

A Year of Daily Poems for Dancing Mystics

Joy and woe are woven fine, clothing
for the soul divine; under every grief
and pine runs a joy with silken twine.
It is right it should be so: we were
made for joy and woe; and when this
we rightly know, safely through the
world we go. –William Blake

To educate yourself for the feeling of
gratitude means to take nothing for
granted, but to always seek out and
value the kindness that stands
behind the action. Nothing that is
done for you is a matter of course.
Everything originates in a will for the
good, which is directed at you. Train
yourself never to put off the word or
action for the expression of
gratitude. –Albert Schweitzer

Water does not resist. Water flows.
When you plunge your hand into it,
all you feel is a caress. Water is not
a solid wall, it will not stop you. But
water always goes where it wants to
go, and nothing in the end can stand
against it. Water is patient. Dripping
water wears away a stone.
Remember that, my child.
Remember you are half water. If you
can't go through an obstacle, go
around it. Water does.
–Margaret Atwood

Always experience says, “Rely on
your own strength, hold fast to your
own resources, desert not your own
mind.” In the same sure moment, the

same voice whispers, “Upon your
own strength, upon your own
resource, upon your own mind, at
long last you cannot rely. Your own
strength is weakness, your own mind
is shallow, your own spirit is feeble.”
The paradox: all experience strips us
of much except our sheer strength of
mind, of spirit. All experience reveals
that upon these we must not finally
depend. Brooding over us and about
us, even in the shadows of the
paradox, there is something more —
there is a strength beyond our
strength, giving strength to our
strength. –Howard Thurman

***Even I would like to believe when I
die that I have given myself away
like a tree that sows seed every
spring and never counts the loss,
because it is not loss, it is adding
to future life. It is the tree's way of
being. Strongly rooted perhaps,
but spilling out its treasure on the
wind.–May Sarton***

Persistence. Nothing in the world can
take the place of persistence. Talent
will not; nothing is more common
than unsuccessful people with talent.
Genius will not; unrewarded genius
is almost a proverb. Education will
not; the world is full of educated
derelicts. Persistence and
determination alone are omnipotent.
The slogan “Press on!” has solved
and always will solve the problems of
the human race. –Calvin Coolidge

On some positions, Cowardice asks the question, "Is it safe?" Expediency asks the question, "Is it politic?" And Vanity comes along and asks the question, "Is it popular?" But Conscience asks the question "Is it right?" And there comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but we must do it because Conscience tells us it is right. MLKing, Jr.

Joy and woe are woven fine, clothing for the soul divine; under every grief and pine runs a joy with silken twine. It is right it should be so: we were made for joy and woe; and when this we rightly know, safely through the world we go. –William Blake

Never give up
No matter what is going on
Never give up
Develop the heart
Too much energy in your country is spent
developing the mind instead of the heart
Develop the heart,
Be compassionate
Not just to your friends but to everyone,
be compassionate
Work for peace in your heart and in the world
Work for peace, and I say again
Never give up
No matter what is happening
No matter what is going on around you
Never give up. Even this late it happens:

The coming of love,
The coming of light.

You wake and the candles are lit as if by themselves,
stars gather, dreams pour into your pillows,
sending up warm bouquets of air.
Even this late the bones of the body shine
and tomorrow's dust flares into breath.
– Mark Strand

***It's all I have to bring today –
This, and my heart beside –
This, and my heart, and all the fields –
And all the meadows wide –***

***Be sure you count – should I forget
Some one the sum could tell –
This, and my heart, and all the Bees
Which in the Clover dwell.
–Emily Dickinson***

This is what life does. It lets you walk up to the store to buy breakfast and the paper, on a stiff knee. It lets you choose the way you have your eggs, your coffee. Then it sits a fisherman down beside you at the counter who says, Last night, the channel was full of starfish. And you wonder, is this a message, finally, or just another day?... So life lets you have a sandwich, and pie for your late night dessert. (Pie for the dog, as well.) And then life sends you back to bed, to dreamland, while outside, the starfish drift through the channel, with smiles on their starry faces as they head out to deep water, to the far and boundless sea. –Eleanor Lerman

Noticing

When something does not insist on being noticed, when we aren't grabbed by the collar or struck on the skull by a presence or an event, we take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude.
–Cynthia Ozick

No longer forward nor behind I look
in hope or fear;
but, grateful, take the good I find, the
best of now and here...
And so the shadows fall apart, and
so the west winds play;
and all the windows of my heart I
open to the day.
–John Greenleaf Whittier

The Frogs After Dark

I am so much in love with mournful music. That I don't bother to look for violinists. The aging peepers satisfy me for hours. The ant moves on his tiny Sephardic feet. The flute is always glad to repeat the same note. The Ocean rejoices in its dusky mansion. Bears are often piled up close to each other. In caves of bears; it's just one hump. After another, and there is no one to sort it out. You and I have spent so many hours working. We have paid dearly for the life we have. It's all right if we do nothing tonight. We've heard the fiddlers tuning their old fiddles, And the singer urging the low notes to come. We've heard her trying to keep the dawn from breaking. There is some slowness in life that is right for us. But we love to remember the way the soul leaps Over and over into the lonely heavens. –Robert Bly

The fairest thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of science. Those who know it not, and can no longer wonder and no longer feel amazement, are as good as dead. We all had this priceless talent when we were young. But as time goes by, many of us lose it. True scientists never lose the faculty of amazement. It is the essence of their being.
—Albert Einstein

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope. For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love, For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith. But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting. Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought: so the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing. —T.S. Eliot

Whisper of running streams, and winter lightning. The wild thyme unseen and the wild strawberry, the laughter in the garden, echoed ecstasy. Not lost, but requiring, pointing to the agony. Of death and birth.

Birches

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay
As ice-storms do. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in

With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

—Robert Frost

To You

Whoever you are, I fear you are
walking the walks of dreams,
I fear these supposed realities are to
melt from under your feet
and hands,

Even now your features, joys,
speech, house, trade, manners,
troubles, follies, costume, crimes,
dissipate away from you,

Your true soul and body appear
before me,
They stand forth out of affairs, out of
commerce, shops, work,
farms, clothes, the house, buying,
selling, eating, drinking, suffering,
dying.

Whoever you are, now I place my
hand upon you, that you be
my poem,

I whisper with my lips close to your
ear,
I have loved many women and men,
but I love none better than you.
—Walt Whitman

True patience isn't gritting one's
teeth and saying, "I'll bear with this
for another five minutes because I'm
sure it will be over by then and
something better will come along."
Patience isn't dour, and it isn't
unhappy. It's a steady strength that
we apply to each experience we face.
If the situation calls for action, we
must take it - patience doesn't mean
inertia or complacency. Instead, it
gives us a courageous dedication to

the long haul, along with the
willingness to connect with the
multilayered truth of what is right
here. —Sharon Salzberg

Reason and Passion

And the priestess spoke again and
said: Speak to us of Reason and
Passion. And he answered,
saying: Your soul is oftentimes a
battlefield, upon which your reason
and your judgment wage war against
your passion and your appetite.
Would that I could be the
peacemaker in your soul, that I might
turn the discord and the rivalry of
your elements into oneness and
melody. But how shall I, unless you
yourselves be also the peacemakers,
nay, the lovers of all your elements?
Your reason and your passion are
the rudder and the sails of your
seafaring soul. If either your sails or
your rudder be broken, you can but
toss and drift, or else be held at a
standstill in mid-seas. For reason,
ruling alone, is a force confining; and
passion, unattended, is a flame that
burns to its own destruction.
Therefore let your soul exalt your
reason to the height of passion, that
it may sing; And let it direct your
passion with reason, that your
passion may live through its own
daily resurrection, and like the
phoenix rise above its own ashes. I
would have you consider your
judgment and your appetite even as
you would two loved guests in your
house. Surely you would not honour
one guest above the other; for he
who is more mindful of one loses the

love and the faith of both. Among the hills, when you sit in the cool shade of the white poplars, sharing the peace and serenity of distant fields and meadows -- then let your heart say in silence, "God rests in reason." And when the storm comes, and the mighty wind shakes the forest, and thunder and lightning proclaim the majesty of the sky, -- then let your heart say in awe, "God moves in passion." And since you are a breath in God's sphere, and a leaf in God's forest, you too should rest in reason and move in passion.—Kahlil Gibran

St. Catherine of Siena in her ***Dialogues pictures the spiritual life as a large tree:***

- ***The trunk of the tree is love.***
- ***The core of the tree, that middle part that must be alive for the rest of the tree to be alive, is patience.***
- ***The roots of the tree are self-knowledge.***
- ***The many branches, reaching out into the air, are discernment.***

Do not try to save the whole world or do anything grandiose.

