



**NEWSLETTER #29
Winter 1998-99**

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Check out:

◇ New Dream Group—Coming January 16!

◇ CA Retreat Weekend—Coming March 13-14!

◇ Jay O'Callahan—Coming May 7-9!

◇ Brugh Joy—Coming October 29-31!

The Creative Edge: The Way Of The Arts is a nonprofit public benefit corporation formed in January, 1989. It operates under IRS Code 501(c)(3) for the educational purpose of sponsoring programs that introduce and develop for individuals the inner creative process used by experienced artists of all fine arts disciplines. In particular, these programs have as a foundation the belief that expression consciously based on intuitive material from the psyche and expressed in one or more channels of artistic endeavor supports healthy development of both the individual and the society. Furthermore, the underlying creative principles are the basis for a healthy way of life.

Issued: 12/15/98

Board of Directors:

Marlie Avant
Donald W. Mathews
Kyla McCollam
Barbara Rose Shuler
Patricia Waldin



THE NEWS

Winter 1998-99

No. 29

Programs Scheduled: (See pages 2-4)

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| • Ann McSwiggin & Donald Mathews | A Creative Arts Retreat Weekend with Touch Drawing | Mar 13-14, 9 a.m. |
| • Jay O'Callahan | Finding & Telling Stories† | May 7-9, 7 p.m. |
| • Brugh Joy | Weekend Study Group | Oct 29-31, 7 p.m. |
| • Donald Mathews | Dream Work Seminar
Creative Arts Fellowship
Creative Development & Dreams | Jan 16, 9 a.m.
Monthly, 1st Sat-9 a.m.
E-mail or as scheduled |

† Interview on Barbara Rose Shuler's Discovery Radio Program—KAZU (90.3FM) at 7 pm.

Holiday Blessings One & All!

A new Dream Work Seminar starts in January and meets monthly through May on third Saturdays (9 a.m.-noon). This group is limited to eight people to provide intimate sharing of personal experiences using each other's dream images.

The Creative Arts Retreat Weekends begin again with the introduction of a Touch Drawing process led by Ann McSwiggin. There will be time for dreams, exploring and just plain relaxing! Come join the Creative Edge Artist-Directors for a special weekend of sharing together.

Jay O'Callahan & Brugh Joy return again in 1999! Their workshops will fill up in a hurry so make your reservation now! (Checks are held until the early price date of each program before deposit.) It is also possible John O'Donohue will be able to return next November. Stay tuned!

For all you new Internet users, don't forget to check out the Creative Edge Web Site. There you will find a entirely different collection of poems, images and comments in Letter Box On Line! All past Newsletters are there for download too! DWM

New & renewed Members of the Creative Edge:

Patrons: Joseph Johnson, Ann McSwiggin & Illia Thompson, CA.

Associate Members: Duffie Bart, Laura Bayless, Barbara Lotz, Chris Lovette, Paulette de Maestre, Andrea Moore, Suzette Phillips, Charlotte Sky & Peter Wallace, CA.

Friends: Mary Ruth, MN; Anonymous, Marilyn Beck & Peggy Hansen, CA.

We invite newcomers to our free mailing list— membership with your fully tax deductible donation is totally voluntary.
Newsletter Distribution: 1498 — Current Membership: 10 Patrons, 13 Associates, 14 Friends.



“If you look for the truth outside yourself, it gets farther and farther away.”
—Tung-Shan

Background:

Our thoughts and imaginings are fed continuously by our emotionally guided six senses. Mystically, we receive dreams and intuitions to evoke our imagination. Therefore, along life’s way, we perceive and store a whole range of personal experiences and visions triggered by these processes.

Like creative artists of all kinds, we all have within our psyche this rich flowing wealth of personal and collective history and unexamined mysteries of creation. As a resource, it is a full treasure chest waiting to serve our glorious response to life. When we chose to manifest our unique expressions and bring them into the world in support of life, we fulfill our soul’s gift to community, Spirit or to Divine Creation.

Our urge to express from the heart through our natural ability to sing, dance, draw, tell stories, write poetry,

and make other highly creative expressions of all kinds from this personal wealth, provides a way to find, and meaningfully travel, the inner and outer roads of a rich life experience.

Instead of critical judgment, when we have appreciation and curiosity about our own and each other’s personal process, a door opens to imagination, inspiration and our soul’s deeper longing. An open supportive group with deep respect for each person’s journey gives sacred witness, provides safety and trust for intimate sharing.

It facilitates spiritual and mystical aspects of life where meaningful collective themes spontaneously emerge. Thus we gain strength to share the universal joy and pain of being human and courage to creatively participate in service to life.

