard Rohr: The larger self, which you weren't allowed to imagine when you stayed in the small family. Not morally non-imaginable, you just weren't capable of, "There are people who don't eat that food, who don't talk that way." You need points of comparison, you need alternatives. And you don't even know this is happening. But I remember going home my first Christmas already and I knew I was different than my Kansas family. I loved them. It was great to be there, but I met a whole bunch of people who don't do it this way. They're neither worse nor better, but it's different. I had four Black classmates, had six Hispanic all here from New Mexico, and they especially, I don't know that I would've ever lived close to Black or Hispanic people. And then a few white kids who were extremely smart and I couldn't be the smartest boy in class anymore. That was good for me. Because I wasn't, I was a B student. But up to that, I thought I was an A student, I guess. I don't know. You're forcing me to say all these things that are brilliant. Thank you.

Paul Swanson: I like the idea of us forcing you towards brilliance. It feels good that we're forcing you towards brilliance.

Richard Rohr: Oh.

Paul Swanson: I've just never heard you say that before. We're going to shift gears here to talk about home and homesickness in relationship to union with God. And one of the things that you write in *Falling Upward* is you write, "There is an inherent and desirous dissatisfaction that both sends and draws us forward, and it comes from our original and radical union with God." I find this sentence captivating when I think about this original.

Richard Rohr: I do too. Thanks for quoting that. I forgot I wrote that. Go ahead, that's good.

Paul Swanson: Forcing you towards brilliance. The way that it's coming to me right now is that there's this original union with God and then there's this sending out into our own incarnational selves, and we experience that as a longing for that union.

Richard Rohr: Yes. Yes.

Paul Swanson: How do we live in both a union and longing for union at the same time? Am I sharpening the right end of the stick, as far as how I'm approaching that?

Richard Rohr: Let me try this. You can't want something unless you've begun to taste it. You don't know what is. You have to have had a bit of God to want more of God, and that's why it energizes the journey going outward, but then when you realize it isn't totally out there either, what you learn in this going out and coming back is that it's the self you have to change. There's no geographical cures. There's no, "If I find the perfect partner or woman, then I'll have it." All of those have to disappoint you to some

degree. Not entirely, hopefully. To say, “As much as you love your wife, she isn’t God.” There’s a bigger love, a deeper love, a love that she is subject to too and drawn by too. So it refines the journey, the going out and the coming back.

Mike Petrow: I wonder, I’m absolutely fascinated by the millennia-long Christian mystical obsession with the Song of Songs as a mystical text.

Richard Rohr: Oh, good.

Mike Petrow: And so I think when Origin wrote the first commentary on it, he said, “It’s this idea of love lost and found, and lost and found again.”

Richard Rohr: Is that right, he says that?

Mike Petrow: It’s there. And that’s the song, is you have the lovers, they’re together and then one goes away. And origin says, “And when they depart, the search begins anew. And then they find each other and they’re together and then one goes away, and then the search begins anew.” And this used to bother me when I was younger, and now I actually take comfort from thinking of union with God as something that I experienced cyclically. Or from realizing that I’m going through order, disorder, and reorder over and over and over again. Do you think that’s accurate? Is there a...

Richard Rohr: I think that’s very accurate, if I understood you. It’s why so many of the world myths or circular and why the spiral is the most universal petroglyph in the world found in most ancient cultures. Somehow they saw life as coming back to the same place, but as T. S. Eliot would say, “Knowing it for the first... Oh, I was here, but I didn’t know that.” And you gradually collect the good parts and let go of the parts that weren’t helpful. Like you’re ashamed of your boyhood when you’re 12 years old, but then when you get 25, you love the freedom and innocence of it.

It’s, “Oh, that was so dear.” Like I can picture myself in western Kansas laying in my beautiful spot. I’m about 13. It’s behind the chokecherry tree, so no one can see me over there, and I could just lay there for hours. Now, early stage, I would’ve thought of that as means nothing, wasting time. Something I was even a little bit ashamed of to tell people about it, and now I just idealize it. Even when I went back to the farm about five years ago, I even looked for the spot and there was still this soft patch of grass. The chokecherry bush was gone, but it was that meaningful and I remembered a patch of grass that I could lay in. Wonderful. Well.

Mike Petrow: That’s beautiful.

Paul Swanson: Yeah. I love that imagery. The home and homesickness, one of the things for me that comes up when I’m in that place of vulnerability or I get that taste of that longing of that original union, I will sometimes say out loud, “I want to go home.”

Richard Rohr: Do you really?

Paul Swanson: I don’t conjure it and try to say, it just comes out of my mouth.

Richard Rohr: I want to go home.

Paul Swanson: And there's something that I think that is so palpable about the sense of homecoming, the sense of home. Whether it's a patch of grass, it's another person, but also knowing that it's so much bigger than that. It's what's being expressed through those carnal pieces, but that it's-

Richard Rohr: That's beautiful.

Paul Swanson: I think it's one of those things that really unites. When we see family separated or we see people kicked out of their country, there's this intuitive sense of wanting to make whole what is broken.

Richard Rohr: What is broken, yes.

Paul Swanson: Then it's such a theme that I feel like underlies home and homesickness.

Richard Rohr: To bring it back together. Yes. Now, we have to be aware. I know you are. Well, we all are. A lot of people don't have that, who had horrible family.

Paul Swanson: Right. Right.

Richard Rohr: There's not a single thing recalling them. Just so we're always aware of that. So not everybody enjoys what we partly enjoy. Yeah.

Mike Petrow: I think about... Well, our great teacher, Jim Finley talks about he had a very violent childhood growing up.

Richard Rohr: Yes.

Mike Petrow: And yet he talks about how sometimes we have these experiences in the presence of another. He says, "Who neither invades us nor abandons us, where we experience safe love that allows us to sort of be re-parented, and we realize we're experiencing the love we always should have and wish we would've had as children." But I think what captivates me is that there's still, no matter what we've been through, there still seems to be some intrinsic longing for an intuited goodness.

Richard Rohr: That's very well put.

