



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

a california nonprofit corporation

**NEWSLETTER No. 16  
Winter 1993-94**

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## THE CREATIVE EDGE THOUGHTS ON CREATIVITY (NL 16)

by Donald W. Mathews  
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**Some say that my teaching is nonsense.  
Others call it lofty but impractical.  
But for those who have looked inside themselves,  
this nonsense makes perfect sense.  
And to those who put it into practice,  
this loftiness has roots that go deep.**

**I have but three things to teach:  
simplicity, patience, compassion.  
These three are your greatest treasures.  
Simple in actions and in thoughts,  
you return to the source of being.  
Patient with both friends and enemies,  
you accord with the way things are.  
Compassionate toward yourself,  
you reconcile all beings in the world.**

*Lao-Tzu* (The Enlightened Heart—Stephen Mitchell)

In each of us there is a great longing for unconditional acknowledgment of who we are—to be seen with the authenticity of our soul. We long to be *fully present* in our body, with the wholeness of all our creative energies fully alive. We long for intimate relationships where our hidden beauty, fears, and darker aspects may be revealed and witnessed with loving kindness. We long for unconditional love of ourselves and each other, so we may fully heal and grow together.

For this to happen, we need a shift in relationships from the confining co-dependence we often call normal in our society to mutual support of creative independence. This comes naturally when we develop a conscious relationship with our own inner resources, particularly dreams, intuitions and emotions tested by life experience. The first principle of creativity is a shift from dependence on outer authorities and their cultural rules for our direction to our own fluid inner process as resource—the resource of our soul. This requires patience and mature courage to face fears and pain—moving beyond blame and shame to our soul's deeper passion. We can not develop this inner strength alone, we need the honest supportive witness of other courageous human beings we trust. Witnessing each other with appreciation is a spiritual practice yielding solid evidence of

worthiness and the vision of new possibilities—it reveals the spark of our mutual divinity. Thus, in relationship, we experience our soul and find deep compassion for our shared humanness.

The spiritual connection to creation, life, or God, is the personal experience of a seamless connection to all that exists. Frequently, it is experienced as a mystical or peak experience—a short spontaneous opening to the divine in the middle of normal life. It contains a deep sense of wholeness and the absence of longing—the longing that arises even when all physical desires are satisfied and we feel loved by others. With a spiritual connection, longing turns into direction for living from the personal passionate soul level. Relationship is the gateway to the soul and spiritual connection. This occurs both within oneself and in relationship with others. When our relationships are limited or limiting, longing will eventually arise to guide us and signal our spiritual separation. Examining the longing and creatively engaging its focus provides spiritual direction and growth. This is an important work in mid life—the preparation needed for eldership.

In our busy lives this experience is often missing. Our tendency is to focus only on our faults, striving for perfection against society's standards. This has its merits, but is ultimately limiting. Often at an unconscious level it implies we are not good enough as we are. Thus we override the subtle inner signals and creative process of our soul—the very part of our divine nature that tells us how to heal and grow beyond cultural boundaries. As mature healthy adults functioning in our society, we need the creative responsibility of choosing our own way in life. Suspension of judgment and recognition of our divine nature is essential as we strive for this development. This is the mid life transition usually seen as crises.

Playful expression and sharing with others gives the necessary means to explore and find the appropriateness of our inner world discoveries. This requires time away from regular commitments and a place where we can gently invite personal dynamics forward from the normally private and hidden parts of our psyche to be present in the light of consciousness—a place to relax, be nourished, dream, express what we discover in our inner musings and finally, safely share with unguarded love what we find and feel with each other. Because we often become so personally vulnerable with the unpredictable content and associated emotions of our creative soul, we need the unconditional love of supportive witnesses in this highly creative act. When we have this, we gain the necessary confidence to be fully present in life with the fiery passion of our soul.

