Day 26: Integration

In Theory: Within the psychodynamic tradition, the goal of therapy is not happiness or the elimination of conflict. It is the gradual bringing together of split-off, defended-against, or undeveloped parts of the self into a more coherent and livable whole. This involves the feelings that were too dangerous to feel, the desires that conflicted with who we needed to be, and the parts of ourselves we disowned because they were unacceptable. Integration does not mean acting on everything we discover. It means being able to bear knowing it, because the self that knows itself, including its darkness, is more whole. This replaces the exhaustive labor of repression with a quiet, internal unity that allows us to inhabit our entire history without falling apart.

In Experience: A person who can say they know their capabilities and what there is still to work on, and who can hold this truth without it destroying them. Here, the difficult parts of history are no longer split off or kept apart. Nothing has been cured, but everything can be held. The ongoing labor remains, but it can now be done from solid ground.

In Thought: Knowing oneself more fully does not mean changing completely. A more honest relationship with the past is what becomes possible.

In Print: Bromberg, P. *Standing in the Spaces* (1998)

In Attention: Notice something difficult to acknowledge.