



**NEWSLETTER # 37
Fall 2002**

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Check out:

Linda Losik—Coming Nov 23, 2002!

Jay O'Callahan—Coming May 9-11, 2003!

Carolyn Conger, PhD.—Coming Oct 10-12, 2003!

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: 11/15/02

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THE NEWS

Fall 2002

No. 37

Programs Scheduled: (See pages 5-7)

• Linda Losik	Theater of Dreams	Nov 23, 2002, 10-11:30 a.m.
• Jay O'Callahan	Finding & Telling Stories	May 9-11, 2003, 7 p.m.
• Carolyn Conger, PhD.	Walking Between The Worlds	Oct 10-12, 2003, 7 p.m.
• Donald Mathews	Creative Arts Fellowship Personal Development through Dreams	Monthly, 1st Sat-9 a.m. E-mail, phone or as scheduled

Carolyn Conger, PhD., noted teacher and international seminar leader in psychological growth and spirituality is scheduled to lead a weekend retreat using the labyrinth as a theme. This program will also be a fund raiser for the Community Labyrinth Project in Carmel Valley. Check out the program & register!

For all those interested in improvisational theater, Linda Losik will give you a chance to explore with her on Saturday, Nov. 23 from 10-11:30 am. This mini-workshop is free! Check out the program and call to register now!

An anthology of poems by Rick and Louise Nelson: *Written in the Language of the Heart* is now available for the first 24 donors of \$25 or more to the Creative Edge. This revised 162 page edition of "Poems and Prose for Those Who travel the Inner Way" is a beautiful collection given by Rick & Louise as a fund raiser for Creative Edge.

The time has come retire the free distribution of the Creative Edge News by regular mail since the internet provides such a low cost resource. Consequently, this will be the last snail mail newsletter for many of you. However, we will try sending it for awhile to active members who desire it. This will save almost \$2000 a year!

Be sure we have your current E-mailing address if you desire notification of special seminars!

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 LBOL!

Iam interested in scheduling more individual dream work with those wanting to connect with this important personal resource of the spirit! DWM

New & renewed Members of the Creative Edge:

Associate Members: Duffie Bart, Laura Bayless, Marilyn Beck, Cindy Gum, Lynda Hughes, Phyllis Kelley, Shirley Tofle, Trude Zmoelinig, CA.

Friends: Jean Gates, Alexandria Rossi, Faith Zimmerman, CA.



Marlie Avant



At last writing, I had few words, leaving a large blank space that curiously felt very comforting. Since then, I have been

spending a good deal of time in such inner spaciousness, content simply to "be".

I came across a quote in my journal, (unfortunately author unknown)

"A great silence comes over me and I wonder why I ever thought to use language."

I have been feeling my way through my inner life—without the spoken

Shanja Kirstann



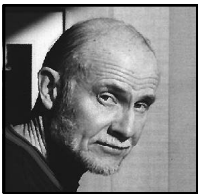
When I reflect back on this half year, it is filled with a rich landscape of travel, teaching and trainings. While all of these events have been wonderful, they blur in this moment when

musing on the heart of my deeper spiritual and creative Journey.

I have a spiritual practice that helps me stay on track. It is a journal process that reflects back on the day or a certain period of my life and looks for captured moments when I was touched by life itself—when the

mystery has broken through and invited me into the present moment. The questions I ask are: "Where was I touched or inspired? What was my true fulfillment today?" Asking these questions over time has revealed my truest fulfillments and helps me making choices that honor these callings.

Donald Mathews



Last night I dreamt I was tree trimming by my house! A large Oak had several sections of dead wood. So, I began trimming. The first cut surprised me as it was

such a large section—almost half the tree fell away. Other cuts were smaller and very easily accomplished. There was then a great open feeling surrounding me. Later, I am inside looking at entrance stair steps thinking some repair was needed. However, upon closer inspection, everything was fine as it was!

Well, here we go again with the same theme I have been sharing for the last couple of years. Clearly I am trimming away aspects of my life that no longer carry my vital energy—the heart's blood. However, it is not easy to know where or what to cut away so I

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



Pull up a chair next to the precipice and I'll tell you a story.