The first half of life is primarily about developing relationship with those in the outer world. We start with parents, family, peers, and later in couples as we often raise children and become a part of our culture. Relationship skills are not easy to acquire for there are many layers of maladaptive conditioning and unresolved experiences to be unraveled. Marriage often provides the most important

container for personal growth through extended relationship. However, all human relationship structures can only take a person so far because they depend on a prescribed form. It is then necessary to learn how to let go in relationship for continued growth. This develops for each person a well-rounded creative center—a soul based inner resource for life's direction. Eventually, a deep relationship with one's own soul must be established to provide a fluid creative resource for life's unpredictable challenges.

The inner cast of characters we find in our dreams communicate about the nature of our soul and its spiritual relationship. Generally, relationship with spirit occurs in the last half of life when we have enough experience and wisdom to gently let go of all outer structures and begin to live spontaneously in the world with creative passion as a spiritual being. We teach most profoundly by the way we live our lives in the golden age of our later years. As we approach death and our return to the seamless realm of spirit, material needs fade and our physical well-being is often challenged. However, it is the quality of our soul development and connection to spirit that finally provides the greatest strength, inspiration and meaning in our life, and in the lives of others.

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## THE CREATIVE EDGE LETTER BOX (NL 16)

*Carmel, CA*

I recently wrote a poem. Nothing unusual in that, except that it was the first poem I had written in almost a year. For a long time, because of the love that fills my life, I did not feel the need to put pen to paper, an act that had previously been as natural to me as breathing. Why write poetry if your life is poetry?

I thought the muse had left me, that I would never again feel the overpowering urge to not only experience life with wonder but to capture that process on paper. Then I did something quite ordinary that changed that—I went to buy a lithograph. While there, the person running the gallery showed me a work in progress by the artist.

It was a catalyst for me; it was as if a spark had just been struck to paper. I was standing in front of the creative edge in all of us, facing it head on. I saw what the painting was and what it would be and for a moment glimpsed the world as the artist saw it, witnessed the vision behind the creative force. I could no longer allow it to be dormant in myself, I had just seen so very clearly how strong a force it could be. And so I went home and came back to the poet in me and thought I'd send you the result:

### **RIDE**

**Like hoofbeats in the moonlight,  
The words come, wild and free,  
Leaving behind the traces  
Of fairy dust upon the unmarked page.  
The letters gallop into a radiant space,  
The sanctuary of the whimsical muse,  
And begin a swirling dance  
To become a herd of lyric sentences  
Touched by magic and light,  
An offering, as it were,  
To those of us perched  
On the tenuous edges of the fairy world  
Who happen, by choice or by design,  
To look in, gasp,  
And wonder.**

*Olga Jarel Chandler*

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*Fair Oaks, CA*

On the subject of learning from others, I'd like to share a poem with you that I wrote during my initiation conference with Brugh Joy. Brugh had glanced in my direction and I felt like he knew everything about me, especially the secrets even I didn't know. It was shocking to me and very unsettling. After I wrote this poem, though, I began to feel that I was really writing about myself. That there could be a way that I could look into those dark passages and know. I was able to reclaim my own power, instead of projecting it on someone else. Slowly I'm learning to recognize myself as I deal with the outside world. It seems such a gigantic task where I make some wonderful breakthrough only to go immediately to sleep, stumbling along in my life, unconnected to my Spirit and Soul. But my optimistic side tells me that I need to follow this pattern, for now, anyway, in order to really process my spiritual progress. Of course, there are other characters inside me that have other, more negative, things to say about it, but I've listened to them long enough. Like the poem, I know.

### **I KNOW**

**One quiet glance,  
One silent moment  
Of wondrous breath held  
Suspended in chaos  
Forever.  
Forever.  
One quiet glance  
One silent surge  
Of truth passed  
Through the center,  
Glancing off frozen secrets  
Reaching beyond  
Careful schemes  
Burning.  
Burning.  
One quiet glance and  
He knows.  
He knows.**

*Carol Mathew-Rogers*

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*Greenock, Scotland*

Many thanks for the Fall 1993—No. 15 issue of the Creative Edge! I only wish there were similar events and workshops here in the West of Scotland... [where] ... I am now lecturing in Art & Design.