Mike Petrow: For a hoped-for home maybe that we've never known.

Richard Rohr: Well put, intuitive longing for a intuitive goodness?

Mike Petrow: A longing for an intuited goodness. Yeah. It's like, again, a longing for a home we've never known, but we somehow sense is there. I appreciate this, you talking about how that's wholeness, and God, and the whole self. I wonder, also listening to you talk about how it's a spiral, it sounds like it's a very windy road. In this chapter, you say this and I love it, "The good news is that there's a guide, a kind of medical advocate, an inner compass, and it resides within each of us." And you're talking about the Holy Spirit. How have you experienced the spirit as a guide, longing you on your journey to and from home?

Richard Rohr: This is really very traditional teaching. It's in the relying upon the Holy Spirit within you that you know the Holy Spirit. If you never take the leap to draw from that inner source, to trust that the inner source is there, is given, is free, is love, you'll never know it. So that leap is what I think we mean by faith. That I'm willing to trust something that I can't logically prove is there, but as I draw from it, I know it. It isn't a good word, forgive me, but yeah. It's a shame that we usually do use the neuter for the Holy Spirit, because gender much more connotes relationship for most of us. But people say the Holy Spirit is feminine, that works. But unless you trust her, that she's there with you and for you even more than you're for yourself... Can you imagine believing that? "There's someone for me, more than I'm for myself." The allowing of that thought and that prayer is to allow it to become true.

Mike Petrow: I think that's-

Richard Rohr: And then you know it more, and then you know it more. Yeah.

Mike Petrow: I think that's great comfort for a lot of our listeners-

Richard Rohr: Isn't it?

Mike Petrow: ... Who feel that homesickness and maybe don't feel like they can go home to their family of origin, or the church that they grew up in, who are part of the tribe of wandering exiles here.

Richard Rohr: A few years ago, I was watching some TV show on music and they said a group of composers got together and tried to vote on what is the most perfect song ever written. Do you know what they concluded?

Paul Swanson: I'm going to guess, a rock song or like a composer? Classical music?

Richard Rohr: A song.

Paul Swanson: A song.

Richard Rohr: Once you hear it, you won't be surprised.

Paul Swanson: Really?

Richard Rohr: I don't think.

Paul Swanson: I'm going to go with, Hey Jude, the Beatles.

Richard Rohr: No.

Mike Petrow: That's a good song.

Richard Rohr: That is a good one.

Mike Petrow: Stairway to Heaven.

Richard Rohr: The Kansas Boy gets to say it.

Paul Swanson: Oh, let's hear it.

Richard Rohr: Somewhere Over the Rainbow.

Mike Petrow: Oh, god.

Richard Rohr: The most perfect song.

Paul Swanson: Wow.

Richard Rohr: Because it starts-

Mike Petrow: Right in the feels.

Richard Rohr: It starts with a leap of a complete octave and then just continues to make leaps, but then the words, longing for home.

Mike Petrow: My heart is crying a little bit right now, but probably in a good way. Wow.

Richard Rohr: You thought it was Stairway to Heaven.

Mike Petrow: No, just because when you say somewhere over the rainbow, it just hits so hard. Because it is exactly that, it's the longing for home.

Richard Rohr: It's the song.

Mike Petrow: Oh, my god.

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Mike Petrow: Wow.

Richard Rohr: Picture Judy Garland singing it in her little farm in Kansas, looking up. There's a land that I dream of. She's every girl, every boy.

Mike Petrow: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. But yeah, the most perfect song ever composed.

Mike Petrow: Wow.

Richard Rohr: That doesn't make it so, but you could see why. These were composers that thought that.

Mike Petrow: Wow. That's powerful.

Richard Rohr: And then as a musician, they went on to show the other, there's a leap downward too. And they said for a composer to risk putting both of those in one song, I think it was Irving Berlin is the composer, took tremendous courage to think it could work and it worked.

Mike Petrow: Yeah.



Richard Rohr: Yeah.

Mike Petrow: And it's the longing for a home not yet known, but somehow intuited and the journey takes her back to the place that she started from.

Richard Rohr: It's very much a Forish kind of song. Melancholy.

Mike Petrow: It really is.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. Yeah.

Mike Petrow: I'm going to listen to that and the Rainbow Connection by Kermit the Frog on the way home. Goodness gracious.

Paul Swanson: I do love how you just made the point about Irving Berlin taking that leap, taking that risk, trusting in the spirit as well.

Richard Rohr: Oh, very good. Yes.

Paul Swanson: To fully act upon it.

Richard Rohr: Breaking the rules.

Paul Swanson: Breaking the rules.

Richard Rohr: To start with, what is that leap? I'm not a musician. There's a name for it, isn't there?

Mike Petrow: Listeners can download Richard singing Somewhere Over the Rainbow at the end of the episode.

Paul Swanson: We'll auto-tune it.

Corey Wayne: There's a Welsh word called hiraeth, and it means a homesickness for a home to which you cannot return, a home for which maybe never was, the nostalgia of the yearning or the grief for a lost place of your past. I love that word.

Paul Swanson: That's beautiful.

Mike Petrow: I feel that in my bones, man.

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Yeah, repeat it. Read it again.

Corey Wayne: It says, "A homesickness for a home to which you cannot return, a home which maybe never was, the nostalgia, the yearning and the grief for the lost places of your past."

Mike Petrow: Yeah.

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Mike Petrow: Yeah.

Paul Swanson: I just think too, what's coming up for me with that is even though I did have, as one can only have at best, a mostly good childhood. That longing for a home is still, it's not always that home of origin. It's a different type of home. And I think that's an interesting note of just the longing for something that is not quite tangible, not quite yet experienced.

Richard Rohr: That's well put, Paul. Yeah.

Mike Petrow: Yeah. And I think I appreciate this conversation so much because I live with that longing as an unigram for as a person, as I think many of our listeners do, who again, have gone through deconstructions and left homes of a sort behind. And I think sometimes I touch that taste of home in getting to talk to others who understand what that feels like. So thank you, Richard, for writing this chapter, for having this conversation with us.