Instead, create a clearing in the dense forest of your life and wait there patiently, until the song that is your life falls into your own cupped hands and you recognize and greet it.

Only then will you know how to give yourself to this world so worthy of rescue. —Martha Postlewaite

Not long after I first learned I was sick...I began to meet every Friday with the pastor of the church just around the corner from where my wife and I live....In those meetings grief was not suspended or banished but entered and answered.

Answered not by theology, and not by my own attempts to imaginatively circumvent theology, but by the depth and integrity and essential innocence of the communion occurring between two people."
—Christian Wiman, *My Bright Abyss*

God is another word for the heart of everything. St. Bonaventure said that all of creation is the fingerprint and the footprint of the Divine One (*vestigia Dei*)...One would think that the three monotheistic religions would have been the first to see this, and especially Christians whose distinguishing doctrine is the Incarnation.

When you say you love God, you are saying you love everything. That's why mystics can love the foreigner, can love the outsider; in fact they cannot not love them, because they see truthfully and fully! Adapted from *Silent Compassion: Finding God in Contemplation*—Richard Rohr

Last Call

Tonight
moonglow
from within
softly

like a candled egg

and softly
stars diminish
until incandescence washes

the dark sky

until midnight's
lightslick
its ebb and flow

liquid

the candent universe
rolls
softly

—David Lee

It is always miraculous to see a dream take shape and form. Dreams in themselves are made of the chiffon of our hopes, desires, and aspiring. There may be no limit to their fabulous unfolding, rich in all the magic of the fantastic. A dream may be held at the focal point of one's mind and heart until it takes over the total process of one's thinking and planning, until at last we become the living embodiment of what we dream. This is the first miracle: we become our dream; then it is that the line between what we do and are and our dream melts away. A new accent appears in how we think; the

signature of our dream must guarantee the integrity of our every act. —Howard Thurman

Not because of victories
I sing,
having none,
but for the common sunshine,
the breeze,
the largess of the spring.
Not for victory
but for the day's work done
as well as I was able;
not for a seat upon the dais
but at the common table.
—Charles Reznikoff

With Understanding I bow to the pine, and surprisingly, She bows back. "You give me grace, Strength, And beauty," I say. "You give me movement, Voice, And dance," She says, Again, surprising me, As I had not known, Pines could talk. "Of course we can talk," She tells me. "But you, "You have to be capable, Of listening." "Ahhhh," I say, With understanding.
—John McAndrew, Plum Village

Return again. Return again.
Return to the land of your soul.
Return again. Return again.
Return to the land of your soul.

Return to who you are.
Return to what you are.
Return to where you are.
Born and reborn again.

Return again. Return again.
Return to the land of your soul.

Rumi writes of the soul in this shape: I was walking at dawn with a monk on his way to the monastery. We do the same work I told him, We suffer the same he gave me a bowl and I saw the soul has this shape...being partly in the middle of being partly in myself and partly outside.

The Creative Fire

Create your reign of unity now-- through our fiery hearts and willing hands.
Let your counsel rule our lives, clearing our intention for co-creation.
Unite our "I can" to yours, so that we walk as kings and queens with every creature

Desire with and through us the rule of universal fruitfulness onto the earth.
Your rule springs into existence as our arms reach out to embrace all creation.
Come into the bedroom of our hearts, prepare us for the marriage of power and beauty.

From this divine union, let us birth new images for a new world of peace.
Create your reign of unity now!
—Prayers of the Cosmos. Neil Douglas-Klotz

Since Copernicus we have known better than to see the earth as the center of the universe. Since Einstein, we have learned that there is no center; or alternatively, that any point is as good as any other for observing the world. I take this to be roughly what medieval theologians meant when they defined God as a circle whose circumference is nowhere and whose center is everywhere... There are no privileged locations. If you stay put, your place may become a holy center, not because it gives you special access to the divine, but because in your stillness you hear what might be heard anywhere. All there is to see can be seen from anywhere in the universe, if you know how to look; and the influence of the entire universe converges on every spot.—Scott Russell Sanders

We are a mystery, but we are a living mystery. The most alive thing about us is what we are when thought breaks off and our mind can go no further—for that is where our yearning begins, our inconsolable yearning, and the loneliness that begets compassion, the forlornness that prepares the heart for love. —A. Powell Davies

The morality of a mystic is a response to union, not an earning of union. Once you've experienced that you're one with God and your neighbor, why would you steal from him and make his life more difficult? Once you've experienced union with your neighbor, why would you lie to him? Or steal his wife? Of course you wouldn't.

But most of us think backwards, "If I don't lie, God will like me." No, you'll like yourself more! God likes you already. That problem is solved once and for all and forever. That's what every mystic enjoys at ever fuller levels—that you know that you're loved ahead of time, before death, and unconditionally.

And that's why mystics are happy people. In fact, if they're not happy, they're not mystics. If he or she is a "sourpuss" (Pope Francis' word!), you know that person is still playing the moral game, which is mostly about willpower, leading to constant failure and disappointment with the self. —Adapted fr Franciscan Mysticism: Richard Rohr

Clearing Space for the Name to Live

Focus your light within us--make it useful: as the rays of a beacon show the way.

Help us breathe one holy breath feeling only you--this creates a shrine inside, in wholeness.

Help us let go, clear the space inside of busy forgetfulness: so the Name comes to live.

Your name, your sound can move us if we tune our hearts as instruments for its tone.

Hear the one Sound that created all others, in this way the Name is hallowed in silence.

In peace the Name resides: a "room of one's own," a holy of holies open, giving light, to all.

We all look else where for this light--it draws us out of ourselves--but the Name always lives within.

Focus your light within us--make it useful!

—From Prayers of the Cosmos by Neil Douglas-Klotz

Appetite

Pale gold and crumbling with crust mottled dark, almost bronze, pieces of honeycomb lie on a plate. Flecked with the pale paper of hive, their hexagonal cells leak into the deepening pool of amber. On your lips, against palate, tooth and tongue, the viscous sugar squeezes from its chambers, sears sweetness into your throat until you chew pulp and wax from a blue city of bees. Between your teeth is the blown flower and the flower's seed. Passport pages stamped and turning. Death's officious hum. Both the candle and its anther of flame. Your own yellow hunger. Never say you can't take this world into your mouth. —by Paulann Petersen fr Happiness...

There is no end to ego, with its museum of disappointments. I want to take my neighbors into the garden and show them: Here is consolation.

Here is your pity. Look how much
seed it drops
around the sparrows as they fight.
It lives alongside their misery.
It glows each evening with a violent
light. –by Paisley Rekdal
Millennium blessing
There is a grace approaching
that we shun as much as death,
it is the completion of our birth.

