

## The Circle of Life

“Things do not change; we change” Henry David Thoreau

Transformation is a change in structure, appearance, or character. Transformations are occurring constantly without much notice until the change is complete. “A hundred million miracles are happening every day” in the words of an old song. Over eons, lumps of coal transform into sparkling diamonds, caterpillars become chrysalis then flutter away as transcendent butterflies. Miniature seeds morph into giant oaks. Oceans wear away continents while volcanoes redesign landscapes forever. All this displays nature’s transformative power, but the transformation of a human heart is perhaps the most phenomenal change of all.

Transformation is a black man and a white boy in 1860 becoming best friends. It’s deciding to risk going to hell to save the slave he has begun to love. Transformation leaves a society filled with childhood adventure and fun, yet awash with hypocrisy, greed, and gullibility to light out for the territory and find real freedom. Transformation embraces a good heart that has long been hindered by a faulty conscience.

Transformation leaves playful rambling and food to care for an adored Yearling deer. It forgoes sleep and struggles to build a fence, doing a man’s work. Transformation wanders the woods and lakes starving and furious—separated from family and hope then stumbling home to discover the redeeming power of pain. Transformation hears a “man’s voice” calling for Flag and dreams of “a boy and a yearling ...side by side...gone forever.”

Transformation is Ciely writing plaintive letters to God while enduring unbelievable horrors. Transformation writes and wonders and wanders until she discovers her color purple—her worth and power. Transformation is a middle aged white woman reading Ciely’s story and never again putting the struggle of African Americans far from her conscience.

Transformation defies a society torn by tormented and traitorous girls. It goes to the gallows a forgiven farmer, clinging to a shred of honesty. It is John Proctor refusing to squander his name.

The transformative power of nature as she restructures life forms, lands, and universes fills us all with wonder. This transformative power of appearance makes us take startled second looks at both ravage and renewal. But the transformative power at work in human beings--evident in their characters and recorded in volumes of literature fills us with wisdom that will hopefully continue to transform each one of us as we read and as we live.