My life is undergoing a great change... [looking inside myself]... So, as your thoughts on creativity say, I am prepared to “wrestle with unknown forces.” I suppose it will mean recycling my past not-so-good experiences into my future dreams and aspirations. There will be a lot of secrets voiced, skeletons brought out of cupboards, etc, but I think nothing can ever be as bad as the actual event itself, although the mind is powerful, there is also a healing there in opening up. I feel settled enough now and strong enough.

*Julie Ferguson*

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*Thousand Oaks, CA*

I played a drawing game of what if ... and when I was finished I found a wonderful message. I am sending you a copy.

- **to see today with an eye to the future.**
- **to speak from a listening place.**
- **to feed on the light of universal truth and connection.**
- **to allow the union of opposites...the unifying force in life.**
- **to reach out...to step out in the forward motion of movement toward the dynamic future that awaits us...always connected to the heart and and sound of consciousness.**

*Katherine Stadler*

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*Wrightwood, CA*

I very much enjoy your publication. Please renew my subscription to your delightful Newsletter.

*Frances Krause*

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*Poway, CA*

Please change my address, I can't survive here without you!

*Bev Jackson*

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*Saint Andrew's Abbey, Valyermo, CA*

I wrote this poem, in response to the death of my best friend. The first poem I wrote after her death was very constricted, and in a crushed voice. Then something stood up in my blood and began to sing, something Celtic. The St. Brendan poem is Celtic not only in the image of the aged monk, but in the strong rhythms, the alliteration and resonance, and the vivid and sacramental sense of nature. What freed me to sing was Celtic, too, because it is a blood memory of a world which honored men as warriors and bards and druids. The loss of my best friend is leading me into a new inner solitude, and I can meet it and sing it, and in singing, pray my way into this new and deeper owning of my own life.

### **SAINT BRENDAN ON THE CLIFFS OF SKELLIG ISLAND**

**There cling upon the cliffs of Skellig Island  
Some hermits' beehive cells of mist-grey stone,  
Ringed round with sparkling grass true emerald green,  
Where white and purple flowers blow,  
Bowing as the Spirit breathes from where It knows  
To where It will, gathering lauds of wildflowers  
Till It lifts Its ageless praise  
From cliffs to streaming sky,  
Within whose impossible vault of blue,  
White gulls wheel round beseeching,  
And seals' barks loft from beaches far below,**

**Here a lizard on the warm stone dozes,  
While nearby a sacred manuscript, now loosely rolled,  
Quivers in the whispers of the breeze,  
As holy Brendan sits alone, not in study,  
Nor in dream, but empty waits, amazed,  
Himself, his soul, the naked vellum upon which  
Words no man can say are writ with iron pen of pain  
In characters of fire unseen,  
And now and then a sigh the only punctuation  
In this script so silent grown,  
As out in the open of the sea-girt world,  
Where islands sing and flash as salmon do in spring,  
God, with His finger, begins on Brendan's spirit  
To inscribe the radiant mystic runes of utter faith,**

**There beneath the royal canopy of day,  
Brendan sits in deepest inner night,**

(Continued)

**Scrying beyond all hope or sight  
Those lovers' words from speech or dream withheld,  
Than discourse, than desire  
Churning round the circles of this world,  
Than all which blooms in spring and in autumn  
Passes dead away, intimately more precious,**

**Beyond all memory of his glorious voyage  
To the Blessed Isles of the West,  
Through inner vistas darkling past horizon,  
Through sins forgiven and wounds still bleeding,  
Brendan lays bare his torn heart,  
Seeking full surrender to the Saviour,  
Christ Himself the poem unspeakable,  
Chanted in the soul's high hall,  
He the night and He the day,  
This island's stone, the wild ocean's spray,**

**He the quaking wildflowers' splendor of an hour,  
He the cry of gull and sea, the yearning all things  
Have, to be, to move, to make, to mate,  
To know and love, to spend themselves upon the next,  
And then at waning of the day, to take their leave,  
And from the havens set forth west  
To that which lies beyond the Hesperides,**