It does not come in time,
but in timelessness
when the mind sinks into the heart
and we remember.

It is an insistent grace that draws us
to the edge and beckons us to
surrender
safe territory and enter our enormity.

We know we must pass
beyond knowing
and fear the shedding.

But we are pulled upward
none-the-less
through forgotten ghosts
and unexpected angels,

The world without spirit is a wasteland. People have the notion have saving the world by shifting things around, changing the rules, and who's on top, and so forth. No, no! Any world is a valid world if it's alive. The thing to do is to bring life to it, and the only way to do that is to find in your own case where the life is and become alive yourself." –Joseph Campbell

If you find yourself in a raging, whitewater river whirlpool eddy (of **reactivity**), don't try to fight it, there's nothing to grab onto, it's not real, it's not what it seems. Trust and Surrender are called for; let yourself be pulled downward (into the awareness of your biggest fear). You will hit the bottom (of this illusion) and you'll catch some downstream current and it will pull you out of your hole and release you into the river (of life). –Lena Stevens, the power path.

luminous.

And there is nothing left to say
but we are That.
And that is what we sing about.
–Stephen Levine

What you hold, may you always hold

What you hold, may you always
hold. What you do, may you do and
never abandon. But with swift pace,
light step, unswerving feet, so that
even your steps stir no dust, go
forward. Securely, joyfully, and
swiftly, on the path of prudent
happiness, believing nothing,
agreeing with nothing, which would
dissuade you from this resolution, or
which would place a stumbling block
for you on the way, so that you may
offer your vows to the Most High in
the pursuit of that perfection to which
the Spirit of the Lord has called you.

–Clare of Assisi

I know why you tap the bat four times before stepping into the batter's box. Most call this a superstition. I don't think it is. I think it's something that shifts the psyche into the place it's meant to be. So yeah, a certain pen, blank book, comfortable chair, ragged shirt and comfortable socks, all that stuff creates something like integration. Whew, heavy. And I've a chair that looks out a window down the creek behind our house.—Jack Ridl

Earth Your Dancing Place

Beneath heaven's vault
remember always walking
through halls of cloud
down aisles of sunlight
or through high hedges
of the green rain
walk in the world
highheeled with swirl of cape
hand at the swordhilt
of your pride
Keep a tall throat
Remain aghast at life
Enter each day
as upon a stage
lighted and waiting
for your step
Crave upward as flame
have keenness in the nostril
Give your eyes
to agony or rapture

Train your hands
as birds to be
brooding or nimble
Move your body
as the horses
sweeping on slender hooves
over crag and prairie
with fleeing manes
and aloofness of their limbs

Take earth for your own large room
and the floor of the earth
carpeted with sunlight

and hung round with silver wind
for your dancing place
—May Swenson

Is There An Angel in the House?

***If there is,
come to me...
and if you aren't too tired,
or otherwise occupied,
and if it isn't too tacky a request,
please rock me.
I am bruised.
If you will hold me until morning,
I promise I will rise and light the
fire
and break the bread and put back
on my shoulder
my corner of the world.
But for now I could use the shelter
of a wing.
Excuse me,
is there an angel in the house?
—Pat Schneider***

The same stream of life that runs
through my veins night
and day runs through the world
and dances in
rhythmic measures.
It is the same life that shoots in joy
through the dust of the
earth in numberless blades of
grass and breaks into
tumultuous waves of leaves and
flowers.
It is the same life that is rocked in the
ocean-cradle of birth
and death, in ebb and flow.
I feel my limbs are made glorious by
the touch of this world
of life.
And my pride is from the life-throb of
ages dancing in my
blood this moment.
–Rabindrath Tagore

***The kind of work God usually calls
you to is the kind of work (a) that
you need most to do and (b) that
the world most needs to have
done. The place God calls you to
is the place where your deep
gladness and the world's deep
hunger meet. –F. Buechner***

Soul is something creative,
something active. Soul is honesty.
I sing to people about what matters.
I sing to the realists, people who
accept it like it is.
I express problems; there are tears
when it's sad and smiles when it's
happy. It seems simple to me, but to
some, feelings take courage.
–Aretha Franklin

Each day I learn more than I teach; I
learn that half-knowledge of
another's life leads to false judgment;
I learn that there is a surprising
kinship in human nature; I learn that
it is wise parents who know their
children; I learn that what we expect
we get; I learn that there's more
good than evil in this world; that age
is a question of spirit; that youth is
the best of life no matter how
numerous its years; I learn how
much there is to learn.
–Virginia Church

I very much wished not to be noticed,
and to be left alone, and I sort of
succeeded.
I worked probably 25 years by
myself, just writing and working, not
trying to publish much, not giving
readings.

Poetry isn't a profession,
it's a way of life. It's an
empty basket; you put your life into it
and make something out of that.

***Forget not that the
earth delights to feel
your bare feet and the
winds long to play with
your hair.
-- Khalil Gibran***

*if there is something that's been visiting you
a question, story or image
if you've found yourself walking in circles
trying to enter your personal pilgrimage
if your body has felt restless or neglected*

*or simply wants to smile
if your humanity and divinity miss each other
and want to hold hands for awhile
come.
no need to RSVP or pre-register.
just come. –Coke Nakamoto*

I seek this day an active wonder. An active wonder is the desperate need of my mind and spirit. The awareness of the unexplored and the untried until I find my way into their secret places: this I need and I seek. The illumination of wonder over my familiar landscape, revealing ordinary things, fresh glories, making manifest in my familiar heights and depths that which I have never known: this I need and I seek this day. –Howard Thurman

"For many of us, the march from Selma to Montgomery was about protest and prayer. Legs are not lips and walking is not kneeling. And yet our legs uttered songs. Even without words, our march was worship. I felt my legs were praying. –Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

Arms Full of Wildflowers

Gratitude means showing up on life's doorstep,
love's threshold, dressed in a clown suit,
rubber-nosed, gunboat shoes flapping.
Gratitude shows up with arms full of wildflowers,
reciting McKuen or the worst of Neruda.

To talk of gratitude is to be
the fool in a cynic's world.
Gratitude is pride's nightmare,
the admission of humility before something
given without expectation or attachment.

Gratitude tears open the shirt
of self importance, scatters buttons
across the polished floors of feigned indifference,
ignores the obvious and laughs out loud.

Even more, gratitude bares her breasts, rips open
her ribs to show the naked heart, the holy heart.
What if that sacred heart is not, after all, about sacrifice?

Every day, priests minutely examine the Law
And endlessly chant complicated sutras.
Before doing that, though, they should learn
How to read the love letters sent by the wind and rain,
the snow and moon.
Imagine it is about joy, barefoot and foolhardy,
something unasked for, something unearned.

What if the beat we hear, when we are finally quiet
is simply this:

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

—Rebecca del Rio

***When in doubt, make a fool of
yourself. There is a
microscopically thin line between
being brilliantly creative and
acting like the most gigantic idiot
on earth. So what the hell, leap.
—Cynthia Heimel***

men and women bring the world's
work to its highest perfection. Let us
learn then in these growing years to
respect the harder sterner aspects of
life together with its joy and laughter,
and to weave them all into the great
web which hangs holy unto God.
—W.E.B. DuBois

Despair and hope are inseparable.
One can never understand what
hope is really about unless one
wrestles with despair. The same is
true with faith. There has to be some
serious doubt, otherwise faith
becomes merely a dogmatic formula,
an orthodoxy, a way of evading the
complexity of life, rather than a way
of engaging honestly with life.
—Cornel West

If I had influence with the good
fairy...I should ask that her gifts to
each child in the world be a sense of
wonder so indestructible that it would
last throughout life, as an unailing
antidote against the boredom and
disenchantments of later years, the
sterile preoccupation with things
artificial, the alienation from the
source of our strength.
—Rachel Carson

It is the wind and the rain, oh God,
the cold and the storm that make this
earth to blossom and bear its fruit.
So in our lives it is storm and stress
and hurt and suffering that make real

I believe in kindness. Also in
mischief. Also in singing, especially
when singing is not necessarily
prescribed. —Mary **Oliver**

Twigs
(excerpt)

And so

it has taken me

all of sixty years

to understand

that water is the finest drink,

and bread the most delicious food,

and that art is worthless

unless it plants

a measure of splendor in people's
hearts.