Community Projects:

The Creative Edge supports various programs and collaborative efforts in the community where the creative process of individuals and groups is enhanced. Donald Mathews, the Executive Director, is available to advise or facilitate various interdisciplinary groups for special projects. He provides information, inspiration and emotional support from his wide variety of experiences.

Creative Arts Fellowship:

The monthly Creative Arts Fellowship is a public gathering seeking self awareness and presence through a practice of contemplation, mutual support and intimate sharing. Our shared stories, dreams and artistic expressions of all kinds then become a deep source of wisdom.

This free living room group is for those interested in sharing their creative work and process from a personal point of view. Facilitated by Donald Mathews, it is for all skill levels. Bring an image, poem, song, story, dance or other creative expression that intrigues you. Meetings: the first Saturday each month except July & August. 9 a.m. till noon. No fee.

Creative Arts Retreat Weekends:

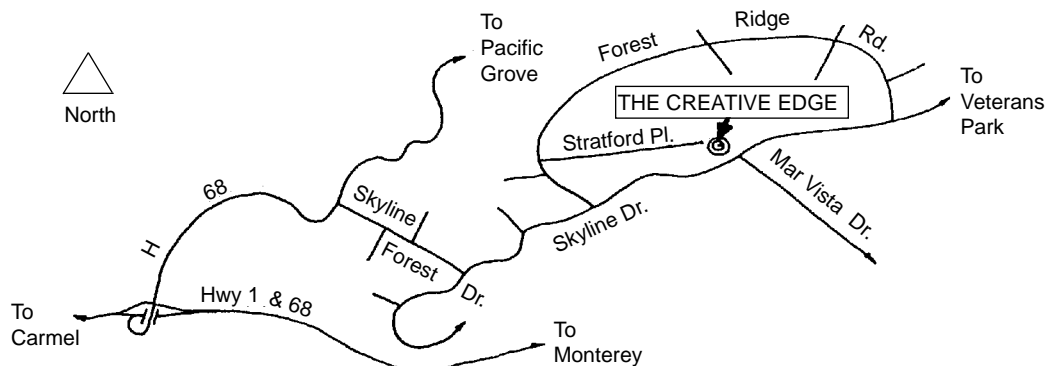
Explore with the core fellowship of Creative Edge Artist-Directors. Away from busy lives for either one or two days in a small intimate group, we leisurely seek the authenticity of our soul’s call. Although primarily a weekend of self discovery, we open to the power of collective energies and guest facilitators to bring and share their special talents with us.

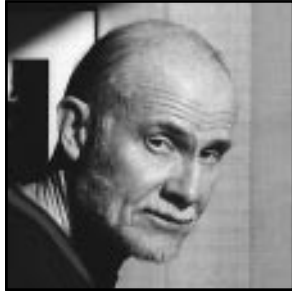
Forming a safe circle of support for dreams, sharing and contemplation, we use lots of free time to follow our personal muse with reading, writing and other creative work. Mask-making, paints and clay are available in the studio. Lunch is provided. Typically offered each year in the spring & fall, 9 a.m.—5 p.m.

Special Workshops & Seminars:

Special workshops and seminars are scheduled throughout the year with different facilitators. Call for information or addition to the mailing list.

Reservations are made by sending your check payable to The Creative Edge. There is a \$20 handling fee for refunds.





Donald William Mathews is an artist, educator and Founding Director of The Creative Edge where he teaches and edits the newsletter. He has diverse degrees and professional experience with teaching credentials in education, management, fine arts, engineering and mathematics. He has studied and gained wide experience in various psychologies and other disciplines searching for a deep understanding of the human experience, creativity and spirituality.

“Come with me into the great hall of my heart. I will light the candle of my thoughts and I invite you to light yours.”

—Donald Mathews

In particular, he has been involved over the years with the Association of Transpersonal Psychology and Process Oriented Psychology. He facilitates trust and intimacy in order to find wisdom from individuals and groups based on his continuing journey learning from life. Married over forty years to his musician wife Lou, they have three daughters and seven Grandchildren.



Ann McSwiggin is an artist, teacher, writer, healer, and dream worker whose greatest desire is to celebrate the mystery of life in all its uncensored splendor. In seeking the creative spiritual connection, she is committed to being fully alive. She has been a presenter, leader and participant in many small groups over the last 25 years. She has facilitated Touch Drawing for the last two years and has found this process to be enlightening, healing, mysterious, magical, and sometimes just pure fun.

“Come celebrate the mystery of life in all its uncensored splendor!”

—Ann McSwiggin

A Creative Arts Retreat Weekend with Touch Drawing: March 13-14, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Touch Drawing is a very simple, playful, crude printmaking process in a setting blessed with

Monthly Dream Work Seminars:

By experiencing the vital images and wisdom of each other’s dreams shared as our own, we gain an in-depth understanding of our selves and our common human experience. Limited to eight venturesome people seeking spiritual depth.

