



**NEWSLETTER #36
Spring 2002**

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Check out:

Jay O'Callahan—Coming May 10-12, 2002!

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: 3/22/02

Board of Directors:

Marlie Avant
Shanja Kirstann
Donald W. Mathews
Kyla McCollam
Barbara Rose Shuler
Illia Thompson
Patricia Waldin

Patrons:

Marlie Avant
Anne Victoria Ellwanger
Joshep Johnson
Don & Lou Mathews
Kyla McCollam
Sandra Peters
Illia Thompson



THE NEWS

Spring 2002

No. 36

Programs Scheduled: (See pages 4-6)

• Jay O'Callahan	Finding & Telling Stories (Full)	May 10-12, 7 p.m.
• Donald Mathews	Dream Work Seminar Creative Arts Fellowship Creative Development & Dreams	Continuing Monthly, 1st Sat-9 a.m. E-mail or as scheduled

The Creative Edge welcomes two new CE Board members! Shanja Kirstann and Illia Thompson both bring their talent and work to our offerings.

Shanja Kirstann, M.S.W., founder of The Open Way, brings over 25 years experience to her work in transpersonal counseling, lifecoaching, bodywork and teaching at San Francisco Bay area universities including SF Arts Institute, JFK, UCSF Medical School and presently at the University of Creation Spirituality with Matthew Fox.

She is a gifted evocateur—assisting others with heart and humor in gentle, yet profound journeys of transformation and spiritual awakening. Her holistic approach is a unique synthesis of eastern and western spiritual practices, medicine wheel wisdom, depth psychology, dreamwork and the expressive arts.

Shanja currently has a private practice in Carmel in which she assists individuals through practical lifecoaching skills to honor their own soul callings and to bring forth their gifts into life.

Illia Thompson, author of *Moments* and *Gracious Seasons*, teaches creative writing at Monterey Peninsula College and is a journaling workshop leader throughout California. She also leads groups in Mexico and aboard cruise ships.

Illia is dedicated to sharing her knowledge and love of writing. She is a master at creating a safe and supportive place in which to learn. She inspires simplicity, clarity, and passion as groups recognize the treasures of keeping a record of their lives in a new way.

A'musings returns expanded with more thoughts on creativity from our new seven member Creative Edge Board.

If you haven't checked out Letter Box On Line at our web site, there is a rich collection of totally different E-mail submissions available monthly from readers. Send your work now for either Letter Box!

DWM

New & renewed Members of the Creative Edge:

Patrons: Marlie Avant, Ann Victoria Ellwanger, Joseph Johnson, Don & Lou Mathews, Kyla McCollam, Sandra Peters, Illia Thompson, CA.

Associate Members: LaVerna Brown, Patricia Brown, Jean Callahan Crowe, Laura Carley, Adriana Farkouh, Franz Spickhoff, CA.

Friends: Elizabeth Whitten, VA; John Dotson, Sharon Hermes, Martha Torres, CA.



Marlie Avant



I could muse right now that I am struggling with writer's block and slip into a sense of fear and frustration that I will never be able to

meet Don's deadline and certainly never have anything worthwhile to say.

But, my heart is at peace and so instead I allow this moment to simply be what it is...quiet and with very few words. I imagine I am cultivating a grateful

heart which is at peace with whatever is and so sits content gazing upon an almost blank screen...feeling so blessed to be a part of all that exquisitely unfolds in its own time.

Shanja Kirstann



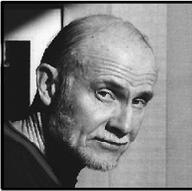
Today, as I sit quietly on my back porch in the sun and reflect on the role that creativity has played in my life, I am flooded with images and memories: *Trudging*

through snowdrifts with my camera to capture the single water drop dangling from the solitary icicle. Painting landscapes on the rocky shores of Maine. Dancing with streaming colored scarves to classical music under the Redwoods. Releasing anger and tenderness through clay, sadness through color, confusion through

writing. Grief poems pouring through the pen upon seeing a deer struck by a racing auto on the Oakland Freeway. Tears of joy while singing in morning meditations.

The images go on, as I recall orchestrating spaces for others

Donald Mathews



In a recent dream, I head out to an open road leading off to the distant hills. The road is a main thoroughfare. I am carrying only a book I am reading.