Richard Rohr: Oh, thank you.

Mike Petrow: For telling us about the song, Somewhere Over the Rainbow.

Richard Rohr: Well, the whole Odysseus journey is trying to get back home.

Mike Petrow: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: I guess I say that.

Mike Petrow: Yeah. And then when it's all over, what happens? He leaves home again.

Richard Rohr: He leaves again for the further journey. That's right. Yeah.

Mike Petrow: For the further journey. For the further journey. But I appreciate being reminded that we're not alone and that we have guides like you who can give us a little bit of a roadmap. Everything Belongs will continue in a moment.

Paul Swanson: Today we're joined by CAC faculty, James Finley, who is both a contemplative practitioner and a clinical psychologist. Jim previously joined for an episode in our introductory series. You can find that episode. It's titled Tips for the Road. He offers trustworthy guidance for the spiritual journey through a variety of resources. Including our sister podcast, Turning to the Mystics, as well as online courses and books including Merton's Palace of Nowhere, the Contemplative Heart. And most recently, The Healing Path, a memoir and an Invitation. Jim, thank you so much for being on the Everything Belongs podcast where we look at the teachings of Father Richard Rohr and how we can live them forward. As a place to begin, I know that you and Richard have been pals for a long time. Can you remind me how you and Richard first met? It wasn't when you were both in Ohio, was it? When he was at New Jerusalem and you were teaching high school?

James Finley: No, no.

Paul Swanson: Was it later than that?

James Finley: What happened was that when Ave Maria Press published Merton's Palace of Nowhere,

on the true self and the teachings of Thomas Merton, I was living in Cleveland, Ohio and South Bend Indiana. And I started leading silent weekend retreats around the United States and Canada. And while I think I was on tour every other weekend, and we met at a certain city, I don't remember where, that he was giving a retreat. So we met and then we kept in touch with each other, and then he invited me to come to the center there in Albuquerque to lead a weekend retreat, which I did. And we kept in touch, and then he invited me to lead several with him, several of these big weekend retreats. Jesus and Buddha, and Following the Mystics through the Narrow Gate. And there's one other one, I can't remember. So then from there, then he invited me to be a faculty member of the Living School. So it's been a longstanding friendship, but that was the context of our ongoing relationship with each other.

Paul Swanson: I love how you guys met almost like you were touring musicians, you bumped in each other at a gig. That's fantastic. And those conferences that you first joined on, I know were my first introduction to your teaching, and were life-changing. Just the invitations to contemplation and mysticism from a vantage point of a very poetic psychological depth that I think is one of your calling cards about how you invite folks into the mystical waters of healing.

James Finley: Yes, it is really. I find that it's like a voice that seeks to bear witness to or to embody this unitus state that the words are about. And I think poetry does that. It's evocative and pulls you into the stream of these sensitivities, and it's how it's been given to me to teach. It's just the way I teach. Yeah.

Paul Swanson: That's a gift, and we're glad that you listen to that poetic voice and share it with all of us. On my drive in this morning, I was thinking about the four stages of life and Hinduism, and that's because of you and Richard. Because Richard let us know that the two of you have joked about being in the third half of life and I think that you're onto something. When you look at metaphorically segmenting your life, does this two half of life framework work for you, or do you see it as more segments akin to the Hindi framework?

James Finley: Yeah, what are the four in Hinduism?

Paul Swanson: There's like the student stage, householder stage, hermit stage, and wandering ascetic stage.

James Finley: Oh yeah, that's right. That's right. Yeah, that's great. And then Richard's like the two halves of life. Well, here's the way I see. Here's the way I see it. First of all, I think the two halves of life is psychologically very insightful and important to remind ourselves of this. There is something about a cresting the hill and coming down the second half of life, and you internalize what you learned within a new perspective. And moving from action and performance, to gratitude, and sensitivity, and so on. So I think it's good just to realize that.

I also think sometimes in the first half of life we're beyond our years, there's ways we're granted a wisdom of the second half. And also some people in the second half are still chronologically, they're still stuck in the first half. So there's all of that. I think it's important. How I see it, and it has to do with the Hindu four stages, is that... And I did this in this little article I did on wanting too, I commented on this. Is that we can be in the first half of life and in the first half of life we can be granted a moment of experiencing ourselves resting in the presence of God resting in us. And in that moment, we're not in the first half of life in

those moments because we're not in time.

It's like a fleeting moment of the eternality of ourself, in the passage of time. And I think sometimes when people are quite young, I think everyone has these little moments like this. But sometimes when quite young, these moments of oneness can give rise to a longing to abide in the oneness. So in that sense, it doesn't follow the chronological thing. But it does say this, if you do follow that path, especially if you were awakened to it when you were young, over the course of the years, you do ripen in it. I do think there's a ripening of a deeper sensitivity to what you were awakened to, like yours earlier. That's the way I see it, I think.

Paul Swanson: That's really helpful. Those moments when there are no halves of life, there's only the wholeness of life, and you abide by that and ripen into it.

James Finley: That's right. It's the way I put it is it's resting in that which never passes away. It's a ribbon through everything endlessly passing away. It's like a strange interplay of eternity and time. I think it is like that actually.

Paul Swanson: Yeah. I couldn't agree more. Throughout this season of this podcast, we've been talking a lot about home and homesickness, and this is the theme of the chapter that we're talking about today. And we've talked about in ways of nostos and nostalgia from the hero or heroine or healer's journey, to the ontological longing for the divine. And knowing how you orientate towards these themes, how do you articulate a sense of home and homesickness within the spiritual landscape?

James Finley: Yeah. Here's one example that I use, my Merton reflections. The example as I use is imagine you're driving home at the end of the day and the sun is setting, and at first you don't pay any attention to it, the sun sets every night. But on this particular night it's particularly beautiful, and you're prompted to pull over and get out of the car and you sit on the ground, and you sit there giving yourself over to the beauty of the setting sun, giving yourself over to you. And if we meditate on that moment this way, we notice first that it's a moment of heightened awareness. It's not lethargic or dull, but it's also true that in this moment you're not thinking, or anything you are thinking doesn't measure up to the richness of the awareness.