January—May & August—November:
9 a.m.- noon on the 3rd Saturday of each month,

Creative Development & Dreams:

Donald Mathews responds to personal questions involving development of one’s creative process through artistic expression and the use of dreams as an intuitive resource (E-Mail, Telephone or other exchanges). This usually involves an intimate exchange seeking hidden talents, thus activating the individual’s deeper resources. Sliding scale fee: \$25-35 each hour’s work.

sacred intention. It is a simple way to by-pass linear thinking and tap into soul’s essence—a way of letting soul be it’s own authentic self without thought, judgment or analysis. Tissue paper is placed on top of a board rolled with oil paint. Then fingers, hands and even nails are used as drawing tools while listening to continuous soft drumming and chanting. Images come forth of every kind and nature, flowing freely, telling their own stories and moving forth to be whatever they wish to be. The second part of the process is sacred witnessing of evoked images and sharing personal processes in the supportive group formed with the core fellowship of Creative Edge Artist-Directors..

Fee: \$95, Saturday only: \$50. Lunch provided. (\$80/\$45 prior to March 1,)

Computer Users:

Adobe Systems Inc. provides an ideal cross-computer program for distribution with their PDF file format. PDF files are read by Adobe’s free Acrobat Reader (AR) software available for download at <<http://www.adobe.com>>. (There are links to Adobe from the CE Web site.) This system works on all types of computers and gives an easily read presentation adjustable in

format with a menu click for different size screens. Buttons allow viewers to conveniently jump around to different pages. Images are in color! Desired hard copies may be printed on your own printer. PDF files with all past newsletters and other materials are already available at the CE Web site! Downloading is quick and easy because of compression technology.

Mail to:
The Creative Edge
8 Stratford Place
Monterey, CA
93940

or call:
Donald Mathews
(831) 373-7809

Registration Form:

Name: _____ Telephone: () _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Amount enclosed: \$ _____ E-mail: _____
 Please register me for the _____ Seminar/program. Date(s): _____
Please send: Map Motel information Back copies of Thoughts on Creativity (\$5)
 Information flyer for the _____ Seminar/program(s)
 Please accept my donation. Friend (\$5 plus), Associate Member (\$25 plus) or Patron (\$100 plus)
 Please change my mailing address. Please remove my name from your mailing list.



"Each human being is a galaxy... Yet we live most of life superficially, unaware of our vast inner world."

—Jay O'Callahan

Jay O'Callahan has been creating and performing stories now for over 20 years. Time magazine called him "a genius among storytellers...." "A virtuoso," echoed the Boston Globe.

Jay O'Callahan crafts the details of ordinary life into extraordinary stories containing deep spiritual wisdom. There are no gimmicks or clever tricks opting for the quick response so often found in today's entertainment. Rather, with artist's imagination and attention to authentic detail, he brings to life his personal perception of experience in telling the unfolding story. Then, combining his intimacy with the audience's deeper experience, participants discover their own stories.

**Finding & Telling Stories
A Weekend Workshop
May 7—9, 1999**

In the warmth and trust of a special Monterey home, Jay will give a small supportive group the opportunity to experience this highly unique creative process. We will playfully examine rich stories hidden in our memories. "We are beings in a universe that is alive with creativity, with wonder." says Jay... Wanna dance?"

Fri.: 7—9 p.m., Sat.: 9 a.m.— 4 p.m. (with lunch), Sunday: 9 a.m. — noon.

Fee: \$240 (\$220 before April 1, 1999). Limit 12.



"Dreams are our greatest and truest teachers, as they reflect our basic aspects in constantly creative variations."

—Brugh Joy

W. Brugh Joy, M.D. is an extraordinary guide! In the dream realm, he follows personal images and stories to their mythical roots like a fine artist follows the mysterious trail of the muse.

By exploring the divine images, characters, and stories of our dreams and building personal relationships with them, a new profound resource is born in us for both creative expression and life's continuing adventure. This study group is for exploring the mysteries reflected in dreams & daily life.

His book *Avalanche: Heretical Reflections on the Dark and Light* tells of the dark and disowned portions of the human psyche.

**Divine Mystery Reflected In
Dreams & Daily Life:
A Weekend Study Group
October 29—31**

Friday Evening: 7-10 P.M.
Saturday: 9 A.M. to 9 P.M.
Sunday: 9 A.M. to noon

**Fee: \$385 (\$360 prior to September 1, 1999).
Limited to 27.**



"My wish is that you can rest, and let go of this massive need to find yourself...relax—your soul will find you."