– Taha Muhammad Ali

There is in me something mysterious
that nothing is able to grasp,
something that no thought or feeling
can help me know. It appears only
when I am not caught in the web of
my thoughts and emotions. It is the
unknown, which cannot be grasped
with what I know.–Jeanne Matignon
de Salzman

Even in the darkest of times we have
the right to expect some illumination
Such illumination may well come less
from theories and concepts than
from the uncertain, flickering, and
often weak light that some men and
women, in their lives and works, will
kindle under almost all
circumstances and shed over the
time-span that was given them on

earth–Hannah Arendt

Give me the listening ear. I seek this
day the ear that will not shrink from
[...] the word that challenges me to
deeper consecration and higher
resolve – the word that lays bare
needs that make my own days
uneasy, that seizes upon every good
decent impulse of my nature,
channeling it into paths of healing in
the lives of others.–Howard Thurman

I know I am mortal by nature...but
when I trace at my pleasure the
windings to and fro of the heavenly
bodies, I no longer touch earth with
my feet. –Ptolemy

And I have seen a woman with her
head flung between
her

naked knees, and her head held
there listening to
the

sea, the great naked sea shouldering
a load of salt.

And the blue pansy mouth sang to
the sea:

 Mother of God, I'm so little a
thing,

 Let me sing longer,
 Only a little longer.

–Carl Sanberg

Faith is a state of openness or trust. To have faith is like when you trust yourself to the water. You don't grab hold of the water when you swim, because if you do you will become stiff and tight in the water, and sink. You have to relax, and the attitude of faith is the very opposite of clinging and holding on. In other words, a person who is fanatic in matters of religion and clings to certain ideas about the nature of God and the universe becomes a person who has no faith at all. Instead they are holding tight. But the attitude of faith is to let go and become open to truth, whatever it might turn out to be. –Allan Watts

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here... And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy. –Max Ehrmann

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these broken wings and learn
to fly
All your life
You were only waiting for this
moment to arise.

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Taken these sunken eyes and learn
to see
All your life
You were only waiting for this
moment to be free. –John Lennon

But often, in the world's most
crowded streets, But often, in the din
of strife, There rises an unspeakable
desire After the knowledge of our
buried life; A thirst to spend our fire
and restless force In tracking out our
true, original course; A longing to
inquire Into the mystery of this heart
which beats So wild, so deep in us –
to know Whence our lives come and
where they go. –Matthew Arnold

And oftentimes, to win us to our
harm, The instruments of Darkness
tell us truths; Win us with honest
trifles. –William Shakespeare

Ode To Gaiety

Go gloom
Be gone glum and
grim
Off with the drab drear and grumble
It's time
its pastime

to come undone and come out
laughing
time to wrap killjoys in wet
blankets
and feed them to the sourpusses

Come frisky pals
Come
forth wily wags
Loosen your screws and get off your
rocker
Untie the
strait lacer

Tie up the smarty pants
Tickle the crosspatch with josh and
guffaw
Share quips and pranks with every
victim
of grouch pomposity or
blah

Woe to the bozo who says No
to
tee hee ho ho and ha ha
Boo to the clean-cut klutz who
wipes the
smile off his face
Without gaiety
freedom is a chastity belt
Without
gaiety
life is a wooden kimono

Come cheerful chums
Cut
up and carry on
Crack your pots and split your sides
Boggle the
bellyacher
Convulse the worrywart
Pratfall the prissy poos and the fuddy
duds
Take drollery to heart or end up a
deadhead
at the guillotine of
the mindless

Be wise and go merry round

whatever you cherish
what you love to enjoy what you live
to exert

And when the high spirits
call your number up
count on merriment all
the way to the countdown

Long live hilarity euphoria and fluma-
diddle

Long live gaiety
for all the laity
—James Broughton

The alphabet of grace is full of
sibilants—sounds that can't be
shouted but only whispered: the
sounds of bumblebees and wind and
lovers in the dark, of whitecaps
hissing up flat over the glittering sand
and cars on wet roads, of crowds
hushed in vast and vaulted places,
the sound of your own breathing. I
believe that in sibilants life is trying to
tell us something. The trees, ghosts,
dreams, faces, the waking up and
eating and working of life, are trying
to tell us something, to take us
somewhere.

Everything is breathing and receiving
and giving back from everything else
at all levels of being ... fundamentally
this is the dance – it is the only
language in which God can speak
the word "love". –Cynthia Bourgeault,
The Divine Exchange.

Mystic Einstein: 5 quotes

1."There are only two ways to live
your life. One is as though nothing is
a miracle. The other is as though
everything is a miracle."

2."One knows from daily life that one
exists for other people; first of all for
those upon whose smiles and well-
being our own happiness is wholly
dependent, and then for the many,

unknown to us, to whose destinies we are bound by the ties of sympathy."

3."A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life are based on the labors of other people, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving.

4."A human being is part of a whole, called by us the "Universe," a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest -- a kind of optical delusion of our consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty."

5."Only a life lived for others is worth living."—Albert Einstein

Movement

***It's as if, here too, there's a hierarchy:
a Poet's Heaven, where the favored few
live, feeding on fame, Pulitzers
and paychecks
on parties, applause and book signings***

in the midst of endless wine and crackers and cheese.

***O the celebrity! O the throngs!
And then there are the rest of us
also in love with the word, the***

mystery:

***we dance, unnoticed, in the alleys
of the world***

***we dance, barefoot, on the
pavement, in mud --***

***we are the peasants, the gypsies,
the beggars***

***dancing outside the Poet's
Heaven,***

dancing, nonetheless, under stars.

—Pesha Joyce Gertler

We are all of us deeply involved in the throes of our own weaknesses and strengths, exposed often in the profoundest conflicts within our own souls. The only hope for surcease, the only possibility of stability for the person, is to establish an Island of Peace within one's own soul. Here one brings for review the purposes and dreams to which one's life is tied. This is the place where there is no pretense, no dishonesty, no adulteration. What passes over the threshold is simon-pure. What one really thinks and feels about one's own life stands revealed; what one really thinks and feels about other people far and near is seen with every nuance honestly labeled: love is love, hate is hate, fear is fear. Well within the island is the Temple where God dwells – not the God of the creed, the church, the family, but the God of one's heart.

—Howard Thurman

Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth. They do not preach learning and precepts, they preach undeterred by particulars, the ancient law of life.
–Hermann Hesse

We are all of us more mystics than we believe or choose to believe – life is complicated enough as it is, after all. We have seen more than we let on, even to ourselves. Through some moment of beauty or pain, some sudden turning of our lives, we catch glimmers at least of what the saints are blinded by; only then, unlike the saints, we tend to go on as though nothing has happened. To go on as though something has happened, even though we are not sure what it was or just where we are supposed to go with it, is to enter the dimension of life that religion is a word for. –Frederick Buechner

You candle for it--an idea, or the world. People have done so, brilliantly, letting their small bodies be bound to the stake, creating an unforgettable fury of light. But this morning, climbing the familiar hills in the familiar fabric of dawn, I thought of China, and India and Europe, and I thought how the sun blazes for everyone just so joyfully as it rises under the lashes of my own eyes, and I thought I am so many! What is my name? What is the name of the deep breath I would take over and over for all of us? Call

it whatever you want, it is happiness, it is another one of the ways to enter fire.