So one way to put it is in this moment, the thinking you and all that it thinks is transcended. Thinking doesn't have the final say in what awareness is. And likewise, the memory, it isn't that you know it's called a sunset because you were told that when you were little, it's not an act of memory where you know what to call something. Because all the eons from the beginning of the universe till now, the sun has never set before tonight, ever. And for all the eons to come, it'll never set again. So it's virginal and new. So the remembering self and all that he remembers is transcended, just the newness of the eternality of now. And in the will, you're sitting there in a richness of oneness that's beyond what you're able to make happen by your own powers. And even though you can't make it happen, it's happening anyway.

So the desiring you and all that it desires is transcended. And in that moment you experience a deep kind of homecoming, like you belong there, like a resting in this. And also you're not in time, because if it's prolonged. When you get up to leave, you have to look at your watch

to see how much time passed because you weren't in time this way. So you go home and pull the car in the garage and you get the mail, you're standing in the kitchen going through the mail, and you remember the moment of the setting sun this way. And you ask yourself this question, "Why do I spend so many of my waking hours trapped on the outer circumference of the inner richness of my life? And I know the inner richness was there, because I experienced it. Like I'm not at home in my own home." And that's path talk. See, what is the path at which I can come deeply at home in God resting in me, resting in God forever is a foreshadowing of eternal life. And that's what I think as homecoming, like a longing to be at home. Yeah.

Paul Swanson: That's such a rich imagery that you just painted there for us. And I know that for me, being able to step into that, I can feel myself, there's that desire of having that experience of that homesickness, but then that longing to become homesickness itself. Because it is outside of time, it is that step into eternity.

James Finley: That's right. And another big thing I think too is this, then when we really look at it, we can see that living alone or being married or having children, they have built right into it opportunities for that kind of homecoming. And a deeper insight, I think as we move along, is this longing, this homesickness is an echo of God's longing for us. For in the reciprocity of the longing, the longing is consummated this way. Because this is why we were created, ultimately, I think is for this oneness.

Paul Swanson: Richard, in this chapter, he uses a lot of different names for what we might call that homesickness. Where he talks about it, is this the indwelling soul, is this... Homesickness is obviously one of them, this longing. What word do you find most helpful to articulate within mystical frameworks that epitomizes that? Is it homesickness, or is there another poetic punch that can-

James Finley: Well, yeah, very good. Yeah. One way that helps me, one way that I put it is that when we talk like this there's that in us that recognizes it because we've experienced it, but then there's that in us that doesn't recognize it yet. Or put it another way, it recognizes it, but it's not faithful to it. And so the task is to be endlessly tenderhearted toward the part of us that doesn't get it yet as we're circling back around in the compassionate encounter toward the preciousness of ourself and our waywardness. And I think that's a very deep kind of homecoming, because I think that's Christ's consciousness.

I think one way of understanding Christ this way is that in Christ is revealed that God's response to us in our dilemma, which is being exiled from our oneness in God, that alone is ultimately real. That in Christ is revealed that God's response to us in our dilemma is to become identified with us as precious in the midst of our dilemma and meets us there. So I think that's it, we meet God waiting for us in the deep acceptance of broken places. And then I think this also leads to empathy, because then each of us is a unique addition of the universal story of this paradox and having this experiential self-knowledge in ourselves, it helps us understand other people at this deep level and community becomes possible.

Paul Swanson: I so appreciate what you just said at the start of that, in particular about there's part of us that gets it and there's part of it that does not get it.

James Finley: Yeah.

Paul Swanson: And I'm thinking about your beautiful memoir, *The Healing Path* and about the trauma you experienced at home. And then as you left that home space and made a new home at the monastery, that you experienced further trauma. How does the unfolding way of healing that you have been walking ever since, and maybe we will all walk our entire lives, how is the work of building a healthy container and safeguarding it with tenderness carried throughout all of our life?

James Finley: One way that I see it, and then later when I left, became a clinical psychologist working with trauma and went through my own trauma, and healing, and so on. Is that say on the horizontal level of our passage through time, there's the commitment to do all that we can to heal from the internalized effects of trauma. Because a lot of our disturbing behaviors and reactivity are really internalized survival strategies formed in trauma and abandonment. So we do what we can to walk through that, understand it, accept it, integrate it, move on so that we're more and more freed up from the effects of internalized brokenness this way. Then secondly, then that horizontal line is intersected by this vertical depth dimension of God. So there are moments, we were talking about earlier with the sunset, or reading a child a goodnight story, the arms of the beloved or quiet hour at day's end, there's these deep moments of resting in the oneness.

And then what can happen is in the very midst of healing from the trauma, like we're going through the remembering painful memories and going through it all, right in the midst of working through painful things there can flash forth God sustaining us in the midst of painful things. I think this happens quite a lot actually, that in the midst of long-suffering, there are unexpected moments of being sustained by God in that which remains unresolved. So the more there's an alchemy where the two, or an interplay of the two and we experience that interplay with endless variations. You have your life, I have mine. But I think for all of us, that interplay of birth and death, and gain and loss, and woundedness and deliverance from woundedness plays itself out in our life and we walk our walk and learn as best we can to mature in it and stabilize in it and share it with others.

Paul Swanson: As you were sharing that, I couldn't help but think about the work that you've done entitled *Mystical Sobriety* and the way you've intersected the 12 steps. And a particular story jumped to mind I wonder if you wouldn't mind telling about when you first experienced, I believe you were still a student, but you were in a supporting group of men going through addiction and they let you in on a ritual that they do to welcome a new addict into their circle. Because I think it touches on, at least in I hearing of it, the experience of the home and then also the work that's necessary within the homesickness that's still ongoing?

James Finley: Right. Yeah. The story I share is that when I left the monastery and wrote *Merton's Palace of Nowhere* and started getting invitations to lead silent retreats around the United States and Canada, a clinical psychologist who read that book gave a retreat there with his community and he offered me a PhD with family support as a gift under the condition that I explore the contribution that mystical traditions made to the science of psychology. So I accepted it, so I went into five years of full-time doctor training. And as I was going through it, it took me quite a while. I couldn't quite... I knew what the interface was between the mystical thing, but I didn't know how to put words to it this way.