—John O'Donohue

There is a deep beauty hidden in the luminosity at the heart of soul... hidden behind the dull facade of our daily lives. Only in your solitude will you actually find it, find the neglected beauty of your life!"

John O'Donohue is a poet, priest, philosopher and scholar from Conamara, Ireland. Born and raised in County Clare, he was awarded a Ph.D. in Philosophical Theology from the German University of Tübingen in 1990. He has recently been delighting audiences at intimate seminars and major international conferences. He is a true storyteller, dynamic teacher and prolific writer.

John O'Donohue speaks to the great and relevant themes of life with a fresh voice unencumbered with religious dogma! He is unafraid to intelligently challenge many prevailing assumptions, bringing them to earth with poetry, stories and other human experiences. With the ease and richness of a Celtic Bard, he spontaneously dialogs with the audience, bringing a warm intimacy to subjects of profound depth.

An Evening Talk (To be scheduled):

A few professionally recorded two audio tape sets of the February 26, 1998 talk and the Q&A session are available for \$17 plus \$ 3 shipping and handling from Oral Traditions Archives (831) 663-1682.



A dream: *Feeling vulnerable inside a well lighted space, I close large barn doors against the darkness outside and place a lock through the hasp loop. My relief is short lived as the loop, to my amazement, slowly parts allowing the doors to open again. I sense a powerful alien presence behind the door, and instinctively, I reach behind the door with my hand. I feel a figure there! Then, I am wrestling with it—an amorphous, unclothed, vaguely human shape. Strangely, as I wrestle with it, I become aware I don't know if it is trying to harm me or love me!*

This dream came at a time when I was wrestling to bring a major design project into form (the barn). I was pushing ahead carrying many aspects of the project myself (to close the barn doors). In light of my creative vision, I felt sure the project could move forward toward completion. However, with my singular effort, I was surprised to find others on the team were not yet behind the work—bringing necessary support to complete the project (the doors opened again). Consequently, a wrestling with the relationship issue began, both personally and collectively.

In search of meaning for the dream. I immediately thought of Jacob from the biblical story. He was a successful wanderer who overreached—fell out of relationship with his brother. He too dreamt (Genesis 28:12) and wrestled in the night (Genesis 32:24)! I believe much can be learned about the creative process from this important age old story.

As I wrestled with the process, I felt a whole gambit of emotions. For awhile feelings of personal rejection and discouragement came from having put so much of myself into the project—actually all good work. But with the dream, also came the realization *there really was more work to be done at this stage of the project* (the blessing).

In my creative success, finding an excellent design, I had unconsciously overreached in my relationship with other members of the project team. Feeling the pressure of self-imposed time limits for the project and seeing a possible way to make it happen, I essentially tried to carry the group project all by myself! But life intervened with a personally painful

blessing—to slow down and build community support first. To be spiritually alive we need both creativity and relationship! It was up to me to put this important teaching into practice—to find the blessing of love in the issue I was wrestling with rather than harm.

When we leave our well-lighted secure spaces in search of something in the dark that calls us—become a wanderer—many unforeseen adventures with unpredictable outcomes greet us. They happen in the darkness where spirits dwell and dreams come forth. I believe the creative moment comes when we chose to stay and wrestle in the darkness with what has been found until the issue yields a blessing. Often it is associated with what we fear most. In the process, we are both wounded and transformed—receive a new identity!

Sometimes a straight forward blessing is given to us in a dream. Jacob dreamt of angels moving back and forth on a ladder between heaven and earth providing God's blessing on his state of darkness and uncertainty. Other times we must wrestle in fear with what has found us until something gives—what has been supporting us or what we have taken a stand on (Jacob's thigh). Although wounded and given the opportunity to quit, if we continue to wrestle in the darkness with the issue until light of dawn (insight) forces a blessing from it, we creatively contribute to the task at hand and to evolution. (Jacob's new name was Israel or God struggles). Creation is still unfolding and the mystery of God does continue to struggle with it. However, our creative participation is essential to Divine success!

Often what we are wrestling with is our own unknown or unclaimed genius or genie. Genius is the spirit of a place, person, group or time. It is our intellectual and creative power. Our potential for loving relationship is also a part of the human genius. Although natural or native to each of us, our genius is often hidden. Sometimes we feel victimized by it. Sometimes genius is considered to be supernatural or divine and therefore not ours. Ultimately, when we have lived long enough to wrestle and find blessings in some of the terrible mysteries of existence including death, we finally become one with the creative genius of our soul. Thus we find our soul's voice and found a new nation with the genius in our transformed being.