When I reach the road, I stick out my thumb to catch a ride. I am excited about the possibilities!

You may recall these similar themes from recent A'musings of mine: The pause that refreshes. The purpose of life is the

pleasure of life itself. Change is in the air. Letting go of old ways. Now this dream! The dream has the same theme of change I have been following for the last several years! Only now action has been initiated! It is exciting and frightening at the same time!

Kyla McCollam



A shadowy, masculine character in my dream says to me, "You're trying to be funny—that comes later." As I "try" to comprehend this message from my

soul, I realize that I have a need to make others laugh and appreciate me, and I am aware that this requires effort and is not always successful. So, the idea arises that I could ease up and allow for the growth and development, accept this assurance that, later, more humor will be available. A

certain amount of knowing exists about this potential, this promise from my unconscious.

To be truly funny is outrageous, unruly, fun, on the edge of truth, stimulating and revealing of polarities of dark

Barbara Rose Shuler



Recently, I woke from a dream that made me laugh. It seemed to represent the wonderfully fecund chaos that artists

often dwell in. Here it is:

The Queen and her family invited some dangerously odd artists and their friends, including me, to breakfast. We were to meet the royals in a place of exquisite nature on a

weather-perfect day. But plans evidently changed as the Queen instead arrived with her entourage at the artists' retreat, high up a moist, chilly mountainside in the woods where canvases extended way beyond their easels in a culture of intentional

Illia Thompson



Cherishing and encouraging artistic endeavors, Donald Mathews graciously offers of his time, place and energy, to support these undefinable

processes that enliven the spirit.

One Saturday morning, over a decade ago, I arrive at Donald's home, shyly bringing a recently crafted poem. A dozen or so people meet in a circle, speak their names, share current thoughts before sitting in communal

silence, after which Donald reads a randomly selected quote from Lao-tzu's Tao Te Ching which somehow always "fits" the current mood. We then have the opportunity to express our gleanings from the quiet. Next a social break, followed by time to share what creative work

Patty Waldin



"Escaping from Creative Limbo"

An unfulfilled commitment... a looming deadline... and my own foul mood.

No inspiration... no insight to draw upon... priorities tangled in disarray--

What is stopping this unfocused "i" from becoming the Creative I? Lifting my attention up and out, I witness

how my peevish self-nagging has fruitlessly sown and harvested its own confusions...

Vision clearing, I awaken to sunlight through newly unfurled birch leaves, inches beyond my open window.



Marlie Avant

Shanja Kirstann

to connect to their creative spirit: *Vision-questing in the wilderness, chanting and drumming in the sweatlodge, ecstatic dancing under the full moon around the blazing fire, ritual theatre, magical pilgrimages, and creative soulwork circles.*

All my life, this call to the creative life has been a persistent passion. I have witnessed myself and others being transformed by the healing powers of beauty, I have experienced the amazing unfoldment of soul through creative images. But my attention is drawn to something much more

subtle here—and that is a taste of pure Beingness, which is at the heart of every creative act.

What I have learned about the time I've spent in the creative process has taught me about the deeper mysteries of

Donald Mathews

Several months ago, my heart seemed to stop providing blood and I momentarily passed out. Many tests only affirmed my good health and now I have a recorder implanted in my chest to catch the mysterious process should it occur again. I feel great and only miss driving myself

when I want to go somewhere. Sometimes it takes such an experience to motivate change!

The Universe acts in strange ways! Downsizing and simplifying are often painful and disruptive as we cling to old ways and responsibilities. Clearly in our

society many are struggling with the changes brought about by recent world events. Yet, life often drops us into the most creative possibilities as old ties are broken for us. How easily I get caught up in what I call the logistics of life—the many responsibilities of family

Kyla McCollam

and humanity. Since the dream—I may not be funnier, yet I have found some humor in “trying situations” and had some hilarious times. So far, it seems like I'm more the recipient or finder of humor than the server of it.

The Brugh Joy weekend highlighted for me the service of witnessing another's process as my own. Turning disgust into a delicately tuned compassionate humor for situations that before festered with pain and suffering. I have had reservations about my passivity and am finding acceptance for this part of

my nature. finding how I am served by those experiences which seem to thwart and frustrate—as honing the maturation of my heart into states of innate harmony and the unconditional acceptance.