This is the reality we live: aspiring to be at our best, longing for and sometimes finding meaning and connection within ourselves and with that which is larger than ourselves, we are undone by messy bathrooms, traffic jams, and burnt toast. I am not interested in spirituality that cannot encompass my humanness. Because beneath the small daily trials are harder paradoxes, things the mind cannot reconcile but the heart must hold if we are to live fully: profound tiredness and radical hope; shattered beliefs and relentless faith; the seemingly contradictory longings for personal freedom and a deep commitment to others, for solitude and intimacy, for the ability to simply be with the world and the need to change what we know is not right about how we are living.
–Oriah Mountain Dreamer

Remember the sky you were born under, know each of the star's stories. Remember the moon, know who she is. Remember the sun's birth at dawn, that is the strongest point of time. Remember sundown and the giving away to night. Remember your birth, how your mother struggled to give you form and breath. You are evidence of her life, and her mother's, and hers... Remember all is in motion, is growing, is you. Remember language comes from this. Remember the dance language is, that life is. Remember. –Joy Harjo

I know how to let my soul out
of the business it's tied up in:
I hear my blood singing and boiling,
I'm light-headed.

And this matter which is my own
somewhere on the border of slow
disturbance
recombines in a chain
of primary links.

There in the unbiased ether
our essences balance
against star weights hurled
at the now just trembling scales.
The ecstasy of life
lives at this edge—

the body's memory
of its immutable homeland.

—Osip Mandelstam translated by
Barbara Einzig

We must not hope to be mowers,
and to gather the ripe gold ears,
Unless we have first been sowers
And watered the furrows with tears.
It is not just as we take it,
This mystical world of ours,
Life's field will yield as we make it
A harvest of thorns or of flowers.
—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Then Almitra spoke, saying, We would ask now of Death. And he said: You would know the secret of death. But how shall you find it unless you seek it in the heart of life? The owl whose night-bound eyes are blind unto the day cannot unveil the mystery of light. If you would indeed behold the spirit of death, open your heart wide unto the body of life. For life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one. In the depth of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond; And like seeds dreaming beneath the snow, your heart dreams of spring. Trust the dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity. From "The Prophet"

Mercy, there have been revelations.

Grace, there has been realization.

Still, you must

travel the path of time and circumstance.

The further you go, the more it comes back to paying attention.

The rough skin of the tallowwood, the trade routes of lorikeets, a sky lifting
behind afternoon clouds. Staying close to
the texture of things.

People can go before you and talk all they want,
but only one thing makes sense: the way the world enters
and finds its voice in you: the place you are free.

Community

To be a human being, fully developing before God, and empowered by the wonderful gifts that are ours, we abide in community. Anything less leaves us dwarfed, shunted, stifled, despairing. In her poem "Alone," Angelou declares that fully functioning personhood disallows a life based solely on solo acts

How to find my soul a home
Where water is not thirsty
And breadloaf is not stone
I came up with one thing
And I don't believe I'm wrong
That nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out here alone.
–Maya Angelou

The world is split, and in more than half of it passion plays itself out in slow motion, a creaturely nobility is in place. I live on the water, and if I can catch sight of a large softshell turtle turning its way back to deep water as my canoe crosses over it, I consider myself lucky. –David Dodd Lee

There is a dance at water's edge, a movement between the lakes, its sand and the horizon where lake becomes cloud. Between those lines our world's a thin wash of muted tones, beige and gray with a hint of white, almost abstract, until the dancer steps out into the pool. She makes the whole thing real.
–Ulrich Schaeffe Searching for You

When I face my solitude
I become richer
as all weights fall away from me
and I find peace

The empty spaces
convey your presence
and you begin to talk more audibly
than through the wisdom of human
voices

I sink into myself
to meet your gentle wind
a tent to my spirit
and a home for my brokenness.

If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place. –Margaret Mead

The freedom for which we stand is not freedom of belief as we please, not freedom to evade responsibility, but freedom to be honest in speech and action, freedom to respect one's own integrity of thought and feeling, freedom to question, to investigate, to try, to understand life and the universe in which life abounds, freedom to search anywhere and everywhere to find the meaning of Being, freedom to experiment with new ways of living that seem better than the old. –Sophia Lyon Fahs

O world, thou chooseth not the better part!
It is not wisdom to be only wise,
And on the inward vision close the eyes,
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;
To trust the soul's invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.
Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is led
Unto the thinking of the thought divine. –George Santayana

You are an angel: Give over to goodness. Increasingly let "the better angels of your nature" be the animating force of your life. Why: Loving yourself is more fun and makes the wheels of synchronicity and magic spin!

Dancing Mystics Joke week

Why don't Buddhists vacuum in the corners? Because they have no attachments.

This fellow climbing a mountain suddenly slips off the edge of a cliff. As he falls all he can think is, "Oh my Lord, I don't want to die!" when a protruding branch breaks his fall and he grabs on. After an hour or so pondering Divine intervention, he was exhausted. Looking up to the heavens he cried out, "Lord, help me, please, help me." All of a sudden the clouds parted and a voice boomed out from on high. "This is your Lord Avalokitesvara, Let Go!" said the voice. The fellow paused, looked down the cliff side, and looked up at

heaven once more, then said: "Is there anyone else up there?"
The Zen Monk ponders what to give his nephew as a birthday gift. He decided to give him nothing wrapped in emptiness. The nephew, indignant responded, "You are thoughtless for giving me such a gift" Well flattered, said the monk, "Thank you."

When asked what his thoughts were on Western civilization, Mahatma Gandhi said, "I think it would be a good idea."

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to help another soul, to assist some portion of this poor suffering world, will help immensely. It is not given to us to know which acts or by whom, will cause the critical mass to tip toward an enduring good. What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts, adding, adding to, adding more, continuing. We know that it does not take everyone on Earth to bring justice and peace, but only a small, determined group who will not give up during the first, second, or hundredth gale... When a great ship is in harbor and moored, it is safe, there can be no doubt. But that is not what great ships are built for.

–Clarissa Pinkola Estes

From all this, my friends, there arises an insight which the poet must learn through other people. There is no insurmountable solitude. All paths lead to same goal: to convey to others what we are. And we must pass through solitude and difficulty, isolation and silence, in order to reach forth to the enchanted place where we can dance our clumsy dance and sing our sorrowful song – but in this dance or in this song there are fulfilled the most ancient rites of our conscience in the awareness of being human and of believing in a common destiny.

–Pablo Neruda

How to Be a Pilgrim

Air travel is like
ancient pilgrims walking on their
knees,
flight delays and narrow seats
offer their own kind of penance.

You jettison excess baggage,
leaving behind the heavy makeup case,
knowing the rain will
wash you free of artifice.

Books you wanted to carry left too,
no more outside words needed,
then go old beliefs which keep
you taut and twisted inside.

Blistered feet stumble over rocky
fields covered with wildflowers and you
realize this is your life,

full of sharp stones and color.

Red-breasted robins call forth
the song already inside,
a hundred griefs break open under
dark clouds and downpour.

Rise and fall of elation and exhaustion,
the tides a calendar of unfolding,
a bright star rises and you remember
a loved one waiting miles away.

A new hunger is kindled by the sight
of cows nursing calves in a field,
spying a spotted pony, you forget
the weight and seriousness of things.

Salmon swim across the Atlantic,
up the River Corrib's rapids to the
wide lake, and you wonder if you have
also been called here for death and birth.