Jacob...came to a certain place, and stayed there all night because the sun had set... And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord,...I am with you and will keep you wherever you go,..."
—Genesis 28:11-15

And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob's thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Tell me, I pray, your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him.
—Genesis 32: 24-29



DOC, Plainfield, IN

A friend of mine who receives your newsletter asked me to send you some of my poetry. Here is one to start.

WE BELONG TOGETHER

While I was walking one morning
humming an R&B's tune...
My soul was awakened by the rising sun
burning in the vast blue sky...

I wondered where all the tree's are?
Three years and no trees—just razor wire.

I thought...
What color is green, real dark grassy green...
It is Spring to a tree!
Like in Autumn when colors appear
red, yellow and brown leaves falling
sailing through the wind
winding slowly
swirling around
to the ground.

A memory almost forgotten!

But in time, maybe real soon
I'll climb up a tree.
Why not—it's free!

I cross my heart, dear God—
I'll never again pass a tree without saying
"Hi!"
Nor will I ever cut a tree down for it will
cry...
Tree tears would break my heart
because non-manipulative tears just hurt!
To hear someone saying timber-r-r-r...
It tears me apart
for if the tree can't breathe
I can't breathe!

I love trees and trees love me...
One in the spirit I be, and be, and be...
We belong together me and the trees!
I love trees, trees, trees!

L. "Carl" Gilchrist DOC #955634, PCF D3-9L
727 Moon Rd., Plainfield, IN 46168-9400

Kentfield, CA

THE FIRST BODHISATTVA

I

I went to the horizon, where the Universe ends,
intending to cross that threshold, and step into the Abyss.
It was the only place I'd never been, and I was tired of all the others.

II

In truth, I was tired of everything:

Tired of being born, and dying;
Tired of being the Child—and the Wise Old Man,
The Maiden—and the Queen,
The Fool—and the Shaman.
Tired of all of them.

I was tired of Youth—and Age;
of Solitude and Company,
of Despair, and of Hope, too;
of Ecstasy and Sorrow,
of Fear—and Love.
Yes! Tired even of Love.

III

Tired of Life and tired of death, I stood at the edge and asked:
Wouldn't it be nice to have nothing to be tired of?
To be nothing?

And, because the place was holy, I was answered;

A Voice spoke from the Abyss, saying:

*Avalokiteshvara, you do not need
another birth, or life, or death.*

You may go to Nothingness now.

*But, if you choose, you may fide on
and do what is yours to do.*

Then a new and awful sound broke across the Cosmos
like a wave, so vast it filled up the space
between the stars, filled it with pain:

The voices of all the worlds, joined in a common grief,
were wailing as one, mourning my departure.

I understood then what was mine to do.

I knew I could—and would, for I was destined to it—
end the agony from which that sound came.

IV

I did not choose Life—Life had already chosen me.
My weariness dropped away, and a great comfort took its place.

I turned my back upon the Abyss and spoke to myself in a
whisper; but my words went forth as if in a mighty roar
that pushed the sound of pain away, dissolved it.

And replaced it with a promise that would remain in every world,
would hang there, resonating like a chord of music too sweet
to disappear or ever be forgotten. These few words:

I abandon no one.

All shall go before me.

Rick Nelson



Willets, CA

This was inspired by your newsletter!

MEETING YOUR SOUL

My wish is that you can rest, and let go of this massive need to find yourself ... relax—your soul will find you.

—John O'Donahue

Okay John, imagine what happens when your soul does find you.

From the unlimited infinite void on God's lap where souls hang out your's arrives and looks around. You are doing your best to relax by watching a good video and then getting in the Jacuzzi with your Walkman listening to your favorite tunes.

You think something is wrong with the Walkman because it keeps malfunctioning and you keep imagining this voice is saying, "Hey you, yes you! Hello, hello. Heaven calling!" So you take off your Walkman and grab the book you've been wanting to read but before you can open it up you get this jolt of electricity and jump out of the tub.

Then you hear in the middle of your skull, "Do I have your attention yet?"

What's going on? Who are you?" you ask.

"Your soul! Who do you think. I guess you aren't used to listening to me," goes this sarcastic voice.

"Is this some kind of virtual reality trick? Aren't you invading my personal space?" you ask a bit annoyed.

"It really isn't my idea. This guy at the workshop you went to promised I'd show up if you'd relax. Donahue's his name. So I figured what you were doing was inviting me for a visit. I don't exactly call what you are doing relaxing but each to his own."

"So you are my soul?" you ask for reassurance.

"Of course. Now what can I do for you?"

"Well do your thing, whatever it is. How am I supposed to know?" you ask.