A friend today told me she found a scrap

of paper etched with these words just as she left a safe harbor for a new life. It was the last little bit of cleaning to pick up this final scrap in her room.

Pull up a chair next to the precipice and I'll

tell you a story.

My friend found the words reassuring. Like the image on the card of the Fool walking off the cliff without a care, she looks toward the heights and

Illia Thompson



Out of the Ashes, Arises New Growth. A few weeks ago, as I end a journal entry with the above words, I have no idea that my home will shortly resemble the

aftermath of a fire, as the old roof is replaced. Soot and dirt seep through spaces in the redwood ceilings. Some gaps make room for stones and tar, more falling matter. The writing mentioned above, created to conclude a piece of writing about the need to simplify, prophetic. I had envisioned a slow

meticulous clearing of space, with sufficient time to weigh what would stay. Now all storage areas taste the dust of demolition. This inconvenience for a roof that will put an end to putting down stainless steel bowls in the middle of the night and listening to the repetitive

Patty Waldin



Though terms like synchronicity and deja-vu have found their way into our social vocabulary, "if you refer to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV—the Bible of the

American Psychiatric Association—you will find that psychic is still being equated with psychosis...nor will you find references to such metaphysical concepts as Intuition, Sacred and Soul."* Dr. Judith Orloff, M.D. Psychiatrist, states further, "Unfortunately, the overall sentiment among most mainstream physicians is that the psychic is

nonexistent, a sham, or a disease..."

Apparently our professional healers still restrict themselves with a split between those who speak the scientifically objective language of the Clinical Sciences, and those whose healing practices include the semantic



Marlie Avant

word which can often polarize or trap me in reactionary patterns of behavior. I have befriended the sea waves that cast up rhythmic forces; a blending of staccato and legato. They have allowed me to remember what it truly means to be alive as I become

one with the passionate, artistry moving through me. And then of course there is the absolute stillness that is utterly exquisite and all consuming.

inner life". It is, ah YES, it is!

Perhaps the highest art is simply life unfolding life... in all its mystery, its revery, its fierceness and power. And, perhaps my greatest artistry is surrender.

Shanja Kirstann

One image floods me. The endless hours of sitting in the garden, listening to the gurgling water fountain, watching the hummingbirds dart through the rosy blossoms of pineapple sage, feeling the warmth of the spring sun caress my mid-life body, tasting the sweetness of Silence. There is little impulse to write, to paint, to

sing in these moments, for I am captured by the Silence... and find this to be Home. I find that these moments come from a quality of listening with the whole body and I become an open ear drinking in the epiphanies of Silence.

touchstone. Trusting the rhythm of the body to live at its own pace. Giving permission to not know anything... and to letting the moment lead where it will... I have learned to bring this quality of listening presence to others and find the miracle of being deeply seen and heard to be miraculous. I find the gifts

I have grown to trust Silence as my

Donald Mathews

can hit the "open road" I've talked about.

When you receive this newsletter, the Creative Edge Board will have met and made some important organizational changes to create more space in my life. With the Labyrinth project too, a new

leader has taken over. With these two "Oaks" in my garden trimmed, new vital growth should sprout! The entrance to my personal space seems solid and in good order too!

pleasure in the little moment by moment experiences that always unfold containing both good and bad news. And as a bonus, I seem less reactive to my double Virgo perfectionist expectations. Also with my physical process, I finally captured an elusive event with

I am discovering the enjoyment of a simpler life as I continue to find more and more

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

steps into the unknown. Moreover, she's smiling, just like the Fool. I find that reassuring.

Here at Creative Edge we are often pulling up our chairs next to the precipice

and telling each other stories. We are storytellers at the cliff's edge. This is a joy and a wonder and very reassuring.

I must go hear the Monterey Symphony play now. A young prodigy violinist will

play music of Bruch and Beethoven. The precipice of performance for him. Then I must write about him with speed for an editor who will edit even faster so the words can swiftly be published in the daily paper. Writing. There's a precipice too.