This is why we journey:
to retrieve our lost intimacy with the world,
every creature a herald of poems
that sleep in streams and stones.

"Missing you" scrawled on a postcard sent home,
but you don't follow with
"wish you were here."

This is a voyage best made alone.
--Christine Valters Paintner

Here is a mystery: If sweeping through the door of my heart there moves continually a genuine love for you, it bypasses all your hate and all your indifference and gets through to you at your center. You are powerless to do anything about it. You may keep alive in devious ways the fires of your bitter heart, but they cannot get through to me. Underneath the surface of all the tension, something else is at work. It is utterly impossible for you to keep another from loving you. --Howard Thurman

At the very lengthy meeting
I actually felt my soul leave my body
and rush toward the ceiling—
and fly around the walls and flare
toward daylight,
toward the windows—
to throw silently its impetuous
emptiness
against the glass in vain.
It could not go anywhere, the clear
moth.
Then it lay on the rug, not exhausted
but bored and so inert that it
almost—
though nothing—
took on a hue, stained with all the
breaths
and words and thoughts that filled
the room:
the yellow-green color of old teeth.
—Kevin McCaffrey
My heart searched for your
fragrance
in the breeze moving at dawn,
my eyes searched for the flower of
your face
in the garden of creation.
Neither could lead me to your abode

contemplation alone showed me the
way.

—Sarmad, Eng v. Isaac A. Ezekiel

Open
It is a small step to remember
how life led to this
moment's hesitation.

How the door to the deeper world
opens, letting the body fall at last,
toward the few griefs it can call its
own.

Oh yes, I know. Our wings catch fire
in that downward flight
and we come to earth afraid
we can never fly again

But then we always knew
heaven would be a desperate place.
Everything you desired coming
in one fearful moment
to greet you.

Your full presence only in rest
and the love that asks nothing
The rest where you lie down
and are no longer found at all.
—David Whyte

Truly simple
Uncomplicated, purpose driven, no
announcement, just being
Truly humble, rooted in darkness,
humbly striving, undemanding,
untold utility, just being

Verily, the Jewel is in the lotus

The Way

A person will worship something – have no doubt about that. We may think our tribute is paid in secret in the dark recesses of our hearts – but it will out. That which dominates our imaginations and our thoughts will determine our lives and character. Therefore, it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping we are becoming.
–Ralph Waldo Emerson

The time will come, when with elation,
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror,
and each will smile at the other's
welcome
and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who
was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back
your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has
loved you.
all your life, whom you have ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the
bookshelf,

the photographs, the desperate
notes,

peel your own image from the mirror.

Sit. Feast on your life.
–Derek Walcott

In a Dark Time

In a dark time, the eye begins to
see, I meet my shadow in the
deepening shade; I hear my echo in
the echoing wood --A lord of nature
weeping to a tree, I live between the
heron and the wren, Beasts of the hill
and serpents of the den. What's
madness but nobility of soul
At odds with circumstance? The day's on
fire! I know the purity of pure
despair, My shadow pinned against
a sweating wall. That place among
the rocks -- is it a cave, Or winding
path? **The edge is what I have.** A
steady storm of correspondences! A
night flowing with birds, a ragged
moon, And in broad day the midnight
come again! A man goes far to find
out what he is --Death of the self in a
long, tearless night, All natural
shapes blazing unnatural light. Dark,
dark my light, and darker my
desire. My soul, like some heat-
maddened summer fly, Keeps
buzzing at the sill. Which I is I? A
fallen man, I climb out of my
fear. The mind enters itself, and God
the mind, And one is One, free in the
tearing wind. –Theodore Roethke

In the Renaissance light was a stand-in for life, or spirituality, or the presence of a God...or a higher self, a soul. I'm interested in having that aspect of light in my paintings. I think we find solace in the recognition that there's something we don't really understand, that we don't really know. But we do know. You can see, when you look into people's eyes, there's light in people's eyes. That's another place where that light resides. I guess I'm interested in getting light into the paintings because I think we need that. It's about that leap again, that there is something else other than materiality. I'm not certain what it is between being and not being. It's subtle. And it's available to all of us. It's a part of us. It's about recognition.
–squeak carnath

I have lived with passion and in a hurry, trying to accomplish too many things. I never had time to think about **my beliefs** until my 28-year-old daughter Paula fell ill. She was in a coma for a year and I took care of her at home, until she died in my arms in December of 1992. Paralyzed and silent in her bed, my daughter Paula taught me a lesson that is now my mantra: You only have what you give... The pain of losing my child was a cleansing experience. I had to throw overboard all excess baggage and keep only what is essential. Because of Paula, I don't cling to anything anymore. Now I like to give much more than to receive. I am happier when I love than when I am loved. I adore my husband, my son, my grandchildren, my mother, my dog, and frankly I don't know if they even like me. But who cares? Loving them is my joy. Give, give, give—what is the point of having experience, knowledge or talent if I don't give it away? Of having stories if I don't tell them to others? Of having wealth if I don't share it? I don't intend to be cremated with any of it! It is in giving that I connect with others, with the world and with the divine. It is in giving that I feel the spirit of my daughter inside me, like a soft presence. –Isabel Allende

Look at your life in the same way you'd look through an attic, deciding what you're going to keep, what you're going to throw out. You're moving from a house with a large attic but you've got only a small trailer to make the move. Some things have got to get thrown out so that you have space in the trailer for the things that really mean a lot to you. In other words, there are things you've got to give up in order to have the time for the things that really make a difference, that really do give substantial results.—Thanissaro Bhikkhu

Every day, I see or hear something
that more or less kills me with delight,
that leaves me like a needle
in the haystack of light.

It was what I was born for –
to look, to listen,

to lose myself inside this soft world –
to instruct myself over and over in joy
and
acclamation

–Mary Oliv

Freedom is in the unknown. If believe there is an unknown everywhere, in your own body, in your relationships with other people, in political institutions, in the universe, then you have maximum freedom. –John C. Lilly

You God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things which should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other. –Reinhold Niebuhr

Mystics are field players whose perception shifts from looking at to being in. In the field boredom transforms into patience, if not curiosity. This happens naturally with age. But some people sense this mystery long before their temples grey. Any time we proclaim something boring, what we really are saying is that we don't have patience for it. Rather than looking at ourselves for the source of the problem - and therefore the solution - we look at whatever is provoking the feeling and label that the problem. A lot of human experience can be considered boring. There are huge stretches of parenting, in relationships, in work, where "nothing" is happening, or at least nothing obvious. We can consider those moments boring and seek to alleviate that boredom with any distraction available. Or we can see such occasions as opportunities to tap into our patience and look more deeply... With attention, nothing is boring, even the most routine tasks. If you tune in to how the warm soapy water feels as you wash the pots and pans, how does that change the experience for you? Or weeding the garden, how does it feel to bend and stretch in the sunlight? What is the name of that gray bird with the crested head that suddenly appeared? This level of experiencing life isn't one that we tune in to, but it is one that can bear many riches of wonder at the very fact of being alive in this amazing world. –M. J. Ryan

Many men
Have searched all over Tuscany and never found
What I found there, the heart of the light
Itself shelled and leaved, balancing
On filaments themselves falling. The secret
Of this journey is to let the wind
Blow its dust all over your body,
To let it go on blowing, to step lightly, lightly
All the way through your ruins, and not to lose
Any sleep over the dead, who surely
Will bury their own, don't worry.
–James Wright, "The Journey"

Education is not the piling on of learning, information, data, facts, skills, or abilities -- that's training or instruction -- but is rather a making visible what is hidden as a seed... To be educated, a person doesn't have to know much or be informed, but he or she does have to have been exposed vulnerably to the transformative events of an engaged human life... One of the greatest problems of our time is that many are schooled but few are educated.
–Thomas Moore