"What can I do? Where would I start?" asks your soul. "Looks like you have this long list of can'ts and just a short list of cans. You've only claimed a few friends and a couple of enemies out of the billions here. You've managed to partially disable your body with diseases, aches and pains. You are insistent on using one of the more crude methods of communication, words, and act as if you can't connect to another by just a thought. You carefully save your love to give to only a few when in fact there is no limit to it. You wallow in fear, pity, and anger as if joy had to be rationed out. And then there is the pollution and filth you take for granted along with war, famine and cruelty. When you do manage to shine a little light you get into arguments about it and who should take credit and who should be served as if there was a shortage of anything."

After a pause your soul continues, "I heard it was bad down here but this is much worse than I expected. You tell me what I'm supposed to do for you?"

"I thought you had that all worked out," you say.

"Sure I do, that's why I hang out in heaven, not with the likes of you."

"Can you just give me a few hints on how to live a better life," says you.

"If I did you wouldn't believe me. We periodically send messages down and for all those messages just look at yourself. You've taken the most beautiful image of creation and act as if it is not worthy of the slightest love and appreciation," says the soul.

"You mean, the earth? Yeah, I know, we're working on it," you say.

"Earth is doing just fine, it will take

care of itself. As usual you're way off base. The most beautiful image of creation is YOU! You are the thing you show the least love and appreciation for. If you loved yourself and the rest of your earthling buddies did the same this place would transform instantly," your soul declares vehemently. "But I'm not placing any bets on it. This is more like a prison full of guilt ridden convicts who don't deserve any better, not a home. I really don't feel that welcome but thanks for the invite."

Before you know what to say, your soul continues, "Look, I'm going back to the great infinite void for a while." The exasperation is obvious. "I got some bliss to lap up. Don't call me, I'll call you."

Well John, are you sure we are ready for our soul to find us?

Max Zbitnoff

Pacific Grove, CA

ARE YOU HUNGRY?

What hunger haunts you when you know you want but not what you want hunger for the unknown, untried, unlearned?

What hunger hurts you? in the height of night takes away your sleep, your peace fills you with empty longing

What hunger devours you? the uneaten life What hunger starves you? an untasted world

What hunger holds you in its skinny arms? Which hunger speaks your name?

Julie Houy



Carmel, CA

UNTITLED

I am the wind
that carries the scent of somewhere else,
... that lifts a prayer.
I am the sound of children in play,
sea spray...
feather... stone.

I am the chase... the catch,
the fallen tree to sit upon for rest.
I am desire for springtime.
I am the warm pond
from which the squiggle of new life forms.

Portsmouth, NH

BODY POEM III
(At 68)

Listen,
there are still many things to love...

showering, soaping
skin of belly and breast

lying in bed in the morning,
resting the hand
in the warm place
under the breast,
feeling the heart
beat

loving still
sweet acquaintance
with
the private parts

and
rising from the bed
from white sheets
and pale blankets,

tracing the warm outline
where the body has just lain,

the palpable essence
that lingers

Anne De Wees

I am anticipation on waters' edge.
I am the fallen leaf,
the dream,
the laugh in a surprise,
a song of inspiration,
... the glory of God.

I am the furnace, anvil,
sting of hammer on steel.
I am this moment,
... the next step,
the weapon of love,
the sparkle in your eye,
sweat from pushing,
allowing in the open hand.

I am the courage in a "yes" and "no,"
a whistle in the dark,
a flag unfurled,
sons' father... fathers' son.

I am the pollen of wildflowers
on the legs of honeybees...
the jab of fear in jealousy,
the broken law of gravity.

I am the silence before the sound.

I am the intended blow withheld.

I am the wound of mortality,
an avalanche of creativity,
a dance of contradiction,
desperate invocation...
nobility on it's knees.

I am surrender.
I am the call of beauty.
I am the open space in a poem.

Gary Ibsen.

Carmel, CA

SCENT OF JASMINE
(Birthday Poem for Rosa Doner)

Your beauty is everywhere.

Your hair, long and gray, hangs like Spanish moss
on the pines in Point Lobos; your eyes have
the quickness of the hummingbird darting
from purple fuchsia to white jasmine;
your voice, the sweetness of a gentle rain,
the sound of raindrops; your body, the grace
of the cypress, limbs twisting and swaying,
dancing, dancing in the morning wind.

No way to tell which birthday: so alive
to each moment, you see with such freshness
the beauty around you; are that beauty,
outside of time, whole, beyond yearly birthdays;
glow with the same spirit that animates
moss and hummingbird, rain and cypress,
the same spirit that fills your garden

with the scent of jasmine.