**Then as Brendan weeps unnoticed tears,  
The Brilliant Star, that from highest night  
Had fallen in his breast,  
Twin within of the Holy Sun,  
Shooting dark and piercing rays,  
Blossoms beyond all ken,  
And holy Skellig, in its ancient arms,  
Holds Brendan in his waking swoon,  
Himself his burning prayer now become.**

*Father Gregory Elmer, O.S.B.*

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*California Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo, CA*

I can't imagine what it is that you feel is worthy of being printed, but of course you are welcome to use anything you'd like. The honor is mine, believe me. I'm extremely proud and excited about an endorsement I got on the books [Drawing On Wholeness—Workbooks by Kevin Lock]. I am so honored, that you may have heard me whoop for joy where you live. Ten years ago, I never could have imagined that any of these things could have been in my grasp or that I would have even begun to know such an incredible group of people. Life is good, I don't care who is stuck into thinking otherwise.

You know, life/society may be or seem unfair sometimes. But I don't regret experiencing just as I have. Sure, there are things I would have rather avoided, but each negative aspect has enriched my creativity by being forced to seek new ways to cope and grow from it. It has also provided me with an understanding that helps me relate to others on what I feel is a deeper level. So everything is as it is for the best possible purpose. Right? I still have a long way to grow but people like you have entered my life with fresh new outlooks and enough compassion to help me experience and see my shortcomings, not from fear and shame, but from "What am I going to do about it." That's a big difference. And one I'm grateful for.

I wish I could reach everyone on a personal level, but I guess all we can do is work on ourselves and hope that example can provide a role model for others to learn from.

*Kevin Lock*

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*Perris, CA*

I feel somewhat bound to what is happening... my "visions" will no doubt be confusing [to some] due to my bipolar nature. The concept of interpreting nature, dreams, relationships with others helps us all—mostly myself. Thank you for the "La Ventana."

It is said that in a days journey for it, one will find gold.

*Chris Maat*

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*California Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo, CA*

I am currently incarcerated at the California Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo. During the last 12 months I've been doing a lot of soul searching. I have in the past not had a very good outlook towards myself and felt that there weren't many

things that I was capable of doing. Suddenly I began to write poetry. I really don't know why, it's just something that I started to do... Throughout this process I became very involved with my inner self looking for ways to improve not only the way I see myself, but also the ways that I perceive other people. I was so encouraged with my writing of poetry I...went through Kelvin's "Drawing Through Wholeness" course twice...Through this course I also started to see a lot of the mental trips that I had thrown on myself. I wish that we had more of these types of extra curricular activities of this caliber to enhance ourselves, not only physically, but mentally as well.

Enclosed you will find some of my work.

### **LIFE**

**"Being" is Life  
"Love" in your Soul  
"God" in your heart  
And in your mind you now know.**

### **FROGS**

**These creatures they are slimy  
And live in a pond  
Eating live insects  
From dusk until dawn.**

**There are green ones  
Red one, black ones too  
Big ones, little ones  
More that I ever knew.**

**They cannot hurt you  
For they are very kind  
They make good pets  
Some of the best you'll find.**

**So if you see them  
Don't despair  
Because [if] you want some insects  
I'm sure they'll share.**

*Steven L. Imler*

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*Pleasanton, CA*

I thought I'd send you a copy of a recent poem I wrote as a token offering. I write less than I used to mostly because I spend so much energy with working and continuing my graduate studies in Transpersonal Psychology.

**WALK WITH A FEATHER**

**I found the feather of a hawk  
And walked with it.**

**I felt it's edge cut into wind  
Lifting and falling  
With each twist I gave.  
I felt it's weight become weightless  
When the pitch was just right  
And the air flowed smoothly.**

**For an hour I played  
And became the bird,  
Sensing each change of now  
Responding to each new movement  
Feeling the pleasure of feathers.**

**Now I watch the hawks  
Circling, swooping, gliding.  
I watch them adjust their wings  
Flap to change their course  
Float on wing.**

**Because I walked with a feather  
I know the feeling of flight  
The hawk  
The wind.  
Because I sit on this log  
Silently watching  
And alone  
I know these things.**

*Kirk Ridgeway*

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Thank you for your letters and creative offerings.

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  
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