There is such satisfaction in the

Barbara Rose Shuler

madness. Two famous painters lived here. One man was cerebral and philosophical, given to pontificating with impossible metaphors about the metaphysics of artistic expression. The other, wild and flamboyant, grasped at anything with color to create with,

including my clothing which he tore off my body and swiftly turned it into a dramatic art piece. I thereupon took my place, naked, in a bathtub of water where I remained on display as if part of breakfast entertainment. The Queen observed all this in the manner of one

strolling through a museum exhibit that charmed her. I thought this peculiar since very little of the scene or the art appealed to me, except for a small self-portrait of the philosopher, his face etched into a painting of the mountainside and sky.

Illia Thompson

we have chosen to bring.

The show begins, as rich as any offering, as varied as the colors in a prism. Paintings and Poetry, Collages and Ceramics, The Ancient Art of Placement and the New Art of Photo Shop. Carvings

and Quiltings. Story Telling and Readings from Ongoing Opuses. Music and Dance. Fantasy and Fables. Any of these, and more, may appear on the playbill. In this space, the critics step outside and appreciation enters. The cast of players in each production changes, yet each

morning is worthy of a standing ovation.

My initial wavering voice now speaks poetry easily. My paintings debut on Saturday mornings, receive courage to enter shows to be more widely viewed. Invigorated by witnessing other's

Patty Waldin

A chestnut-backed chickadee settles onto the feeder. Eyeing me, he pertly snatches seeds and flits away... Three juncos now balance upon the still swaying feeder. They scatter much seed before shelling their selections... Though only a screen separates us, neither my presence nor the hum of my

computer seems to bother them. Are they innocently oblivious? Or merely self-confidant? Is there a lesson here?

What a mystery—this rescuing of awareness from yet another descent into a bog of creative limbo. I am reminded that

my ego, taskmaster that it is, does not belong in my driver's seat, nor does it qualify as navigator. Only when centered within stillness can I rediscover my bridge to the illusive high road of lyrical palettes, dancing brushstrokes, phrases that evoke realities, and



Marlie Avant

Shanja Kirstann

life, about trusting and surrendering to the natural dance of yin and yang, about giving birth to a new form from within the Formless—and then moving back into the Formless again to await the next new spark of life.

Playful, yet holding reverence for the sacred process, these experiences take me to the core of myself, to my deep Being—and the walls of separation dissolve and I am one with all the world. How it happens, I do not know. That is the Mystery—the one that calls to me again and again to live the

surrendered life. I simply have to say yes to this call, to the creative impulse that breathes through Life—and I am Home. No matter the weather. Always Home.

“The way to do is to be” *Tao te Ching*

Donald Mathews

and work. These are important if we are to accomplish something in life. However, there are times to leave it all behind and hit the open road. I believe this is where I am being lead in this later life stage!

with Creative Edge, The Labyrinth Project and other responsibilities. It doesn't mean I quit—just leave the driving to someone else!

mysterious vehicles stopping for us! Between rides, there is the wonder of many stories shared in the great books.

It is time for me to “pass the lead” to others

The most important gift of creative artistry is to live life with pleasure in this open road manner, taking full advantage of the

Kyla McCollam

on-the-spot creation of insightful humor that draws out the laughter and nurtures a happier heart. Communication and healing result when pain and pressure succumb to the funny side which breaks the ice, eases facing our truth responsibly, and elevates the mood for uplifting and creative changes.

With the realization that to allow this shadowy, masculine energy to emerge will be effortless—I must trust and let go of outcomes and be more receptive to the pleasure and appreciation for the release of laughter, joy and knowing. Magic and mystery are evoked when something “hits

the mark” and strikes as funny. A creative comeback causes an eruption which guides and consoles. Such service I welcome as valuable, spontaneous and free. It may be latent—I'm looking forward to funnier and later.

Barbara Rose Shuler

The image of the Queen placidly appreciating the madness around her, as if it were normal, reminds me of the way many of us view art in front of us: thoughtfully and respectfully, heedless of the fact that it may have been created

in crucibles of chaos as odd as the one on the mountainside. It also struck me that the artistic temperament is often divided into the thinker, the wild creator and the part that feels naked and vulnerable but also needs to be

Seen. And, then all of this artistic ferment somehow bows to the beauty of nature so transparent in the philosopher painter's portrait.

