



**THE CREATIVE EDGE:
THE WAY OF THE ARTS**

a california nonprofit corporation

**NEWSLETTER No. 12
Fall 1992**

Contents:

THOUGHTS ON CREATIVITY — pg 2

&

LETTER BOX ————— pg 5

Presentation set to “*actual size*” on screen.
Change under view menu as desired

THE CREATIVE EDGE THOUGHTS ON CREATIVITY (NL 12)

by Donald W. Mathews
(cedonald@aol.com)

Night Harvest.

**Slowly,
in deep stillness,
in deep stillness of early morning darkness,
ghostly forms begin to stir.**

**Slowly in deep stillness
of early morning darkness
ghostly forms begin to stir
and haunt the empty chambers of my mind.**

**There is no image.
There is no dream.
There is no light.
There is no God!**

**I am alone.
I am alone on the edge.
I am alone on the edge of life.
I am alone on the edge of life with all life.**

**We are seeds.
We are seeds alone.
We are seeds awakening to light.
We are seeds awakening to light with all light.**

**We are traveling.
We are traveling forward in time.
We are traveling forward on the edge of darkness.
We are carrying the divine light of all creation for an instant.**

**We are the seeds of God.
We are the seeds of God for an instant.
We are the seeds of God and all creation for an instant.
Then we are gone—while the light of all creation continues on.**

—Donald W. Mathews

Night Harvest came to me with great emotional power as I awoke one day recently. It was an image that sees all life, not only human—including plants, animals, organisms, etc.—as meaningful participants, regardless of our differences, struggling to evolve as the living face of creation or God. Inseparably together, we are the spiritual light of all life. In the long haul of historical time and space, we have all been given the most honorable task to struggle creatively for a very short time seeking the best solutions to difficult issues while growing and living together in relationship. It is only out of our willingness to connect with each other with our personal differences that meaningful advances are made to satisfy our deepest longings to be together in harmony.

We humans, if we are lucky, live about 80 years in our families with a wave of three or four generations. But against the 15 billion years or so we have been evolving, our time in life is really infinitesimally short, and somehow, that seems just right. That dark acknowledgment of my own death and the eventual death of all my companions as a part of a much larger cycle, ironically brought to me a new feeling of freedom and commitment to life. It brought hope and a new lightness to my being alive. It also gave me new priorities for my energies.

Recognizing the slowness of evolution, I feel new patience and faith in the mystery of the creative process. I feel appreciation for all people of previous generations before me who have struggled as I have with the tough problems of life—with being present in my body physically, sexually, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually—especially during times of conflict and crises. I feel appreciation and love in my heart for all the fellow cocreators on the good spaceship earth with me now.

This seeking and finding a new deeper sense of appreciation for my fellow creatures and our environment gives me the insight to see we are all in this together—to make whatever small changes in ourselves and contributions to our world we can to help keep joy and inspiration alive for the next generational wave. It allows me to declare a truce in the war of differences over various current issues and have the freedom to be with others creatively with the gate to my private self open for exchange—for love.

In previous discussions I have eluded to the three inner or individual requirements necessary for creativity: following the muse of our own process, increasing openness to all experience, and playfulness. But now with modern life in the fast lane and so much turmoil around the world, insuring the two external creative requirements are satisfied is also essential to avoid emotional pollution and the alienation that stifles relationship and creativity. The two environmental requirements are psychological safety and freedom for members of the group.

As an artist, friend, or group leader, seeking an environment that fosters creativity, I know I must first establish trust, both inside myself and without. I must establish a healthy nonjudgmental environment where there is deep integrity and commitment to value and support the inner creative principles for everyone present. This is particularly true for all the diverse or disowned inner characters we all have—you know, the ones we hate to admit show up in our dreams. This is really a truce from ordinary competitive or power interactions and the truce must take place before the deep inner knowledge or important feelings that are hidden within each of us can even emerge to consciousness, much less be safely shared in the group.

