

Babushka

Our young granddaughters delight in
our four Babushka dolls. When they visit
there's a ritual. Each doll must be unpacked one
by one until each of the inner dolls stand side by side,
from largest to next-to-smallest and then the "teeny-weeny"
one is held in the hand and savored as a precious thing.
Then the process is reversed until each smaller one
disappears again inside the next larger and
the largest doll stands alone. This ritual
is repeated for all four dolls until
all four "teeny-weeny" ones
have been rejoiced over

As the decades pass, I've come to
imagine myself as a Babushka doll. This image
arises often when I'm talking with someone
decades younger than I

In the moment, one part of me is aware they
see me as a white haired older man, while another
self-observing me is acutely aware of all the smaller
me-s living within this older, externally visible me; all the
way down to the "teen-weeny" me with its earliest
childhood memories and even earlier, perhaps

In any given moment, each me is alive within with
his gifts, wounds and limitations: ready to be triggered
to reactively derail me or called upon to resource me and
enable my better self to show up. With awareness and
practice I keep learning I have a choice.

The work of my life is to name, welcome, nurture, and even
delight in my many selves: claiming their gifts, healing their wounds, embracing their
limitations. Learning to stand unashamed and undefended
as my fullest self. Offering all my flawed magnificence to those
I am called to serve and live amongst and love.

Michael Prince January 2019