Elliot Roberts

*Carmel, CA***SPLILT MILK: TALES
FROM THE NURSERY**

the milk's in the batter,
the milk's in the batter,
what does it matter,
if the milk's in the batter?

hickory-dickery dock
a child raced round the clock,
the girl fell down and broke
her crown,
a man chased right behind her.
the clock struck one,
the man fell dumb
and suddenly climbed
right up inside her.

the man beats the child
the man beats the girl
the child hates the man
the girl hates the man

the man rapes his daughter
the man rapes his wife
the man rapes his girlfriend
they all grow to hate the man
and so—many women learn
to hate men,
and men hate themselves
and women, too

the man finds an enemy,
the man finds the enemy,
the enemy rapes his wife,
the enemy rapes his daughter:

the man kills the enemy
and then he kills himself.

But the story doesn't end here—
it goes on and on ad-infinitem,
Until the spell is broken.

Everybody knows this story:
It's as old as time and as young as
nursery rhymes.

*Anya Kucharev**DOC, Tennessee Colony, TX*

I once was a real loud mouth and too big for
my britches, but I learned the hard way to
“tone it down” and it has been better for me.

**GETTING OVER THE
COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN
or Better Said—Lust Isn't Love**

From all I've gathered,
love is ridiculously queer,
some believe it means
never having to say you're sorry—
love is a rose and a hammer,
both blind and all—seeing,
some say it makes the world
go round and round and round...
I say it's often life's fatal error.

From all I've experienced
love is better left for others,
many say it fades when left alone
or absence might make the heart fonder—
love is a two way street...
think about it...
some say it makes you normal
in a world gone insane...
I say it's often life's fatal error.

From all I've learned this time around
rather than suffer the consequences I've
deemed love to be out-of-bounds for me,
myself and I—we know each other well
enough to avoid the sorrow—
we're buddies who don't need the
nervous habit they call
L-o-v-e...
love is only meant to make us
socially acceptable or
thoughtlessly open and close to
a legitimate reason for existing
when there are other alternatives,
love is an illusion...
an attachment...
just one more cheap, inert, impermanent
excitement—the universal outhouse for
the narrow-minded—a pit without bottom...
I say it's life's most fatal error.

*Chester HAAS III DOC #327322 BC-1B-08
Coffield Unit, Rt. 1, Box 150
Tennessee Colony, TX 75884*

*Carmel, CA***TO SURVIVE LOSS**

Go outside yourself. (Make yourself go outside.) Go someplace you've never been before. Help someone else who needs help. Focus on a project. Learn something new. Hurt. Realize that hurt is wanting what you can't have. Let go of that want, and want again. Want what's possible. Make something for someone. Develop a talent. Tell someone you love that you love them. Make a small change. Make a big change. Make yourself get involved with those around you. Scream. Strike out against the pain. Exhaust yourself dancing. Then, go to sleep with a cat curled up against you. Hug a dog. (or a cat or a rabbit or a horse or anything at all to stop the pain. Even for a moment, stop the pain.) Choose not to be miserable. Treat yourself. Treat yourself to a deliciously-long, hot bath or a shower and a bar of sweet-smelling watermelon soap. Eat a piece of your favorite food. (Eat another piece.) Get a massage. Lose yourself in your favorite music. (Turn it up, and lose yourself again.) Buy yourself a present that's fun and colorful and bright. Take a walk. Take a long deep breath. (Take another one.) Study the lines of something beautiful. Marvel at its beauty. Find words that touch your heart—from books, from films—and tape them inside, outside cupboard doors, so that everytime you look at them, you smile. Lose yourself in their strength. Lose yourself in a new dream. Lose yourself in a children's book where magic is real and dreams all come true. Find a rainbow in the darkness. Find a rainbow in the darkness 'round the full moon on an oh-so-cloudy night. Believe. (Life is full of magic.) Believe yourself to be on your way to a new dream coming true.

Tay Scott



DOC, Michigan City, IN

Since my 16 year-old sisters death last year, I have trudged an overwhelming path of despair. The emotional shock waves were overpowering, and came in patterns interfaced with my emotional, physical, intellectual, social and spiritual grids. I was in total meltdown.

I remember writing you saying “I get this feeling of vertigo and my entire feeling and perception grids go into overload. I have to grit my teeth, hold my breath, and push it all down!” When you wrote back you said to expand on that in my journals. I did and it became my refuge. At that point I interpreted your letter as “Stand Against the Storm!” As on other occasions such as my son Eli’s (threatened) health, your sound advice was a light in otherwise violent waters.

A new fusing has taken place. A process of the “Inner-me” aligning with the “Outer-me” For a long time in my life I lived two lives—what people saw outside and what was really going on inside of me. I learned what outward signs of attention would please. I learned to put up a good front. As if donning masks, I’d cut my hair to the “norm style,” pick out clothes “in style” and use body language to impress others around me. Over time I have come to realize that all I’ve achieved is to excel at hiding truly serious problems or any pain, etc.