Let us Light Candles for Peace
Two mothers, one plea:
Now, more than ever, during these days of so much crying, on the day that is sacred to both our religions, Friday, Sabbath Eve
Let us light a candle in every home – for peace: A candle to illuminate our future, face to face, A candle across borders, beyond fear.
From our family homes and houses of worship
Let us light each other up,
Let these candles be a lighthouse to our spirit Until we all arrive at the sanctuary of peace.–Ibtisam Mahameed Tamar Elad-Appelbaum

Don't get me wrong: I know
that knowledge is power,
that mystery's water,
that hunger makes
a gargantuan
lover,
and yes, I've drunk
of the river Lethe,

from the breath of the Celts,
from the echo of
the bugling elk,

and yet,

alas,
here I be,
small and twee,
all liquored up
on song and love,
hard as rails
and light as air,
expecting the heavens
to throw down a flare,
to send in the clowns,
to burn a bush,
strike up the sea,
anything

that might mean
those cloudy bastards
have noticed me.
–Wendy Videlock

I see a place of magical Beauty, that is and is not of this world that we know, a world created of familiar things, but arranged in a new and harmonious order: I see a life lived that bridges the two worlds, the inner and the outer, concept and expression, Nature and Art. I see groves of meditation, where Truth is learned and loved, and halls of Beauty, where the divine self is expressed....to some degree the saint does become the artist. But how far the artist becomes the saint is yet to be understood.
–Ruth St. Denis

Purpose

Do not try to save the whole world or do anything grandiose.

Instead, create a clearing in the dense forest of your life and wait there patiently, until the song that is

your life falls into your own cupped hands and you recognize and greet it.

Only then will you know how to give yourself to this world so worthy of rescue.

--Martha Postelwaite

Silent and serene, forgetting words, bright clarity appears before you.

When you reflect it you become vast, where

you embody it you are spiritually uplifted.

Spiritually solitary and shining, inner illumination restores wonder,

Dew in the moonlight, a river of stars, snow-covered pines, clouds enveloping the peaks. In darkness it is most bright, while hidden all the more manifest.

—Guidepost of Silent Illumination by Hongzhi Zhengjue

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going directly to Heaven, we were all going directly the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only. —Charles Dickens

Every one who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that a spirit is manifest in the laws of the Universe – a spirit vastly superior to that of man, and one in the face of which we with our modest powers must feel humble. —Albert Einstein

**May we be at peace
May our hearts remain open
May we know the beauty of our
own true spirits
May we be healed
May we be a source of healing in
the world
–Buddha metaprayer**

Unconditional
Willing to experience aloneness,
I discover connection everywhere;
Turning to face my fear,
I meet the warrior who lives within;
Opening to my loss,
I gain the embrace of the universe;
Surrendering into emptiness,
I find fullness without end.
– Jennifer Welwood

Whoever breaks another's heart will
find no homecoming in this world or
any other.–Yunus Emre

One Who Is Real Is Humble

To be real on this path you must be
humble --
If you look down at others you'll get
pushed down the stairs.

If your heart goes around on high,
you fly far from this path.

There's no use hiding it --

What's inside always leaks outside.

Even the one with the long white
beard, the

one who looks so wise --

If he breaks a single heart, why
bother going to Mecca?

If he has no compassion, what's the
point?

My heart is the throne of the Beloved,

the Beloved the heart's destiny:

When we make music we don't do it in order to reach a certain point, such as the end of the composition. If that were the purpose of music then obviously the fastest players would be the best. Also, when we are dancing we are not aiming to arrive at a particular place on the floor as in a journey. When we dance, the journey itself is the point, as when we play music the playing itself is the point. And exactly the same thing is true in meditation. Meditation is the discovery that the point of life is always arrived at in the immediate moment. –Alan Watts

The renowned cellist Yo Yo Ma once came to the home of computer pioneer Steve Jobs and performed a private concert. Jobs was deeply touched, and told Ma, "Your playing is the best argument I've ever heard for the existence of God, because I don't really believe a human alone can do this.

I think continually of those who were truly great.
Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history
Through corridors of light, where the hours are suns,
Endless and singing.
Whose lovely ambition
Was that their lips, still touched with fire,
Should tell of the Spirit, clothed from head to foot in song...
Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields,
See how these names are fêted by the waving grass
And by the streamers of white cloud
And whispers of wind in the listening sky.
The names of those who in their lives fought for life,
Who wore at their hearts the fire's centre.
Born of the sun, they travelled a short while toward the sun
And left the vivid air signed with their honour. –Stephen Spender

The bird
called tomorrow
extends into
infinite presence

Its beak peeks

in & out of
an open cage
appearing to
be large &
too small

We have already
flown without
knowing what
it was called
–Frank Sherlock

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true, original
course;

A longing to inquire into the mystery of this heart which beats
So wild, so deep in us—to know
Whence our lives come and where they go.
—Matthew Arnold

Inexorable Deities

Deities!

Inexorable revealers,

Give me strength to endure

The gifts of the Muses,

Daughters of Memory.

When the sky is blue as Minerva's
eyes

Let me stand unshaken;

When the sea sings to the rising sun

Let me be unafraid;
When the meadow lark falls like a
meteor

Through the light of afternoon,

An unloosened fountain of rapture,

Keep my heart from spilling
Its vital power;

When at the dawn

The dim souls of crocuses hear the
calls

Of waking birds,
Give me to live but master the
loveliness.

Keep my eyes unharmed from
splendors

Unveiled by you,
And my ears at peace

Filled no less with the music

Of Passion and Pain, growth and
change.

But O ye sacred and terrible powers,

Reckless of my mortality,
Strengthen me to behold a face,

To know the spirit of a beloved one

Yet to endure, yet to dare!
—Edgar Lee Masters

The really valuable thing in the pageant of human life seems to me not the State
but the creative, sentient individual, the personality; it alone creates the noble
and the sublime, while the herd as such remains dull in thought and dull in feeling.
Einstein The really valuable thing in the pageant of human life seems to me not

the State but the creative, sentient individual, the personality; it alone creates the noble and the sublime, while the herd as such remains dull in thought and dull in feeling. –Albert Einstein

It becomes beautiful where you walk.

***The ground, the path, the shore that you follow,
Everything seems to lighten, rejoice
Everything that sees you***

***Can surely the earth rejoice because
Some one walks on it, steps on it, one who it loves?***

Ask not me.

***I see only the light
How it stays around you
Floats above ground as if the earth smiled***

Step on the one who rejoices to see you happy

Only not hard

***As if you knew you were loved.
–Leah Mann, PLAY to the third power***

Each new day is a path of wonder, a different invitation. Days are where our lives gradually become visible. Often it seems that we have to undertake the longest journey to arrive at what has been nearest all along. Mornings rarely find us so astounded at the new day that we are unable to decide between adventures. We take on days with the same conditioned reflex with which we wash and put on our clothes each day. If we could be mindful of how short our time is, we might learn how precious each day is. There are people who will never forget today... The liturgy of dawn signals the wonder of the arriving day. Magic of darkness breaking through into color and light is such a promise of invitation and possibility. No wonder we always associate the hope and urgency of new beginning with the dawn. Each day is the field of brightness where the invitation of our life unfolds. A new day is an intricate and subtle matrix; written into its mystery are the happenings sent to awaken and challenge us.
–John O'Donohue

You never change things by fighting against the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.