So I did two years of internship at psychiatric hospitals in different units and so on. So I did at a VA hospital, it was an inpatient alcohol treatment unit, and so a lot of these were Vietnam vets, and so it was dual diagnosis. So they had post-traumatic stress disorder and alcoholism, like serious alcoholism. And there was a waiting list to get into this unit, I think there were 80 guys... I don't remember how many guys were on it. So the morning that I arrived on this unit, I was told that years earlier, the men on the unit had created a ritual of initiation and in order to get onto the unit, the person had to pass this ritual. So when I entered the room, it was a big room and the chairs were lined up around the four walls of the room. The middle of the room was completely empty, except for two chairs facing each other in the middle of the room about five feet apart. It reminded me of a Zen meditation hall.

And all the men were sitting there in the unit and they brought this person in going through the initiation rite by one of the people on the unit. And this is the guy with the DT sleeping under the bushes, dying of alcohol really, not knowing what to expect. So the alcoholic leading the initiation rite asked the person to sit down on one of the chairs and the other person sat down and on another chair. And he asked him, he said, "What do you love the most? And I was standing over in the corner watching this. And he said, "My wife." And then all of them yelled as loud as they could, "Bullshit." Real loud. And there was a startle response for the person. And they all looked down and get deadly... No eye contact, no smiles. Because as serious as death, really. "What do he love the most?" He would say, "My children." "Bullshit." Then finally he said, "Alcohol." And they would have him stand up and they stood up and they gave him a long standing ovation.

And then in complete silence, each one came up one at a time and held him like this, and he started crying. Tears came down his eyes and I teared up. And the voice inside me said, "This is just like at the monastery. What's happening in this room is what monasteries are for." And then it dawned on me as I was driving home that day that I would turn to that person standing there with the tears coming down, as my mentor to put words on the contribution of the mystical traditions to the science of psychology. And I came up with a list of qualities and saying that in this moment he was vulnerable, and in his vulnerability, true invincibility was manifested in the world. In this moment, he was unto himself. And being unto himself, he was one with all of us in which we're all alone together this way.

In this moment, he was beyond words. He didn't know what to say. He didn't know what to say really. But when he said alcohol, the truth of what he said set him free. And in this moment he was very childlike and in being so childlike, true maturity was manifested in the world this way. Like the axis of the turning world. And then I saw, when they were coming up one at a time to hold him at one level, I thought they were welcoming into their midst, which is true. Then I thought in another way, they were coming up to get a dose of the golden glow fresh from the opening to save their life this way. And then it dawned on me, this was not the end of the journey, it was the beginning of a long one. Because the alcoholic in him had not yet let go of its claim on his life. So he had to make a fearless inventory of his life. He had to make amends and he had to walk this walk and he had to increase conscious contact with God in the 11th step.

So it had to be a long transformative path of internalizing what was given to him in the spark in that initial thing. So then in the end, having had a spiritual awakening as a result

of living these steps. And that's why I think the depth dimension of AA is so contemplative and mystical, and that's how I would experience it in psychotherapy, sitting with trauma survivors, also that depth dimension that comes welling up and carries us along. And it's much deeper than symptom reduction. It's like a deep awakening. Sometimes they would say at the very end of therapy, they would say things like, "In all of this, I learned something about myself I didn't know was true, I matter. I didn't know that." So that gave me my insight. That was a way to start to put words to the contribution the mystical traditions make. Because in that moment there was tears coming down his eyes, he was a momentary mystic.

Paul Swanson: I'm struck by the beauty of the communal journey as well, folks at different stages, different experiences. But seeing the beauty of the beginning, while also knowing the work ahead. And I know that you've shared many of your experiences of these mystical insights, some that were first sparked in childhood or at the monastery. At this stage in your life, Jim, how are you experiencing this sense of home and homesickness?

James Finley: Well, I would say Maureen died, my wife died four years ago. We lived here 30 years together, and I'm 80 years old and I don't feel homesick anymore. Somehow the rhythm of my days and the solitude of the place, the ocean's right outside the window, my daughters call me every day. And I sense Maureen's deathless presence is with me, I'll be joining her soon enough. Yeah, I don't feel homesick anymore. I put it this way, I'm homesick in that the homecoming is subtle and delicate and hidden. And I know in biological death it'll become manifested, but in an unmanifested way, it abides this way. And I'm grateful, I'm at peace with it.

Paul Swanson: That's lovely. That's lovely. I am going to take us back to Richard quote's T.S. Eliot from East Coker, and at the beginning of this chapter where he shares this quote, "Old men ought to be explorers. Here and there does not matter, we must be still and still moving into another intensity for a further union, a deeper communion." And then Richard goes on to say, "This is the purpose of life, another intensity, a deeper union." I love that he takes that crack at naming that this is the meaning of life, because I think that the purposefulness of this can still get lost in the complexities of our daily rhythms. How does that purpose square with your own sense of the meaning of life of another intensity for further union from that place that is still and still moving?

James Finley: Well, first of all, I think in the arc of life from birth to death, like the first, second half of life, the meaning of life is bound up with our present goals and choices. And that's important, there's reality to that, and that is... But I say it in the light of the way we're talking now, to put it this way, I'll give some images of this. When I was in the monastery, I got a chance to study medieval philosophy, metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas and Scotus. And the philosophy Professor Dan Walsh, he said, "In a way, the love of creation is greater than the love of redemption in the cross." Because the love of redemption had a purpose, creation had no purpose. God created you without a why. It's the anarchy of the ineffable. There was no why.

So Meister Eckhart also says, "We must learn to live without a why." He said, "You got a horse out of the barn in the morning, and it runs with all its might across the field. Why does it run? It runs without a why." He said, "The rose blooms, why does it bloom? It blooms without a why." So he says, we're to be detached from looking for foundations like a



why to explain something. And that brings us into the anarchy of the ineffable. Because we are God's manifested... If we think of God as generosity, then we are the generosity of God. We are the song God sings in complete freedom without a why. Like, pardon me, I don't speak English.