Illia Thompson

art, I am enhanced.

My works hang on the walls of my children's homes (their choice!). And a painting that came just after 9/11, titled Heritage, decorates the cover of the invitation for my grandson's April Bar

Mitzvah. This abstract brightly burning menorah symbolizes the light that radiates from all that is sacred. I include monthly meetings at The Creative Edge in that category, truly enlightening.

Thank you, Donald, and all who choose to share in the widest way. Long live the Saturday Salon (The Creative Arts Fellowship), a place of safety, serenity, and in times of need, solace.

Patty Waldin

melodies that resonate on Soul's level...

Abandoning myself to creative processes can feel a lot like stepping through Alice's Looking Glass, or falling down the Rabbit Hole. Somehow logic can turn back upon itself, and unexpected sequences can move

me into responses beyond my comfort zone. Jarring and out of sync as it is, yet it can also be deliciously and timelessly wonder-filled.

When bearing witness to one another's creative process within the safe circles of

“CREATIVE EDGE: The Way of the Arts,” we are sharing adventures beyond our bridges, and validating maps of the ever shifting, ever evolving wilderness of the Muses' domain.



“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 and collective 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.

Further, 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.

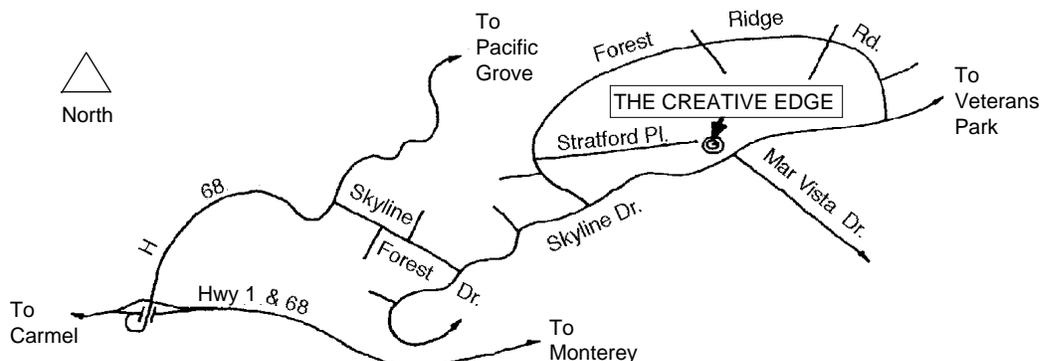
Forming a safe circle of support for dreams, sharing and contemplation, we use lots of free time to follow our personal muse with reading, writing and other creative work. Mask-making, paints and clay are available in the studio. Lunch is provided. Offered as scheduled, 9 a.m.—5 p.m.

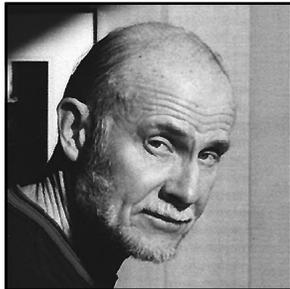
Special Workshops & Seminars:

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

Reservations:

Send 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 forty-eight years to his musician wife Lou, they have 3 daughters and 7 Grandchildren.

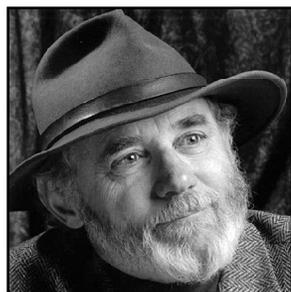
Monthly Dream Work Seminars:

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 about eight venturesome people seeking spiritual depth.

January—May & August—November:
9 a.m.- noon on the 3rd Saturday of each month,
Fee: \$15 each or \$12 each in a series of 3 or more.

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.



Jay O’Callahan has been creating and performing stories now for over 25 years. Time magazine called him “a genius among storytellers...” “A virtuoso,” echoed the Boston Globe.

Finding & Telling Stories A Weekend Workshop May 10-12, 2002.

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) & 7-9 p.m. (after a dinner break),
Sunday: 9 a.m. — noon.

Fee: \$290 (\$270 before April 1) .

“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 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.