Ilia Thompson

pings as droplets meet others to form puddles in motion. With unprecedented resolve, I toss papers, journals printouts, gathered in boxes, take them from rest, their presence no longer needed. Much like any parting, a tinge of regret colors the newly found space. I promise myself, and keep it,

not to reexamine items designated for discard. The wedding of a friend's daughter encourages me to present a set of extra dishes to the young couple. The recent Morgan Hill fire an opportunity to donate clothing. Books whisper farewell as I ready their donation to a library. Some

happily stay, as we are joyously reacquainted and they wait patiently for my hands to hold them again. This new mantra, "Out of the Ashes Arises New Growth," becomes a sword that slices through clutter and minds not that possible treasures may be sent

Patty Waldin

subjectivity of the Arts and Humanities. Fortunately, art therapy courses and internships continue to reference the psychic as an unquantifiable yet valued tool in respected universities throughout the country.

Despite professing a naivete in the arts—

many art therapy patients, students and clients, when encouraged to express their dreams and relationships symbolically, surprise themselves by experiencing and demonstrating a kind of innate, holistic access to a wealth of visual imagery. Through such spontaneous forms of authentic self-expression, healing progress

can be made toward an emotional clarity.

As professional painters we face multi-dimensional technical decisions when attempting to render the mystery of an unfolding content. Our hands would falter if merely directed by logical sequential thinking.



Marlie Avant

Shanja Kirstann

of compassionate aromatic touch with essential oils to be heavenly. I find sitting in circles, listening to voices that speak from the heart and the belly through dreams, journal writing, poetry, and story to be meeting a deep hunger for connectedness at a soul level.

Where don't I find fulfillment? Whenever I have "too much" of anything—words, phone calls, e-mails, people, bills, meetings, plans,... the constant test to confront the cultural trance of endless doing and to say to myself and the world, "No thank you. I love you and no thank you..."

To meet everything and everyone through stillness instead of mental noise is the greatest gift you can offer the universe.
—Eckhardt Tolle

Donald Mathews

my heart monitor while in Naples, Italy this spring and now have a new pacemaker implanted. They tell me it was a mysterious electrical process that sometimes happens to people with excellent hearts like mine. I am in strong physical and emotional shape ready for new

growth wondering about the synchronicity of it all.

Each day as I walk, I stop to visit my 91 year old aunt in a near by long term care facility (I am her guardian). I see how she has made another transition to simple living in a much

smaller outer world. Without worries of past or future, she enjoys meals, naps, and seems content visiting with deceased love ones who come often in her inner world. Her life was naturally trimmed as it was appropriate. Could this be a lesson for all of us!

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

At this moment, I feel immensely grateful for my friends at the Creative Edge, for the work and the play and the realizations that happen when we sit in a circle with one another. I wonder if gratitude is a precipice too. Then I shall

step off, like the Fool, like my friend, without a care into the glistening unknown.

The music awaits.

Illia Thompson

away. Sifting through this writing, fine tuning, distilling, paying attention, I find a poem waiting. Already, a new gift arises.

CLEARING

Roof replacement/ invites falling matter./

Soot, tar, gravel/ and dust of demolition./ Repair promises/ the end of rain drops/ forming contained puddles/ in stainless steel bowls./ Chaos invites clearing./ Old papers, journals, magazines/ tossed with a tinge of regret,/ much like any parting./ Once begun, the flow/gathers

momentum./ Dishes to a young bride,/ clothing to fire victims./ Some book pages whisper/ farewell on way to/ becoming library donations./ Others wait to again be held by me./ The sword of action/ slices through clutter:/ a surgeon's knife/ encouraging healing.

Patty Waldin

We can choose to set aside our learned, rational disciplines. Self-selected modes of psychic attunement—sacred music, prayerful dedication, sounds of nature—enable us to thin the veils of perception and realign with the Sacred. Such a simple act as reaching for a broader brush, becomes a door to accidentals. Lapses, thus

transmuted, become opportunities for rendering visions in partnership with the inspirational forces of our unfettered Soul-self. Once accessed, connection with Inner Knowing provides a wellspring capable of energizing wordless processes that flow in rhythmic strokes of color and texture — together with a mystery of numinous

implications—through us, directly onto the canvas. In essence what we are doing is rationally merging with the psychic— healing the split.