It all begins with my own attitude—*with my own ability to find positive regard for all others present without evaluation while remaining empathically present and open with my own fluid emotional process.* This rich attitude can be very contagious. Judgment is set aside and reactions, particularly personal feelings, are shared as part of the process as honestly as possible. Consequently, the group is free to seek the creative gift or group muse while our differences are safely honored as we really listen to each other. All expression is welcome as long as it remains symbolic. With the personal strength to lower defenses and become emotionally vulnerable to the group process, we allow ourselves to be touched and sometimes wounded by pain that is present under the surface—this leads to unpredictable healing and bonding of the group. I like to call this love making of the finest kind.

With few defenses alienating us, or hidden feelings polluting, we can share and muse over the songs and stories in our hearts. Music, story, poem, image, dance, dreams, ideas and plain ordinary talk are often our most creative tools for loving and the cocreating our divine world. We also come up with great ideas for problem solving—it means we are each able to experience what we experience spontaneously and share it freely. Further, by suspending judgment, we can look at what is created by each of us with pure wonder and curiosity. Listening, sharing, and being inspired by each other is a major human task—this is part of our individual and collective responsibility to life.

THE CREATIVE EDGE LETTER BOX (NL 12)

Pleasanton, CA:

For various reasons in the past few months I've missed the Saturday support group. I have physically and spiritually missed it. I promise I shall return again. I read your daughter's letter in (the Spring '92) newsletter. I was affected very deeply by the words and feelings expressed. I shared it with a men's group I belong to. She sounds like a wonderful daughter.

Kirk Ridgeway

Orinda, CA:

**Oh we Oceanic beings
Our tears leak out from our vast interior
And show us Ourselves
In the thrilling moment
When the Universe speaks back
Giving us our name
The beauty and the pain flow together
Inseparable, unbearable
And the tears flow again
Washing into the Universe
Rising
Falling
Washing the earth clean again**

The process unfolds—and only later we may know where, or why. Maybe we never know—maybe that's the grand secret we quest for—the secret that lies hidden on the ocean floor of our beings.

Sharon Davies

Lytle Creek, CA:

I too have thoughts of your brother, I always try to rid my mind of them since he has been gone but they haunt me anyway. He was very protective towards me and by the sound of your dream, he may be protective towards you too. I wanted to remind you of the Dream Medicine of the American Indian. The Blackfoot culture was based on dreams. *Blackfoot Lodge Tales* by George Bird Grinnel might be interesting reading for you. Hope you enjoy this copy of *Dreamtime and Inner Space*—Inspiration is a beautiful thing—essential for every artist. Keep up the good work and God Bless you.

Linda Dalton

Tenafly, NJ

In response to your request for our thoughts, I send my poem on the roses, which emerged some twenty years ago. Being a late bloomer, I could not possibly have realized at that time how prophetic it was. It was written after observing three roses in the garden at 7:30 am on 6/9/73.

**The bud is beautiful as a kitten is cute,
and a baby sweet and a puppy warm
But none can tarry long this way—
nor would we want them to.**

**Prelude past, the bud unfolds to full blown rose—
petals firm, deep tinted, sweet fragrance
which bud cannot give.
She opens full to her Creator,
displays the glory of creation in her being—
one special rose.**

**Beside her another, open wide, with fading color on the side
of her petals, but still deep blush of beauty—
offers praise.**

**Near these two, yet a third gives thanks.
At first glance, ugly with age—
petals shrivelled and curling inward—brown—
which once were deeply red.**

**Firm flesh now soft, wrinkled, spotted—
scars of aphids feeding,
nourished by the rose, but aphids still,
no magic transformation.**

**But the rose, her beauty of maturity has been transformed
(and not by magic) into the aged beauty
of a life fully lived.**

**To beholder's inner eye, spoken wordlessly
from the deeps of her still blushing center,
comes the message—"I have completed the Way
that She gave me, and soon return to Her."**

**Her petals fall and she is all,
and on the naked stem
a small red fruit is seen—her legacy**

Now at 75 I am still a creative artist and performing dancer, struggling to accept the inevitable aging process. Don, your poem *The Great Hall* immediately brought up vivid memories of our steep candle-lit descent into the heart of the mountain of Zeus's birthplace on Crete. My enclosed art piece seems to me to be from inside a cave looking out. I'm glad to be a part of Creative Edge.