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.



Salinas, CA

WHOLE PIECES

A placemat marking the space
 In midst of crayons, pencils, felt pens, prints
 Of ribcage, pelvis, skulls, muscles
 Temporarily making a home for an oversize, green
 Tea stained cup
 And a plate filled with sweet smelling flesh
 Of dark orange papaya.
 Almost hidden, shining gray seed eyes
 Looking on silently, watching the
 Doings of that creature that is I
 Who is hiding within assignments,
 Homework, fatigue, oversize clothes, long
 Commutes, gradually becoming
 The picture on the table

Trude Zmoelnig

Birmingham, AL

Please accept my modest contribution and
 these words in simple pen and ink. My
 elderly typewriter has passed on to greener
 pastures and of this date I haven't embraced
 the current technology!

I AM HERE

I am here—
 encased in human form,
 occupying a small space
 in this universe—
 and yet my heart and soul
 know no boundaries,
 stretching me out
 into the skies above
 and down into the sea depths
 or circling me
 around the earth's circumference.
 And when I choose,
 I can frolic among the stars
 or play with sea creatures.
 My only limits
 the ones I set for myself.
 The sun and moon my friends,
 and every clod of dirt
 every blade of grass
 calls to me each day
 to come out and play,
 and rejoice in this freedom
 that was vouchsafed to me
 before I was born
 onto planet earth.

Jean Callahan Crowe

Marina, CA

More journal entries
 for and about my son, age 2.

We had a rough night last night since you
 are having problems adjusting to life
 without a crib.

Interesting to note that we, in all
 likelihood, are the only animals that can
 daydream. This is probably because we
 are the only ones that are self-aware.
 Your father and I discussed that concept
 tonight and could not really define it Did
 you know that in the dictionary
 'consciousness,' 'realization' and
 'awareness' use each other as definitions?
 What a crock, language can be so useless
 when it runs right smack into the
 unexplainable. And that is definitely the
 category that self-awareness fits into. I
 think of it as knowledge that goes beyond
 the boundaries of that which can be
 experienced by the senses.

This centers on the idea that you know
 you exist in a concrete world and can
 assess your relationship to it and to the
 unseen dimensions of time and space. In
 short, you know fully well that you are an
 ant on an anthill, with incomprehensible
 but very real elements that exist beyond
 your scope, elements that would be
 crystal clear to yours (what is a pencil to
 an ant after all? Non-food and that's it.)
 Humans aren't born with self
 awareness—by observing your growth I
 realize this. Newborns are bundles of
 instinct, only the recognitions necessary
 for survival are in place.

The world is a vague blurry thing, full of
 erratic fuzzy shapes, strange sounds and
 weird smells. Only slowly do babies
 discover their physical selves and
 eventually gain recognition of their
 surroundings. For a very long time there
 is existence without awareness—a fugue
 state that some return to if senility or
 dementia plague their twilight years. I
 wonder what it would be like to live a life
 like that, flowing through your appointed
 life span without acknowledging
 anything but instinct. And what would
 we be if we were reduce to only that?
 Intelligent but blank like computers?
 Hell bent on procreation like the
 ephemeral, mouthless Luna Moth?
 Fierce and vicious like hyenas? Gentle
 but helpless like rabbits? Thank
 whatever gods are out there that we will
 never have to find out.

Olga Chandler

Colorado Springs, CO

I wish I could get this poem to
 every fire fighter in the country.
 Unless one is personally
 involved in fire, we never really
 realize what these men and
 women do for us. Now, we are
 all personally involved.

SILENT HERO'S

Our country stands silent—
 we have witnessed fire.

We have seen
 for ourselves the
 everyday battlefield
 of the fire fighter.

Silent Hero's.

Men and women—
 so willing to give up
 their own life to save another.

How does one wrap
 the mind around such
 courage—some of their
 soldiers are missing, along
 with those they tried to save.

In this devastation—
 silent hero's raise the
 American flag and plant it
 firmly in the face of terrorism.

Not a word is uttered.

Yet, with
 this single act, the
 firemen deliver our message,

You have not won—
 you have not destroyed our
 symbol, this flag is who we
 are.

Within
 the hearts
 of a nation left
 grieving—this flag
 still waves, and never
 has it looked so beautiful.