**SECOND SIGHT* by Judith Orloff, M.D 1996; Warner Books, Inc.; New York, NY, p. 286.



“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.

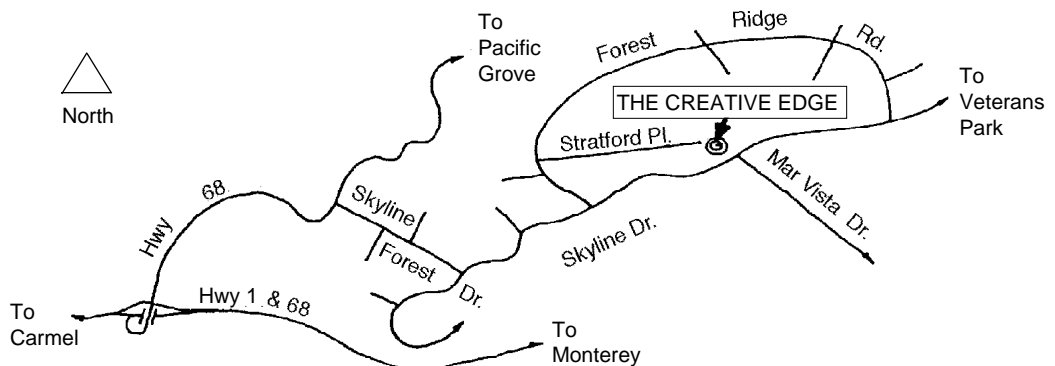
Forming a safe circle of support for dreams, sharing and contemplation, we use lots of free time to follow our personal muse with reading, writing and other creative work. Mask-making, paints and clay are available in the studio. Lunch is provided. Offered as scheduled, 9 a.m.—5 p.m.

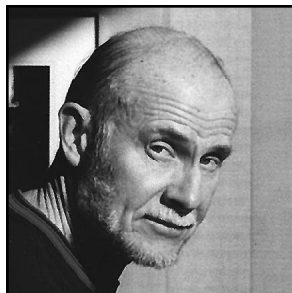
Special Workshops & Seminars:

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.





“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

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.

He facilitates trust and intimacy in order to find wisdom from individuals and groups based on his continuing journey learning from life. Married almost 50 years to his musician wife Lou, they have 3 Daughters and 7 Grandchildren.

Personal Development through Dreams:

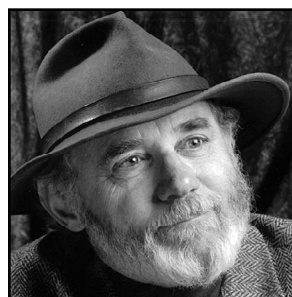
Donald Mathews responds to your dreams as the most accurate guide to personal development and life choices.

Dreams reflect our unique hidden patterns and divine creative cast of characters, many of which we have not yet befriended. Dreams and their underlying content are gifted to us as a guide into self-knowledge and a richer and fuller life experience tuned to our essential spirit.

When we are able to share with another in intimate trust seeking our own final interpretation, we often find the missing key—the penetrating insight we have been seeking.

Using the creative process and his many years experience on his own personal quest, Donald shares his intuitive insights through questions and sharing seeking the deeper story behind a dream. This usually involves learning the language of dreams and developing intimate relationships with all of one's dream characters. As scheduled.

Fee: Sliding scale \$25-35/hour



“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 25 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 9-11, 2003.

In the warmth and trust of a special Monterey home, Jay will tell some of his short stories and discuss character, dialogue, place and emotion using those stories as a basis. Jay will also draw out memories with very simple exercises and look at the craft of storytelling through those memories. The key is being playful and relaxed. It'll be fun and creative!

Fri.: 7-9 p.m., Sat.: 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. (with lunch) & 7-9 p.m. (after dinner break), Sun. 9 a.m.—noon.

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



“Once you explore improvisational acting, there is no turning back.”

—Linda Losik

Linda Losik has been involved in Improvisational Theater for over twenty-five years. She holds a Masters Degree in Education and Counseling from the University of New Hampshire.

She studied acting at the University of New Mexico and improvisational theater with Murry Paskin in San Francisco.