Or another way I think about an image I use is imagine you're alone in the dark at night and you're dying and you know that you're dying and you turn to the flowers on the windowsill, silhouetted in the moonlight. They seem to know all about it. I just think there's the sovereignty of this fullness transcends a why. But we start somewhere, so we start by asking why. Do you know what I mean? I also notice this, whenever we're looking for something and we come up on something like a certain unexpected fullness, like in love or art or silence, notice we're silenced not because it silences us, momentarily transcending the why like this. So the why is leading us along this way.

Paul Swanson: It seems intuitive that we have to start with the why before we can get to the whylessness.

James Finley: That's right, exactly. It's really true.

Paul Swanson: I'm thinking of the way you're sharing right now and not feeling that homesickness and just so much I think of the first half of life is looking for home, whether it's an actual home on a piece of land or a place that we can call home or a person that feels like home. And just hearing what you shared and thinking about other elders and wisdom teachers who, I think of Thich Nhat Hanh, talking about home being the heart and coming home to yourself. It seems like the natural outflow of that attention to the why that gives way to the whylessness in the surrendering over. There's a moving into the home of wherever you are can begin to feel like home.

James Finley: Yeah. And I think any sane ones who become well seasoned in love, or solitude, art, creativity, they're less and less able to explain what it is. It carries them along unexplainably. There's an image that I use, I have this essay on Saints of Jesus where He said, "Unless you accept the kingdom of heaven as a small child, you shall not enter it." So the image I use is that years ago I was flying on a plane to give a retreat and I was sitting in the aisle seat and next to me was a woman reading a magazine, in the aisle seat was her little boy. And he was looking out the window of the plane. So without turning around, he said to his mother, he said, "Mommy, does the man driving the plane know where grandma lives?" See, because it's dawning on him, "Does this guy know where we're going?"

And without looking out for her magazine, she said, "Close enough." And I thought, "That's a good answer." Because if grandma lives in the greater Chicago area, Chicago airports close enough. But the child was too little to see the cleverness in her answer. Instead, the child just accepted it because the child acts of acceptance in our midst this way. And then I was taking all this in and amazing things happened, she turned and looked at the back of her child's head and she closed her magazine, leaned over, put her face up next his to join him in looking out the window. And I think that's homecoming. See? You know what I mean? I think it flashes forth in moments like that.

Paul Swanson: It's stunning. And I'm sure a lot of folks listening also are letting those times with their children wash over them right now. And the ways that that child-likeness... And to me that

is something that I wish was re-emphasized more in our region of the gospel, of that if the kingdom of God is within and without and it takes a childlike posture-

James Finley: That's right.

Paul Swanson: ... We're doing a lot of things the wrong way.

James Finley: Yeah. You know that's a big thing about that story, you said, unless you see the kingdom of God, sometimes the kingdom of God is Jesus as a Jewish mystic. So the kingdom of God is God's ultimate victory over suffering and death. And other times Jesus talks about the kingdom is to work towards it through justice and mercy by bearing witness. But in another way, the kingdom of God is like a state of consciousness, like realizing the kingdom of heaven is within you, it's already here this way.

So He said, "Unless you accept the kingdom of God as a small child accepts it..." And what's interesting is how do children accept it? They don't accept it by trying to accept it. Like the child looking out the window of the plane and when the mother said, "Close enough." The child didn't go, "Oh my god, this woman, my mother, what I'm going to do with her? Oh geez, don't get over it." The thing is that children are acts of acceptance in our midst. But then I say there are certain moments which listening to the rain, or smelling of flower, or a moment of silence, we become an act of acceptance. So there's certain moments we become the act of acceptance, and through meditation and prayer we can habituate that, which is an echo of God's infinite acceptance of us.

Paul Swanson: I'm thinking about how important our consent is, our saying yes to that as the gateway. And I think of children embodying that yes, of that invitation.

James Finley: That's right. And then see, this is where the will comes in. Because I have to then freely choose to live an obediential fidelity to that yes. And then the will comes in at that point as an ascent, as a choice.

Paul Swanson: I'm thinking about a lot of those listening and maybe even myself here in this room about when I have that drive or that inner restlessness for union, for home, or this sense of homesickness. What guidance would you offer as ways to stabilize in the surface level of life while trying to break through to the groundedness? I'm in the midst of marriage, householder life, raising children, doing my work, all beautiful whyful things. But my intention is always to break through to the way of the home that is always there in the eternity of timelessness.

James Finley: Well, I think this. I think one, the day-by-day realities of life is filled with short and long-term goals and it just is. And also, there's certain goals that we wanted to reach and we don't reach them. Or certain goals we reach, when we get to them they weren't what we thought they were. All of that, that's really true, all that. That's just life. But another way to look at it though too is that when I'm on the way to realizing the goal, whatever it is, raising my children, that they can go off and live their... Whatever your goal is, whatever it is. That on the way towards it that the crest of the wave is the present moment's sincerity of seeking it, being true to it. So the very momentary sincerity of being on the way to the goal, the goal is actualized in the moment of that sincerity.

Because there's something unconsummated in it, in terms of the goal, but what's consummated is God unexplainably being poured out and given to us breath by breath in the midst of reaching the goal. So it's always right there in the depth dimension of what's not there yet and to appreciate it. And also I think this has to do with long-term therapy too, is that in long-term, deep goals, we keep looking at the providential ways it takes unexpected turns. We thought we knew where it was headed, then it moves here. We're constantly adapting to the unforeseeability of layers of things. And that's part of living in the richness of life, I think, and how God's present in our life.

Paul Swanson: It's not taking for granted the moment that presents itself, that our own sense of being drawn forward might pivot and shift even as we interact and engage not only with the family life or the responsibilities of the moment, but also the way divine presence might be alluring us to take a left turn that we hadn't seen coming.