Patricia Ann Doneson



Marina, CA

MENDOCINO MÉNAGE

**Granite, shorn of its grasses,
bleaches in sunlight.**

**A shale behemoth rises from cool blue,
dripping kelp garlands.**

**Entropy foams at the edges,
throws itself inland.**

**I meander green kingdoms,
pluck sudden stories.**

**Midas-touch poppies
shed doubloon petals.**

**Sea thrift whispers feral tales
into waiting ears.**

**Poetry bolts, spills its wild seed
upon eager acres.**

DÉJÀ VU DUET

*Some people are like that.
They split up and then they think:
Hey, maybe we haven't hurt each other
to the uttermost.
Let's meet up and have a drink.
—James Fenton*

**Stunted simians,
we sit at this sad bar
and exhume the past,
explore what still hurts,
throbbing amputations,
which parts remain bleeding.**

**You compliment my scars.
I admire your bruising.
All the while, we secretly contemplate
what untouched parts might respond
to renewed mutilation.**

**Weekly, we meet
to remove any protective scabs,
use mutually inflicted pain
as communication.**

**Let's review it again and again,
probe what still twitches,
dissect and destroy
any overlooked wholeness.**

Jennifer Lagir

Carmel Valley, CA

Someone once asked me: "Why don't you draw something?" With a crayon I made a child-like rendering of a human figure. It did not lead to a burgeoning of expressive endeavor. I self diagnosed "artistic paralysis."

Nevertheless, soon after, I bought clay—the inexpensive, air-dry kind. It wasn't intimidating; things expressed themselves; all I did was squeeze. Some of the forms that emerged amazed me. This was definitely an easy entry for me through the creative portal.

Then I was invited to an art/movement class. I went, carrying my clay like a security blanket. As instructed, I worked with eyes closed, just moving the chalk or crayons over the paper, perhaps using both hands simultaneously. I might start with my non-dominant hand and finish with the other—a variety of tricks to entice the inner onto paper. It worked. I wrote my associations on the backs of the artwork using one hand and then the other. We danced our pictures or moved as the music or feeling impelled, and then did another picture. I began to trust and value the images and words, and I kept all of it because the teacher said: "It is a part of you."

One day I came across this poem dated five years earlier. I didn't remember writing it, but it had a hold on me for a couple weeks as I read it and recited it over and over. I reworked it only slightly, looking among old artwork for its origins. I found the forebears in these four pictures.

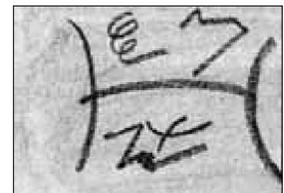
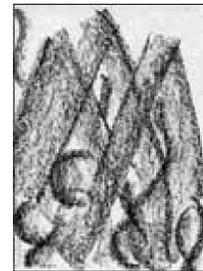
TIME IS RIPE

**Humankind races on
pursued by the tiny winged one,
embedded both in crystal clasp,
in a world of artists
where colors, feeling-fired,
ricochet among faceted walls,
and form evanescent mountains.
Here creators climb
in circuitous exploration,
seeking the secrets of their making.**

**Until ...
Across the Sea of Aeons
Electric Life takes up its brush
to correspond anew.
Lightning-ed arrows
pierce the ancient mark.
Meaning bleeds upon thirsty soil.
Symbols reappear in timeless stance.
We wend our way among them,
silently absorbing.**

**The crystal egg hangs in space.
Time is ripe.**

Sharon Hermes



Santa Paula, CA

Thank you so much for the Creative Edge News. I especially appreciate and relate to the piece by Patty Waldin (NL 35). I can really feel what she's saying!

Jemille Hardy



Carmel Valley, CA

A LIFE OF ITS OWN

I carry my own internal furnace,
Matchlite charcoal, no fuel necessary
to turn my bones to ash.

Spontaneous combustion occurs
at breakfast,
at the office,
at 2:37 am,
the only warning
a moment of irritation just before
the flames ignite, course upward,
flare across chest,
paint a blaze on my face,
Stephen King's *Firestarter*
turned middle-aged,
no longer juvenile or innocent.

Just behind the heat
beads of moisture sluice off my forehead,
irrigate a swamp under my clothes.