Locally, she participated in Improvisational Theater with Director John Rebstock and studied Gestalt Dream Work with Dick Price in Esalen Institute's Residency Program.

Linda was director of Improvisational Theater at the Penitentiary of New Mexico and the Navy Correctional Facility in San Diego, CA. She presently is Director of Monterey Actor's Studio and teaches First Grade.

Theater of Dreams: November 23, 10-11:30 a.m.

This free Theater Workshop for Creative Edge is an introductory session of Linda Losik's work and will focus on the actor's creative process through improvisation, theater games, music and movement.

Feelings, situations, dreams and moments in time will be the context for improvisational activities.

The purpose for this workshop is to experience an enhanced sense of self in the spontaneous moment of acting with the potential for fun, laughter and personal growth.

No acting experience is necessary! Come and have fun! It's free but registration is required!



Walking Between The Worlds with Carolyn Conger, PhD. October 10-12, 2003.

This weekend retreat is an exploration of the energies of the labyrinth and our dreams. Using the eleven course Community Labyrinth* for walking meditation, we'll enter the realms of imagination, myth, and spirituality in safe ways, and will discover how these sacred spaces belong to us naturally and are available to us to enhance our daily lives. This is a safe place where you will be guided into making positive changes in your life. People at all levels of experience are welcome.

We will gather in the warmth and trust of a special Monterey home on Friday evening and Sunday morning while spending Saturday at the labyrinth and chapel located on the grounds of Community Church of the Monterey Peninsula at the mouth of Carmel Valley.

Friday: 7-10 p.m., Saturday: 9 a.m.- noon & 2 - 5 p.m., Sunday: 9 a.m.- noon.

Fee: \$350 (\$310 before September 1). Early registration is essential as a minimum enrollment of 30 is required. Checks held until Sep 1, 2003.

*(The Community Labyrinth in Carmel Valley, like the one at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, is a duplicate of the 12th century labyrinth in Chartres Cathedral, France.)

Carolyn Conger, PhD., is a consultant and teacher who conducts seminars internationally in psychological growth, healing, dream work, intuition, creativity, and spirituality. She has lived with tribal societies throughout the world, studying their healing and metaphysical arts.

From her research in psycho immunology and human energy fields, she also teaches mind/body techniques for optimum health. Her doctorate is in clinical psychology.

Vancouver, British Columbia

This is something I wrote after reading some of the contributions on your site. I write a lot but never anything vaguely resembling poetry—have never tried and didn't really here either, this just sort of "happened" and I didn't feel I should mess with it, didn't know what to change it into. I'm rambling though...and it feels odd to send this off to you but here I go.

UNTITLED

Some small thing you wrote
was to me
a lifting and a clearing,
much more than an inkling
of striking translucence, perhaps.

I was me but now I am
me plus what you wrote,
a me with an altered or modified view
because
when I read your words I
shared your eyes.

That small thing with
its silent sudden all-knowing
command
did not know of my boundaries and limitations and
flattened them in turn.
And so I grew.

For that small thing you wrote,
maybe long ago and not here,
there was no wall and so I
stepped through
or stumbled
or fell,
looked up,
and went further.

Carolyn Verduzco

Birmingham, AL

IS IT JUST FOR ME

The words come pouring in
To land upon the earth
Via paper and pen—
Or once written on the page
Do they sprout wings
And fly away
To live on far-off
Magic shores
And abide there
In rare creatures
Hearts and souls.

If this is true
Take care
These words of mine,
And be only words
That bring joy and love to all
On whatever or where ever
You may befall.

Jean Callahan Crowe



Carmel Valley, CA

Here are the Journal Entries I promised to send.

Journal Entry – 7/10/02

“Times like this everything in the world becomes personal.”
Elizabeth Berg—*Open House*, pg. 13

I write these lines, these scraps of thought plucked from the minds of authors whose books I consume, my appetite for reading insatiable.

For a great portion of life I responded as if everything was personal, as if each injustice and injury were my province, my obligation to remedy. Lately I've been better able to choose my times, my empathies and elixirs, offerings of advice relegated to the rag-bin of restraint.