–Buckminster Fuller

Acknowledging opened water,
possibility:
Open like a woman to this meaning.
In a time of building statues of the stars,
Valuing certain partial ferocious skills
While past us the chill and immense wilderness
Spreads its one-color wings until we know
Rock, water, flame, cloud, or the floor of the sea,
The world is a sign, a way of speaking. To find.
What shall we find? Energies, rhythms, journey.

Ways to discover. The song of the way in.

–Muriel Rukeyser

Nothing Else Matters

Stop dead in your tracks.

It doesn't matter at all, what you've ever done, or not done.

It doesn't matter how grandiose, self-centered,

arrogant, or neurotic you've ever been.

It doesn't matter how brilliant you've been, or how stupid you've been.

It doesn't matter what you've ever experienced, or not experienced.

It doesn't matter how much good you've ever done, or how much harm you've ever done, your whole life long.

Nothing that has ever happened to you makes any difference at all.

It doesn't make any difference how many times you've been enlightened, or not enlightened, or how powerful, profound, or intense those experiences may have been.

The only thing that matters, that really matters at all,
is whether you are willing to be completely alive, awake and free,
this very moment – this very instant

.

The only thing that makes any difference – any difference at all,
is whether you are willing to let go of all mental and emotional

-

all historical and future versions of yourself and your life,
and simply be what you are, completely and absolutely, right now.
We are simply awareness – pure, infinite, and wide open.

Our nature is to be unconditionally kind, honest, wise, and sincere,
tender, affectionate, sensitive, and compassionate,
without reservation, right now.

It's the most natural thing in the world,

and there is nothing real in the way.
Everywhere is your home.

Everyone is your lover, your child,
your mother, your father, your sister,
and your brother, your best friend.
Every one is your own reflection.
Your heart is aching to be
What you are,
to be Everything that you are,
on this breath.

Don't put it off another instant
--Scott Morrison

***I see nothing but the Eyes of Spirit
looking back at me
I hear nothing but the Voice of
Spirit whispering to me
I taste nothing but the nectar of
the Mother feeding me
I smell nothing but the Breath of
The Wind
Nurturing me
I feel nothing but the footsteps on
"The Path"
Leading me home
--From Tao-Zen Verses by Hanakia
Zedek***

People are going
back and forth
across the doorsill
where the two worlds
touch. The door is
round and open.
Don't go back to
sleep. --Rumi

***A poem is an emergency of
the spirit. --William Stafford***

O Love, divine Love, why do
You lay siege to me?

In a frenzy of love for me,
You find no rest.

From five sides You move against
me,

Hearing, sight, taste, touch, and
scent.

To come out is to be caught; I cannot
hide
from You.

If I come out through sight I see Love

Painted in every form and color,

Inviting me to come to You, to dwell
in You.

If I leave through the door of hearing,

What I hear points only to You, Lord;

I cannot escape Love through this
gaze.

If I come out through taste, every
flavor proclaims:

"Love, divine Love, hungering Love!

You have caught me on
Your hook, for you want to reign in
me."

If I leave through the door of scent
I sense
You in all creation;

You have caught
me

And wounded me through that
fragrance.

If I come out through the sense of
touch
I find Your lineaments in every
creature;

To try to flee from You is madness.
—Jacopone da Todi- Serge and
Elizabeth Hughes

I feel some of your paintings are
almost like prayers.
SC: Oh yes. Absolutely. They are.
They are. I think of them that way.
And the way that I came to that is
probably just from the practice of
painting. I could have done it through
meditation, I suppose. Anything one
does deeply—I think you get to that
point. The practice of painting...I'm
very involved in it, and so its natural
outcome is this spiritual concern. If
you consider it long enough and
deeply enough a conversion
experience will occur. On the other
side of that conversion experience,
or transformation, is this
understanding of our fragility of
being—that we're just specks. And,
really, we're just witnesses. It's our
job to come to some understanding
of that. I want the work to evidence
that endeavor. -squeak carnath

To the Thawing Wind

Come with
rain, O loud
Southwester!

Bring the
singer, bring
the nester;

Give the
buried flower a dream;

Make the
settled
snowbank steam;

Find the
brown
beneath the white;

But whate'er
you do
tonight,

Bathe my window,
make it flow,

Melt it as the
ice will go;

Melt the
glass and leave the sticks

Like a hermit's crucifix;

Burst into
my narrow stall;

Swing
the picture on the wall;

Run the
rattling pages o'er;

Scatter poems
on the floor;

Turn the poet
out of door.
–Robert Frost

***I said to my soul, be still, and wait
without hope. For hope would be
hope for the wrong thing; wait
without love, For love would be
love of the wrong thing; there is
yet faith But the faith and the love
and the hope are all in the
waiting. Wait without thought, for
you are not ready for thought: So
the darkness shall be the light,
and the stillness the dancing.***
–T. S. Eliot

Great Alexander sailing was from his
true course turned
By a young wind from a cloud in Asia
moving
Like a most recognizable most silvery
woman;
Tall Alexander to the island came.
The small breeze blew behind his
turning head.
He walked the foam of ripples into
this scene.
The trunk of the speaking tree looks
like a tree-trunk
Until you look again. Then people
and animals

Every day, think as you wake up, today I am fortunate to be alive, I have a
precious human life, I am not going to waste it. I am going to use all my energies
to develop myself, to expand my heart out to others; to achieve enlightenment for
the benefit of all beings. I am going to have kind thoughts towards others, I am

Are ripening on the branches; the
broad leaves
Are leaves; pale horses, sharp fine
foxes
Blossom; the red rabbit falls
Ready and running. The trunk coils,
turns,
Snakes, fishes. Now the ripe
people fall and run,
Three of them in their shore-dance,
flames that stand
Where reeds are creatures and the
foam is flame.
–Muriel Rukeyser

We shall walk together on this path
of life, for all things are part of the
universe and are connected with
each other to form one whole unity.
-- Maria Montessori

Blessed is the season which
engages the whole world in a
conspiracy of love.
–Hamilton Wright Mabie

***May your walls know joy, may
every room hold laughter, and
every window open to great
possibility***
-- Mary Anne Radmacher

not going to get angry or think badly about others. I am going to benefit others as much as I can.”—Dalai Lama

Let there be spaces in your togetherness, And let the winds of the heavens dance between you. Love one another but make not a bond of love: Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup. Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf. Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone, Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music. Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts. And stand together, yet not too near together: For the pillars of the temple stand apart, And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.—Khalil Gibran

God speaks to each of us as he makes us,
then walks with us silently out of the night.

These are the words we dimly hear:

You, sent out beyond your recall,
go to the limits of your longing.
Embody me.

Flare up like flame
And make big shadows I can move in.

Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.
Just keep going. No feeling is final.
Don't let yourself lose me.

Nearby is the country they call life.
You will know it by its seriousness.

Give me your hand.”

~Rainer Maria Rilke

Self Portrait BY CYNTHIA CRUZ

I did not want my body
Spackled in the world's
Black beads and broke
Diamonds. What the world

Wanted, I did not. Of the things
It wanted. The body of Sunday
Morning, the warm wine and
The blood. The dripping fox

Furs dragged through the black New
York snow—the parked car, the pearls,
To the first pew—the funders,
The trustees, the bloat, the red weight of

The world. Their faces. I wanted not
That. I wanted Saint Francis, the love of

His animals. The wolf, broken and bleeding—
That was me.

Moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence.
Yet it is the one essential, vital quality of those who seek to change a world which
yields most painfully to change. —Robert F. Kennedy

***In singing, sung. In stringing, strung.
Connected by this Web of threads
the beads of us bounce up and down
Lights casting near, behind, ahead.
We scatter on behalf of, witness prayers and paint our own in tones.
Though knotted tight we slip around,
Tie-dyed monk robes tossed on dancing bones.*** **—Amy Smith**

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