Sometimes
I blame the glass of wine I had
before dinner,
the pressures of multi-tasking,
necessity of appeasing the gods
of social convention

but, in truth,
it is a vital force,
a conflagration that leaves me heaving,
a lathered horse,
consumed over and over into something different,
something scorched,
anything but passive.

POINT LOBOS

Once again

I take Mound Meadow Trail out to the sea.
Serenity begins to unfold
from the sound of pygmy nuthatches
and white-crowned sparrows.
the press of my footsteps
on the uneven dirt path.

These tilted rock shelves
and kelp-crowded coves invite
questions that stir without definition.

All along pathways
rusty leaves of poison oak
mingle with thrift and clusters of yellow mock heather.
Rock roses, paintbrush and seaside daisy thrive
in shallow bowls of soil
on weathered granite cliffs.

Thistle and wild rose co-exist
like shore and sea,
the convoy of pelicans flying close to the water
and sea lion shifting his portly form
to find comfort on a flat ledge.

Fog cools contention
the same way it soothes
pines and cypress.
Gratitude replaces inexplicable anxiety.
I depart,
not the same person
who entered the gate
an hour ago.

THE POET READS FROM HER COLLECTION

It's not your eminence I want,
not your thick brown hair
and vulnerable blue-green eyes,
not your swinging beaded earrings
or silk skirts.

I want your custom with words,
or something like it of my own,
some wilder canto
playing on my fluted tongue.

You came to your themes
by a spiritual path, a pilgrimage
I cannot suffer and still
be who I am.

It's not your academic attainments
I want, not your elegant presence
on stages in unfamiliar cities,
not your soft step
or cache of literary accolades.

I want your shift and pivot in a poem,
insinuations and animations,
pliable allusions,
cautious and daring between
one phrase and the next.

This is your gift,
to stand before audiences
and classrooms, voice
flowing from a poem's mysterious urgency,
showing us the radiance
in each of us.



Carmel Valley, CA

Had it not been for Creative Edge, Doree Bart, the retreat, etc., this little piece would not been published to arrive today—the exact anniversary of Mother's death, a year ago. You probably have no idea how much your open house and open heart fosters! Thank you!

MASKS

At a creative arts retreat, I choose to make a mask. With a partner, one takes turns placing damp plaster over the face, waits for it to harden, then oneself spreads plaster over the form, sands it into softness of surface. Decorating options abound. My dear friend, Laura, places strip upon strip of warm tape over my face, eyeholes and breathing space carefully created. Tenderness, a gentleness of caring, as the layers build up. My prone position helps relaxation, which slowly becomes meditative. Today, I witness my trust to allow another to place a mask upon my skin. I relax tension gathered over the recent months of great stress.

After letting the mask dry and readying it for decoration, I intentionally pass by beads and feathers and wildness of possibility and am called to the delicate watercolors. I use a simple wash of aquas, gentle blues and pale browns, then leave the mask to fully dry again.

Upon returning, I carefully hold this creation upright. One large blue tear-like drop appears down the right cheek. I place the solid mask upon my face, look in the mirror and see the face of my mother, who died a few months ago. She rested in a coma as her face softened and held the glorious delicate paleness that preceded her journey for which she was prepared, yet left a tear in her wake.

**GRACE AND GLORY
(a two act play)**

**Glory, the hospice worker,
walks on stage wearing a red silk blouse
and a long gray skirt,
a replica of my theater-going outfit.**

*I too, clumsy as a witness
to cancer's intrusion, also sought wisdom
from lips soon to be stilled.*

*My husband told me secrets:
"Under a full moon at sea, only truth can be spoken.
It is the same as death nears."*

*I listened hard lest words slip out,
fall to the ground unheard,
break into evaporating syllables.*

*I stored, for winter, his dreams.
"I'm in a small village and everyone
is calling my name, welcoming me."*

*I embroidered in my mind,
"Isn't she beautiful?"
as he spoke of me to my daughter.*

**House lights dim my reverie.
So fully invited into the play,
applause at the end reverberates
for more than the actors.**

Illia Thompson

DOC Westville, IN

10/13/01: Thank you Creative Edge for encouraging me, for giving our thoughts a space to be seen. Thank you for the letters, x-mas cards, for remembering us when much of the world forgot. You folks are rather ingenious. By the friendship you have extended and the psychological support and comfort found over the years in your Newsletter, creatively you have taken a bite out of crime. Specifically, a criminal I am no more, this to both my own and society's benefit... And you dare to call yourselves a "Non-profit" organization? I'd say there's much more here than a pay check...

