



Friendship and Healing: The Dreams of John Adams and Benjamin Rush

Sheila Zarrow

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Sheila Zarrow writes:

Dr. Joseph Henderson was mentor to me for many years until his death in 2007 at age 104. He felt a deep connection to American history, was most interested in John Adams, and had spent some time on Benjamin Rush's farm. When I told Henderson about how I had spent three years meditating at the foot of Adams's statue in Worcester, Massachusetts, he enthusiastically encouraged me to study Adams, a study that led me also to Rush. My journey into their world ran parallel to my journey inward and the many synchronicities that came together with the writing of *Friendship and Healing* are testimony to the eternal nature of the living psyche.

The letters of John Adams and Benjamin Rush depict the friendship that grew between the two as the course of history brought change into their lives and forced them to change themselves. Of particular interest are the dreams both men described in their letters and the evidence Zarrow has uncovered about how they considered the effects of their dreams.

Rush, in his seminal text on medicine, wrote that dreaming is "as much a native faculty as memory or imagination." Dreams have meaning well beyond the personal and the present. They have roots and tendrils that stretch throughout the unknown inner world of our psyches. While we sleep, they make connections between our lives and the lives of others throughout history, back through mythology, and out to the eternal. *Friendship and Healing* explores one bright thread in the history of our country through the letters and dreams of two men who were there at the beginning.

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