I feel myself becoming insular, less affected by emotional storms brewing around me. The wind stirs. I take note and reach for my raincoat even before the first drops fall. My convictions reside under my ribs, in my veins, in embers banked at my core, but not spilling from my tongue. I disagree silently, snatch back the quick retort, the unguarded reply. I am used to not being heard, to having radical perspectives. It matters less whether or not I add to the commotion.

Still, the time arrives when I throw all discretion to the scavengers and toss a verbal bomb into the debate. I brace myself for the inevitable ricochet, polish my armor for the next rash moment. This is a mystery I go home and live with, this screening and measuring, concealing and revealing, each word torn loose from my flesh a double-edged sword.

Journal Entry – 10/2/02

Why do I write in a journal?

I write because people don't listen. In the journal, on the lines and pages I speak without care how I will be heard, or if I will be heard. I see their faces, watch their expressions change when I say something that doesn't fit in their box, their book of rules. I hear the absurd questions they ask because they have not understood.

Here I can say there is no “father” god, no Allah, no deity managing the details of the world. I can also say I retain a sense of wonder at the mystery of life, its dichotomy of complexity and randomness, how I don't know the why and the meaning—and it is more than anyone can classify and cram into some comfort zone of absolute answers. It is here I can rant against the cruelties and injustices perpetrated by those who hold power over other human beings or animals. It is here I can say that men continue to commit acts of aggression rather than negotiate for the health of all people and the planet, believing they are justified by whatever ideology they claim.

Here no one labels me “feminist” or “lost soul” or “wrong,” or tries to alter my view. The page does not offer the ever-negating opposing opinion, the positive rebuttal to what is perceived as negative simply because it differs. In the journal I am neither right nor scandalous, neither unreasonable nor rational. No one looks at me with a blank stare, as if I have spoken a foreign language, one without translation. In the journal I am not outside looking in upon an exclusive club. Here I am inside the unlimited world of writing, of listening for whatever needs to be spoken without appraisal of its merit, without comparison to the a statistical majority.

Laura Bayless

Colorado Springs, CO

I received a very interesting e-mail this morning concerning my poem, *Until Now*. [See below. Reprinted from LBOL#14 (Section C—March 15, 2002)] It was a thank you and the person told me it made them cry. They quoted two of the stanzas and told me they read and reread this poem. The surprise of this e-mail was that I rose this morning wondering why I keep writing, does it have meaning, is it touching anyone. And like a message from the heavens...in comes this e-mail. I have no idea who sent it, I know their e-mail address, but they didn't sign a name. Well, what is life without risk...so, I answered the e-mail. Such a message deserves a response.

The last time I received a response to one of my poems, *New Horizons*, it prompted a reply from a young man in prison. He wrote to tell me how much that poem meant to him. Poets, this poet, can travel a thousand miles with a single response. So, I continue this journey.

UNTIL NOW

**Late in the blooming
of my life am I—
not realizing, until now,
that the imperfections that
proceeded this moment
was the preparation of the
soil and the seeding of my
very soul. A place where
weeds and flowers and even
rancid wheat might grow. None
needing to be pulled up or plucked out.**

**Not realizing, until now, that the
tears I shed was my own soul
watering the very things I rejected
in myself. The union and communion
of all things without judgement.**

**Not seeing, until now, the
endless possibilities of such
a garden where all things
and all parts of self may co-exist.**

**Not capable, until now,
to appreciate the sweet stench
of compost that nurtured my blooming.**

**Not trusting, until now, that
what came before—makes
this moment possible NOW.**

Patricia Ann Doneson



DOC, Bunker Hill, IN

Well the time has come, parole is upon my doorstep. On July 11th my freedom will be provisionally returned. It's been a long road, yet I'm no worse for the wear. In fact I'm better for it.

I've accomplished a little, a vocational certificate in music theory, a high school diploma, an Associate degree from Indiana University and a pretty good hand at doing art work. Granted, none of which are going to make me a living, but will allow me self respect and esteem which will.

Over the years I have had many conversations with you via our correspondence. I enjoyed the Creative Edge immensely, and the never ending creative processes which I have hence been encouraged to pursue. Donald, tapping into my own creative ability squeezed all the anger and vileness from my being and filled me with peace and contentment, kind of like a jelly doughnut. (What a metaphor, eh?)