James Finley: That's right. It's really like God's the infinity of life's unforeseeability. That is we all need some foreseeability. We do that and so on, but it's always willing to see the ways we're endlessly blindsided by unexpected turns in that. And yet somehow when we look at it, that's the path we're on. Put it another way, how has it come to pass that you and I are able to be sensitive to such things at the level at which we're able? And everyone listening to this can ask, how has it come to pass that I've become the man or woman who's even capable of being sensitive to things like this? And is it not true that just a year ago or three years ago or 10 years ago, you just weren't where you are now, and therefore you're on a journey not of your own making? There's like an unfolding of this transformative process, which is God's sustaining presence in the mystery of your life. And it's not over yet, there's a lot more unforeseeability ahead. And the grand finale is death, and the gate of heaven flies open and voila.

Paul Swanson: That on a path of your own making I think is also just an invitation just to relax a little bit about your life-

James Finley: That's right.

Paul Swanson: And to not push the river.

James Finley: I want to say something else too. It's all up to God and it's all up to us. It is not of our own making in that we didn't bring ourselves into existence. We can't keep ourself in existence. We can't give ourself our next breath, our next heartbeat. Things arise unexpectedly, like a desire or you meet someone, you... But we have to constantly actively engage and cooperate, and in essence it is of our own making. Because love is always chosen, it's never imposed. So there has to be the freedom to choose out of love as best we can, to be faithful to what arises, and then discerning what that is and what it isn't. I think it's that kind of thing.

Paul Swanson: That chosenness, there's another theme that's been really present during this season of the podcast around great love and great suffering. And I've been thinking of them as fires that can consume and also harm, but also can nourish as well and rejuvenate. And there's ways in which that I can see great love and great suffering fanning this flame of homesickness and home, of it can really charge that to deeper levels from experiences of suffering the loss of a child, or partner, or just the woes of the world overwhelming us. And the same for great love. How do you see those, if the fires of great love or suffering enter in, how do you see

them fanning this flame of homesickness for those who might be in the midst of wrestling with that?

James Finley: Several things. I think first of all, the one way I put it is that we can withstand anything as long as the center holds. As long as there's a place from which to face the threatening thing, whatever it is. And where it really gets scary, if the threatening force reaches the center, and we kind of disappear into the trauma. It's a psychic death in a way. So in that sense then, that's the nightmare of severe trauma. And then when the moment passes, we're so relieved we made it. If we did, we didn't. We were incested, or beaten, or whatever it is that happened to us. But not quite, because we discover that the trauma got inside of us, into our body, into our limbic system. And whenever we're in the presence of anything that reminds us of the trauma, the autonomic nervous system will re-experience the trauma, we'll hyperventilate, fear, all this posttraumatic stress disorder.

So then people who are caught in that, some people get caught in that and they never come out of it, they just don't. But the idea is if they come out of it or we seek help and we're able to get help to come out of it, we're so grateful. We're so grateful that we were restored and reinstated an innate sense of wholeness that we lost in the trauma. But we also know it's important to never forget what we learned in the trauma because that's empathy, and that's compassion, and tenderness, and so on. So it's very intimate, the endlessly varied ways this happens.

Paul Swanson: Yeah. And I feel like you're calling us to see just the sacredness of our own being-ness.

James Finley: That's right.

Paul Swanson: And being intruded is something that has the capacity to take us into those places of terror, and this is, I feel like the work of the healing path and to not allow the bigness of it all to overtake our preciousness in the sight of God.

James Finley: That's right. And this is where I say too, that there are moments when we rest in this fullness and we can't make those moments of resting in the fullness happen because we're carried along by the day's demands. But the point is we can choose to assume the stance that offers the least resistance to be overtaken by the fullness and that's fidelity to the daily rendezvous with God. That if we set where there's no agenda but love, like, "Here I am, Lord, just as I am." And in that daily rendezvous with God, Merton says, "With God, a little sincerity goes a long, long way." He said, "We begin to pray by reminding ourselves that we belong to God." And he said that in the spiritual order, to understand is to accept that you're infinitely understood.

And in that sincerity you journal, like Lectio meditation, and prayer, contemplation. And at the end of each rendezvous, you ask God for the grace not to break the thread of that sensitivity as you go through the day. And it breaks many times, but you trust that many times it breaks from your end, and it never breaks from God's end. But in the ongoing fidelity to that sincerity as the weeks and months and years go by, you ripen in it. You ripen in it. I don't know. It requires a certain kind of willingness to choose it, I think, and be true to it, and live out of it as best we can.

Paul Swanson: This brings me to a question that Richard ends this chapter with, where he's talking about

the times we live in. And he talks about how what he defines as postmodern people have to make their own meaning because people who do not see the universe as enchanted as a whole and religious institutions aren't necessarily helping in that either, and that there's nothing to be discovered. And then he says on the flip side that the upside is that folks are immersed through a variety of fields in spirited matter, co-creation and evolution, and I think what he would also call incarnational mysticism. What do you see as the challenges of our times as co-creators in an enchanted universe?

James Finley: Well, I think my sense is that the challenge in our time is the same as the challenge of every time. It's always been this way. It's just that the details follow the configurations of the spirit of the age. So I love this story by Marcus Borg, he's a scripture scholar, passed away a few years ago. And he wrote a book called *The Last Week of Jesus's life*, as a Scripture scholar. He went through the trial and so on. And he had this insight, he said that Pontius Pilate's coming from Rome with soldiers and shields and swords and so on, and to be procurator of Rome over to Jewish people into Jerusalem. And coming in on the other side of Jerusalem was Jesus writing on a donkey and people were waving palms this way. "Hey, Zana. Hey, Zana, Zana, Zana, hey." And he said the whole question for all of us is which parade do we belong to this way?

And I think that life's always been this way. You could tune into the present situation today with politics, anything. So the thing is not to play the cynic, not to become jaded, not to lose heart. And Jesus once said, "Be wise as a serpent, but simple as a dove." He was street smart. He knew about... He was executed. But don't become so street smart that you lose the ability to be simple as a dove and see God's infinite tender mercy permeate. God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son. So I think this is just the nature of the human experience and this is our turn now to face our opportunities and also our threats, our crises and so on.