I may be making a big deal of what most people call growing up—but the process of “becoming” is so peaceful and yet exposed at the same time, perhaps fear can at times be our ally. As humans we are apt to look outside ourselves for the answers. I was doing just that till you gave me a nudge. It was two sentences that really got my attention. You said, “Sooner or later, we must all embrace all the stuff of our life experience and that also means trying to get a clear look at who we really are beneath all the layers of protection developed over our lifetime.” Those words re-vamped my entire mainframe and I began anew at that point.

I think that we have been given a gift, posted down from our Neolithic brothers. It is creativity—the ability to try new things, stumble, but pick ourselves back up and learn something new each time. Me, I’ll stick to the learning process. I enjoy the process of becoming whole too much. I just need bigger Band-Aids than most people!

Robert Burgess, DOC #954722, B-526, ISP
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DOC, Plainfield, IN

Enclosed you find another drawing. It too was done in pencil. I named this portrait “Waiting” and I even wrote a little essay to go with it. Your words really encouraged me to really put my best effort into my drawings and I can now express myself even more freely than ever. Thank You...



WAITING

**And all is always now while I wait
It’s timing from above that’s said to be perfection.
And chemistry by far has to equate, but waiting
to feel its worth is affection.**

**Waiting alone knows no ones heart while it murmurs.
Alone waiting knows no ones fears and tearing eyes
Waiting like darkness keeps me slumbering, sleeping
Softly towards the cliffs edge so high.**

**Waiting has got to be easier anywhere else than here,
or is that a lie?
Waiting for freedom from the worlds hold, waiting for
the nights that won’t be so cold.
Waiting for a friend who will stand by my side.
Hand in hand towards goodness abreast.
Anticipating my walk away from this razor city
is enough
Giving up the wait for I’m waiting no more.**

**Waiting is hearing my heart pounding in sympathy,
but like everything else the waiting soon comes to and end.
Then a deep breath, a sigh of relief that waiting
brings, a smile, a laugh, a hug, a kiss for you
at last my one and only, my friend.**

Ray Saunders DOC #906379 ISP
727 Moon Rd., Plainfield, IN 46168



San Antonio, TX

One morning a wonderful poem came to me about depression...the words sounded just perfect, but I did not get up and write down the words. Never having been a depressed person, at least not depressed for a long period of time, I could not imagine why that particular poem came to me and why I could not write it down. Two mornings later I awoke at 2:00 a.m. The thoughts rolled over me like flouring a roast for Sunday morning.

I find it hard for me to cry....perhaps I just cry on the inside, but tears just do not show. My heart trembles, and my stomach squeezes up tight, and I find my throat tightening as if in a scream, but tears just do not flow.

I wish I could have changed a great many things about my life and my decisions ...but as I look back, time manages to slip away...When my days on this earth are over, there really is nothing of any greatness to show that I have been here.

The last lines of the poem are kind of a fatalistic thought that each of us are given just so much time on earth and like the material in a tapestry or quilt hanging on a wall, we are given choices of the patterns that make up our lives. We can weave our lives into something beautiful or just spin the tapestry into a mixture of hodgepodge colors that lead nowhere and say nothing of who we really are. What a mystery each person's life truly is until we uncover the true fiber contents.

I guess the capping of the entire poem came from the realization that a lot more than half of my life is over, and I must have just played away the time, enjoying myself and trying to please others. Suddenly life becomes delicate and like antique lace, becomes fragile to the touch. One is almost afraid to handle the goods for fear that all that will be left is a pile of flimsy, decaying threads of life.

BLANKET OF TEARS

**A blanket of blinding tears crashed over me
Birthed from smoldering waves far out to sea.
Booming, roaring they came surging in,
'Til my languid soul bursts free of the gyrating spin.**

**Oh, could I be young again and boulder strong,
And face the tomorrow to choose right from wrong.
Oh, might I take up my dusty, creaking soul
And make accomplishments my erstwhile goal.**

**I cannot contemplate long, nor search the wild
Wishing I could again be just a mere child,
For knowledge and wisdom comes too late in life,
For I ponder now—what have I done—mother & wife?**

**One never knows how many lives have been saved,
Or how many forgotten flags have been waved.
My advice is to put away that blanket of anxious tears
And let happiness wipe away all ungrounded fears.**

**One may hide in dark shadows and give in to earthly pain,
Or one may look to the rainbow that cometh after the rain.
The truth is—life is as long or short as God commands it to be
But how we use the time given—that is up to you and to me.**

Shirley Smalley Price

Thank you for your letters and offerings. Keep them coming. Look for emerging themes that resonate with your own intuitions and creative works. I also invite you to comment on how these sharings facilitate your own life journey. (I will add your address if you approve.)

The Editor.