How do I thank you enough? Thank you for listening, taking your time to share, for your words of encouragement. Thank you for making me feel valuable by printing my words/cartoons. But most of all, thank you for your friendship. In your infinite wisdom you've taught me what that really is. Quite a different thing to empower than to enable. You believing in me, it allowed me to believe in myself.

What now? I plan to work through the fall if possible in a factory, then in the winter I will decide upon furthering my education full-time or continuing by correspondence. Part of me wonders why school is important at this stage of life. I mean, with so many years inside I cannot imagine anyone wanting to hire me. More over, with (just a) Bachelors degree they won't be opening doors that are already bolted shut by the prison time. But, for personal satisfaction I want to finish that which I've started, as expensive as it might be.

It's weird, years ago when I started corresponding, I was a psychological mess. A product of years of chronic drug use and horrific self-image. I needed to be incarcerated! Today I've got friendships that have lasted for years.

I've rattled on enough. Soon you'll get an E-mail from me, from the free world. I hope we can continue our friendship outside. Again, my sincere gratitude.

Jeffrey Ford

Big Sur, CA

**THE DRAGON SINGS;
THE DRAGON DIES**

Last evening,
with the black trees towering
and the stars falling behind you,
you sang the nomad's lament
into the moonless night

Spanish gypsy music rode the tides
And lost, vanishing worlds echoed you

Today you reappear,
but the stars are gone
from your shoulders
The heavens have sunk
into your pain-soaked earth;
you've become the murky smoke
of a suffering reptile

I leave with unseeing eyes,
a numb senselessness,
a questioning soul

The dragon sings; the dragon dies—
in One breath, I muse

OF THE LIZARD'S BREATH

We bathe in a shower
of golden beams

Garlands of flaming roses,
scarlet as your passion,
cascade upon my shoulders

Flaxen tresses
adorn the voluptuous hills
We imbibe summer's
warming breath,
renewed in God's heat

And in this
approaching summer,
we grow hair of gold,
green and red,
our wildflowers
again lost to seed

We know not
what will burgeon
in this scorch of sun,
in the dryness
of the lizard's breath

Carolyn Mary Kleefeld

Fair Oaks, CA

RICHARD

Heat rising from
sleep washed skin,
his eyes slowly open
blue portals
overflowing with love.

Pooled sunshine
strokes our limbs,
reminder of passing time,
but we remain
entwined
secure
together.

Gentle touch
soft kiss
warm breath,
these are gifts
from one who
danced into my heart
and taught me to play.

Gazing, now, into shining blue,
thankfulness rises, swells,
moves me to
nestle closer,
closer,
catching the rhythm
of pounding heart
and steadfast devotion.

In his arms,
there is no pain
there is no sorrow.
In his heart,
there is only comfort
there is only love
we remain
entwined
secure
together.

Carol Lynn Mathew-Rogers



Big Sur, CA

UNTITLED

humbled again.
humbled by the wind
that thrashes my door.
humbled by loneliness,
by selfish destructiveness—
wondering what is more,
what is less: safe comfort
or naked homelessness.

humbled again.
burned like a fire by desire,
by the liars that within me lived...
wishing i could give one more song
to lovers who have gone.

humbled by change,
by pain that erects walls.
humbled by cold rain that falls.

humbled by death, by life, by beauty
that cuts like a knife.
humbled by the dregs of the wine
that at first tasted so sweet.
—by strangers that i meet.
—by women who pass me by
oblivious that i for them would die.

humbled by delicate flowers.
humbled by the mind's delusional tower.
humbled by memories, humbled by mountains—
by nature's views.
humbled by the six o'clock news.

humbled by grace, and all that i've been given.
humbled by trees and humbled when you pack
your bags to leave.

humbled by what is, humbled by what never was,
or ever will be.
humbled by dreams, and by this poem's fragile
soft scream...