Joan Bockelmann

Yakima, WA

I just received your newest offering and I was moved deeply. I particularly treasured the letter from your daughter which seemed like validation for my FAILINGS (Spring Newsletter). There's a part of me that is nurtured and nursed by the muse you've re-awakened.

I am wondering if what's been lost is that sense of honoring the sacred and all it encompasses; people, creatures, plants and the earth. I'm thinking that the purpose of life—or perhaps at least my purpose in life is to honor sacred space. That thought moved me the other night:

**Honoring sacred space—that is the Intent!
Sacred space deserves ritual!!
Ritual to honor the freeing of chains and changes in sight.
A celebration for all those who have ever shed their chains
and learned to see.
I pray that I too might shed my chains,
stand taller,
walk freer,
and more aware—
and see with new eyes the joys and blessings
around me and within me all the time.**

**As I reflected on honoring sacred space—I wrestled with
judgement.**

**Judgment is like a rope around sacred space.
The more judgment I have for others,
the tighter I squeeze my own sacred space.
Judgment is a barrier to the experience
of the presence of the Spirit within.
I must remove my judgmental laws
so that my walls melt away,
freeing me to experience
bliss filled fullness.**

I haven't written to see myself in print, but—because I want to share with you the landscapes surrounding me at this point on my journey. To give you a feel of my Mythical dream. Thank you for sharing the light of your thoughts and for opening your Great Hall to my thoughts.

**Tears overflow, unable to be contained,
freed by the sadness and joy, the grief and the celebration,
calling to me from the great hall of my heart—
yearning to be explored.**

**My recognition of the sacred space within me,
is like deja vu, fleeting glimpses of a temple,
shrouded in mist.
I have a vague sense that the temple within me
and the temple within you—are one.
I will always be grateful for the gift of your flame,
struggling like my own.**

**I offer you my strength
and draw strength from your spirit
and from all other explorers,
fellow travelers on the pilgrimage
to honor the sacred spaces within.**

Leo Figgs

Orinda, CA

One morning I awoke from a very real dream in which I was a large bird struggling to break free from someone who was holding down my wings; suddenly I was awake with a strong sense of urgency to capture the feelings I had as a bird.

Soaring
Oh let the winged bird fly...not held to the breast.
Let it rise to its highest and best...
For a life held too tightly will wither and die
And a soul locked in by the almighty "I"
Will never be free to soar and fly.

Connie Hunt

Fort Collins, CO

Thank you for your latest mailing. I want to give you the enclosed contribution as a way to nurture our dialogue and friendship and to pay for the postage and print-outs you've sent my way. I appreciate being in your Creative Edge ripple effect. Here's to you and your Hall of Great Heart and our conversation as men in the Auditorium of Lifebody.

Stephen Maye

La Jolla, CA

I want to thank you for your newsletter, The Creative Edge. I hope one day to be able to participate in something of David Whyte's up there. Meanwhile, I am often intrigued by the similarities in poetic themes and thoughts. Your poem The Great Hall, brought to mind a couple of my own poems, and I thought I would share them with you. The first one opens a series called Time and the River:

**Stay a while.
I have many poems inside me.
Maybe you would like to listen.
My heart is open.
I long to know yours.
Come, let's walk together.**

The other is called The Poetry Reading:

**That was a jewel
That hour of ours
Burnished golden bronze
It was
All warmly smooth
And milky
And we drank in
Slow great swallows
And our thoughts kissed together
In the night.**

Please keep sending the newsletter, and thanks again.