Paul Swanson: Yeah. To live in our times with that simplicity, but also that childlike spirit.

James Finley: That's right. Another thing that I would add too to that is that we do our best to remove any suffering that's present in ourself and others, but we do it grounded and at peace, it's not dependent on the outcome of our efforts, because it's the peace of God on which all things depend. Thomas Merton once said, "Those committed to social justice must be very careful not to be dependent on the outcome of their effort, because by human standards it may go down in flames." So the real issue is not how this is going to turn out because regardless of how it turns out, God's sustaining presence permeates it.

See, that's why I say God is a presence that protects us from nothing, even as God unexplainably sustains us in all things, which is the mystery of the cross. So how I put it is we see the birth of Jesus, the life of Jesus, the suffering of Jesus, the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus as unfolding through time. But what if one way to understand it, if there's collapse, it's the true nature of every moment of our life this way. And with that contemplative groundedness to live out our days as best we can, trusting in God's grace.

Paul Swanson: Jim, I can think of no better note to end on. So I will just say thank you so much for your time today and for the gift of your presence and wisdom and voice for all of us listening. We're so grateful for the way that you have lived and offered your teachings to us. So thank

you so much for taking this time to talk on this chapter of Richard's book.

James Finley: Thank you. It's a gift for me to share too and to be this way with each other. Thank you.

Paul Swanson: Mike. It's great to be with you. We missed your presence and the Jim Finley conversation.

Mike Petrow: Yeah. It was funny to me that you were thinking and talking about homesickness because I was homesick to be with you while I was home sick trying to get better.

Paul Swanson: Well, we're glad you're on the mend and-

Mike Petrow: Getting there.

Paul Swanson: ... Here with us now.

Mike Petrow: Yeah.

Paul Swanson: Yeah. We covered a lot of ground with Jim and it was fun to hear him ruminate and muse about home and homesickness, and the different variations of how that can come into play. And before we hit record, you and I were talking about Up.

Mike Petrow: Oh my gosh, I love that movie so much.

Paul Swanson: And for those of you that don't know, Up is a Pixar movie and the first seven to 10 minutes are its own vignette, which is so beautiful and devastating before the adventure of the rest of the movie begins.

Mike Petrow: Yeah.

Paul Swanson: But why do we bring this up now? What does Up represent for you?

Mike Petrow: Well, first of all, Up shatters my heart. So you have this beautiful movie that starts and it starts with this story of this couple falling in love and then having a life together, and she passes away. I remember watching it in the movie theaters in a giant theater in New York City. And as it got more and more and more sad, I remember thinking, "Just hold it together. Don't sob in a movie theater. Don't sob in a movie theater. Don't sob in a movie theater." And right as I took in a giant breath to let out this just earth-shattering sob, the person in front of me went... And just let it out. And then I was like, "Great, I'm going to cry into their tears." But it's this beautiful reminder for me that the home that we're looking for, it's always there and it's always going away. We're always growing, we're always coming together. Children come and then they move out. We fall in love and then the relationship ends or the person passes away. There's always a sunset to every sunrise, and it touches the heartstrings of things we long for.

Paul Swanson: Well said. I can't help but think of the kingdom of God language in this too about that's here and not yet here. Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. And just the way that that connects for me for home and homesickness and longing. I think I've said this before on this podcast around in moments of unconscious presence, I'll feel that longing and just say out loud, "I want to go home." And it always surprises me. It always catches me. But it's when that longing rises up and then articulates itself in my mouth and spits itself out, not for

anyone else but just to tell me that that longing is present and growing. How does that show up for you, Mike?

Mike Petrow: Honestly, just to be very vulnerable and very honest. It showed up for me the other night. Something happened that has never happened to me before in my entire life. I had a dream when I was in my mid-20s, my parents split and then... Whatever, the audience knows this because it's my falling upwards moment, so I've talked about it a bunch. But brother died, mom died, and life went on. But I had a dream the other night and in the dream my parents had never gotten divorced. My brother had never passed away. My mom had never passed away, and everyone was all together and we were sitting in the living room and we were just laughing. It was life right now and they were making fun of me, which is what my family was like. They were making fun of me for whatever shenanigans I had been up into recently and we were laughing ourselves to tears.

And it was this beautiful taste of home. And I woke up and it was this tenderness of just remembering this is the thing we're always longing for. And I love that you mentioned the Kingdom of God moment as well, because there is something poignant to me... And this is a bit of a free association. But one of the most powerful moments in all of scripture is Moses gazing into the promised land and realizing that he's not going to get there, but he's accomplished his task and his task is to hand the quest on to the next generation. Think about Martin Luther King Jr, "I have a dream. I'm not going to get there, but you might." And I wonder if that's what the longing is that we're always passing on the longing. Does that make any sense at all?

Paul Swanson: Oh yeah, a hundred percent. That passing on the longing I think is what we hope for in any sort of family situation or friend situation where we want that longing to become manifest as this embodiment for union, for connection, for depth.

Mike Petrow: Yeah, I appreciate that. I had a conversation this weekend with a friend and we were talking about the answer to longing might be belonging. But what they said is, "Picture it in your mind and just BE-LONGING, so the answer to longing is being the longing." Which is wild to think about, that maybe we find our home in being at home in our homesickness.

Paul Swanson: I think that's it. I think that is one of the big takeaways from this chapter and this conversation and the ways that we can reflect on how are we becoming longing ourselves. How is home and homesickness unified in this overlapping gray space of at oneness in the home and homesickness? So the question we want to leave with you all today is how are you becoming longing itself? How is that showing up for you in your life?

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Megan Hare: Megan Hare.

Sarah Palmer: Sarah Palmer.

Barb Lopez: Barb Lopez.

Brandon Strange: Brandon Strange.

Corey Wayne: And me, Corey Wayne. The music you hear is composed and provided by our friends Hammock. And we'd also like to thank Sound on Studios for all of their work in post-production. From the high desert of New Mexico, we wish you peace and every good.