David Dunn
© 2002

Tucson, AZ

BALLAD OF THE HOOCH

He claimed to have made major rank
With battlefield promotions in Vietnam
Including 18 months in a Laotian POW camp
Just the place, no doubt, for R&R

So he goes by Gizmo
That's what we all call him
And Ray-Ray who claimed to be an ex-marine
And an ex-con
Lived in the hooch

That is when I first met them,
The day before it snowed in Tucson

Ray was big.
6'-4" lean and strong
Gizmo called him Monster
But he actually does that to a lot of people

I stole four oak pallets
From behind the supermarket
And drove out to the open desert near the hooch

Ray and Gizmo helped haul
The pallets back to the hooch
And it was a good thing
Cause that night it was cold

I had been fired from my job that day

The next day it was cold
The sky was overcast
The open desert not oppressed by heat

I remembered the words Ray had spoken
By the fire: "Join the Circle of Life"

So I walked back through the desert
To the hooch by the Palo Verde tree
Where Benjamin and John
Had come to sit by the fire
It got nasty
So we all crowded into the hooch

Ray and I had a game of chess
The best of my life
And then it began to snow
As we could see through the open blanket cover
That is the door of the hooch

It didn't stay on the ground
But the ground wasn't warm, either

Ray got a fire going
By breaking up the pallets with an iron bar
We all got outside in the rain
It finally began to hail
After I had brought some hot coffee from home
I said good-bye for the day

Ray moved on, but Gizmo is still there
And I remember
The Circle of Life
Contains us all

(Snowstorm of January 30, 2002)

Chris Lovette



DOC, Huntsville, TX

Please find my poem you can print
in the Newsletter.

**THERE'S NONE BETTER
FOR YOU THAN YOU**

If you plan to go
somewhere special during the journey,
regardless of all the suffering,
you've been given Life force and
there's none better for you than
you
because you can be whatever you
want to be.

When people stop up and try
to get too personal
looking for the chance to know
what's hidden deep inside
there's none better for you than
you
because you can be whatever you
want to be.

And if your memory serves
you well,
the best place in the world
to dwell is where you're at now,
there's none better for you than
you
because you can be whatever you
want to be...
and make no mistake—

dreams are what make life
worth living.

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

Carmel Valley, CA

FLOW

Aging is my favorite time
Though I'm no longer in my prime.
My eyes have lost their perfect sight
And yet each day brings in more light.
I see what I still need to earn
The insights that I need to learn.
My guard no longer keeps me blind
To all the flaws I need to find.
I see the growth that still remains
The need for heart instead of brains.
I feel the gift of second chance
Each day brings in a sweeter dance.

Illia Thompson

Monterey, CA

QUESTIONS

Is silence a canvas
On which to paint thoughts?
Are letters ideas made
With circles, lines, dots?

If you put them together
In just the right way,
Can sentences tea
What a heart wants to say?

Is truth always true
Or can it be wrong
Like a melody written
for a different song?

Does the earth touch the sky?
Does every thought fly?
Does the redwood tree feel
When the wind passes by?

When I breathe am I helping
The plants as they sway?
Is a garden a party
Where fairies can play?

Whatever I ask
And whatever I say
Is somebody listening?
Please, don't go away!

EXORCISM OF NICE

Without Nice
I would be wild
I'd be a nonconforming child
I'd not complain
If you thought me a pain
There's fire not ice
Inside my veins.

Nice is empty
Nice is weak
I enjoy my wicked streak.
Nice is quiet
Meek and mild.
As I said,
I fancy wild.

Look out, friend.
I'm learning how
To exorcise
That niceness now.
I won't wait another day
Nice, it's time to go away.

Says Nice, Okay.

WHERE I'M GOING

I have been ill
Against my will.
I thought at last
That I had passed
Some point advanced
Of where I'd danced
Before.

It disappoints me
Out of joints me
To mistakenly
Believe I've reached
A height not breached
Before.

Alas, I find
A certain blind
Spot in my thinking
Was I blinking
When the light of truth
So brightly poured out?

A little voice inside
Quite lovingly confides
That I will not arrive
But keep on going.

The journey never ends
Like a river
Weaves and bends
Be willing to endure
The illness and the cure,
And trust in your own deep
Tendency to keep
On growing.

Shirley Tofte

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.