For anyone lost in the discordant worlds of addiction, or dependence... for those in our nation's institutions, I only hope they will be fortunate enough to discover the worlds of Art and Music, of Language and Expression to lead them from The Abyss.

10/31/01: (Looking forward to my parole in Oct.) I'm faced with the reality I'm a 40 year old man with zero prospects and a degree worth less in the world of academia than the paper it is written on...

While I'm not suicidal, I am a bit stuck. That is I've not a clue where to go to look for employment and with 12 years served, the selection may be slim. Will music play a part? God, I wish it could, but I must face reality. Hell, nothing is as it appears and the more in tune I get with myself the more I realize you just live and play the hand you are dealt.

I would like to teach songwriting on a novice level, I've devised some very simple ways to use metered poetry to create music. if one can count syllables, one can write the words to a tune. It's quite simple. I've done it in various groups in prisons for years.

12/28/01: My immediate goal is my Master's from Indiana University at Bloomington. After struggling through the likes of logic, biology, physics, astronomy, and Shakespeare, I am very glad to now have all my core courses fulfilled. I have nothing but electives remaining toward my major: Labor Studies.

Personally, I would hope to score a spot inside a union representing the underdogs, and acting as a full time benefits specialist. I would help members of unions plan their futures, and facilitate their retirement by advising them on auxiliary retirement plans beyond pensions, which would supplement their union subsistence.

I look forward to my release... with eleven years of sobriety I am excited embracing freedom. The prospects look bright, and baring another economic depression, I'm confident employment in my field of study will be forthcoming...

J. Ford #901020 E-1-E
WCF/DOC P.O. Box 473
Westville, IN 46391-0473





DOC Huntsville, TX

7/21/01: Please find enclosed for possible printing a poem, "Just A Smile Away" which is about my spiritual path in Buddhism. Maybe it is O.K. for the newsletter.

Sorry for not writing sooner but I am going through some of the worst times of my life and I have to stay very "focused" to keep from slipping back into "self-destructive" behavior. My daily sitting meditation helps me to maintain my "cool" nature or should. I say "Buddha Nature." Humans are conditioned beings and in the past I have allowed myself to become aggressive... that was because I did not recognize fear for what it was. I let fear provoke me into violent acts/aggression. But I have learned to control myself.

JUST A SMILE AWAY

**As I follow my breathing
grinning along the way
I fall through space
dodging comets and
meteors reaching out
for moons and
planets as I travel across
whole galaxies
which have no right
or wrong...
day or night...
rich or poor...
it's wonderful
living without...
pain... greed...
anger... desires... prejudices...
foolishness.**

**Appears I've taken the right
path to melt my clings
of false thought...
or is this a dream?
I think not...
then I smile.**

1/27/02: It is with great pleasure I must report our combined efforts have in fact landed me at the right place to attend Sam Huston State University. I think this is a step in the right direction. :-)

**SHUT UP AND LISTEN
or WISDOM CALLING**

**This isn't a message in
a bottle but...
as I'm moving along life's path
the problems are many,
the pace is fast,
and often my mind gets excited
into a frenzy,
however... it's a shallow life that
doesn't leave some scars while
wisdom whispers to shut up
and listen.**

**When it seems out-of-control...
I sit down meditating on my
breath, look deep inside and
follow my heart
because there's the Universal Truth
that leads me to believe
no challenge is too-great and
this isn't a message in a bottle, but...
wisdom whispers to shut up
and listen.**

*Chester Vinton HAAS III, #327322
"CHOKYI LODRO"
(Knowledge Of Dharma)
P.O. Box 32
Huntsville, TX 77348*

Helena, MT

I've appreciated continuing to receive The Creative Edge and stay relatively up-to-date on what all you're up to in the name of creative spirituality, or spiritual creativity.

Another publication I appreciate very much is the quarterly magazine Spirituality and Health. You may already be familiar with it... I'm enclosed the current issue which I think you as a labyrinth lover among other things might find stimulating.

Bob Holmes

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.