Colleen Kelley

Pacific Grove, CA

I would like to share my thoughts and a traditional Native American Prayer in memory of my recently deceased friend.

**Oh Great Spirit
Whose voice I hear in the winds
And whose breath gives life to all the world
Hear me!
I am small and weak and need your strength and wisdom.**

**Let me walk in beauty and make my eyes
ever behold the red and purple sunset.**

**Make my hands respect the things you have made
and my ears sharp to hear your voice.**

**Make me wise so that I may understand the things
you have taught my people.**

**Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every
leaf and rock.**

**I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother,
but to fight my greatest enemy--myself.**

**Make me always ready to come to you with clean
hands and straight eyes.**

**So when life fades, as the fading sunset,
my spirit may come to you without shame.**

My friend Ted Stotler walked the Beauty Way, the Healing Way. He walked the way of the friend. He was a friend to all. He was a friend to the earth and her clear, pure streams, her mountains, trees, her sweet air and vast forests. He was a friend to birds and wild creatures. He was a friend to the children, to the grown men, to the women. He was friend to the elders.

Ted Stotler was a friend to the arts. As a doctor he was a friend to the reproductive rights of women. He was a friend to the new born, to the dying, to the grieving and the rejoicing ones. He was a friend to the hopes and dreams of all of us...indeed the hopes and dreams of humankind.

(Continued)

Ted Stotler was my friend. I too received healing and caring from him at a vulnerable time and knew the preciousness of his friendship. I loved him very much...partly because he reminded me of my Father—also an old-fashioned Doctor loved by many. His practice was in Alaska where I was born and raised. He died when I was twenty.

Healers like Ted and my Father give and give and give. Many of the ways they gave we know about. Many of the ways they gave we will never know. Perhaps most precious of all are the things we learn about after they are gone, poignant, beautiful stories, quiet things that were given in love in a time of need. I assure you there will be many of these stories and they will blossom like roses in our hearts, petal by petal and will stay with us always.

Barbara Rose Shuler

Ben Lomond, CA

You wouldn't believe how often I think about you and your "Creative Edge" program; I am always amazed and grateful that despite the fact I've not made it to one session yet, you still remember me and still send me newsletters. I can't tell you how much this means to me and to my inner child! This newsletter in particular had great special meaning to me because of your poem, dream interpretation, the piece about you and your brother, and finally, the dynamics of life—lessons, reincarnation of the "need to be present"...

I wish I were able to come up with something which expresses my voyage but just writing this was difficult enough; I deeply appreciate the writings of the other members and at least I can offer a few "trite but true" epithets which are helping me. *We are either part of the solution or part of the problem; We cannot complain about what we permit to happen; There's no justice, just us!*

And one I have felt my entire life—but only in the last few years have begun to have the courage to live: *That which is essential is invisible to the eye; it is only with the heart that one can truly see.* (The Little Prince by Guy de Maupassant)

THANKS! on behalf of myself and all "People of the heart".

Dianne Flagg

Thank you for your letters and creative offerings!

I have come to the conclusion we are all like holograms—each of us contains a unique part that reveals the whole of life. Yet, as we strive to know our selves and each other, the mystery of what we are only deepens—it is so difficult to grasp somehow. However, as we listen creatively to each other seeking relationship, we gain insight to the eternal forces mirrored in our collective lives and in our own souls. Often these hidden treasures are buried in our shared images, poems, or stories we tell.

The creative circle of trust established by your continued personal responses to the Letters to the Editor section of the Newsletter provides us this important glimpse into life's unfoldment in a much larger way than any one of us can make alone—we also bond together with companionship and support.

I invite you to look for emerging themes from your own or other's intuitions and creative works. Then, I invite you to comment on how they facilitate your life journey. I look for words and work I feel supports sharing and understanding of the creative process. I will add your address (Regular or E-mail) when you approve.

The Editor
(cedonald@aol.com)
<http://www.creative-edge.org>