



THE CEATIVE EDGE:
THE WAY OF THE ARTS

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THOUGHTS ON CREATIVITY (NL 19)

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

**Do not sit long with a sad friend.
When you go to the garden,
do you look at thorns or flowers?
Spend more time with roses and jasmine.**

—*Rumi*

(*Open Secret*: Translations by John Moyne and Coleman Barks)

As I sit with various gathered groups, I am struck with the creative power of *appreciation* when expressed for personal offerings of another in the group. That is, genuine appreciation offered with the integrity of one's own congruent personal feeling process. Then it acts to establish a foundation of trust and psychological safety for the whole group to risk personal vulnerability. It encourages expression of unique opinions and differences that can lead to a creative break through. Appreciation carries the life giving energy of Eros and is an expression of love. It is recognition of the innate beauty of each person beyond normal comparison with some external standard or judgment of their process or stage of development.

Many feelings, impulses and thoughts are frequently hidden to avoid embarrassment because they often seem beyond rational reason or popular opinion. However, it is these very imaginative discards that are often carriers of new possibilities leading to important results. They are part of our intuition—a mysterious knowing from our depths. As all artists know, the Muses frequently speak with this strange often wild and irreverent language. Like our dreams, these inner communications are divine gifts from the Gods and also reveal the unique voice of our Soul. Holding an attitude of appreciation toward both the many dimensions of our own psyche and those of others establishes a richly creative environment. It also builds community between group members leading to the warmth of intimacy. I call this special inclusive attitude spiritual and its environment sacred.

In all communications there are choices for level of response. Choices vary from information on the stated or implied subject, to underlying wisdom hidden within the subject known as content, and finally, feelings and emotional energies present. Since in each individual there is a unique process not necessarily consistent with any outer reality, the choices for expression rapidly expand in a house of mirrors full of reflections and projections. Further, there are free-floating energies in a

group quite independent of any particular person or rationale. Consequently, selection of the appropriate response to facilitate creativity is often confusing.

I feel *all* expressions by other people need to be seen as containing wisdom or something important for the collective process even when they seem contrary or disruptive to our own position. *When we look for the gift in any process or from any person, it can be found through the power of our imagination and intuition.* However, the bias we humans have developed for processing experience is one of limited critical review, probing for what is wrong or faulty in what we perceive, often before we enter the experience. This method is important and does support growth and perfection of our endeavors. However, thorns of criticism are only part of the story and can easily polarize destructive energies separating us from the flowers of our creative potential. A rose bush has little value without its flowers, and roses only grow on thorny branches. But ultimately it is the flowers that we must cherish and let their beauty affect our lives as Rumi so adroitly said.

We *are* capable of cultivating a paradoxical attitude of appreciation without losing objective criticism. This may create great tension within us, but when we have the inner resources to consciously act as the container for opposing forces, the plants of healing and growth may develop. This paradoxical way is not easy, for often we must patiently wait, waiting for the Muse to come with the flowering buds of an appreciative response.

The task of this different style of relating is to bring forth the unique wisdom carried by each and every group member resulting in a far richer vision of their universal or collective concerns. It is a vision far greater than the private focus of any one person. The direction of the group is set with *fellowship* on a spiritual base of service to the collective. This is also the theme of true Kingship that has intrigued me in past discussions on creativity. Inwardly it applies to the many diverse characters of our psyche and outwardly it applies to any group as the leadership actually is shared through the personal contributions of diverse group members.

This style represents the form of a new creative way of life ready to emerge through the active participation of all of us. But it requires personal courage, strength *and* vulnerability. It requires healing the split or separation we often feel from others and with the Divine or God. It requires we wrestle personally with the issues of life not just for our own private needs but with the deep understanding that in our interconnectedness, another's needs and experiences are also our own. It is a method that encompasses the diverse rich creative resources of all souls united with common spirit.

THE CREATIVE EDGE LETTER BOX (NL 19)

New River Correctional Institution, Railford, FL:



Bruce C. Jonas

Menlo Park, CA

I've been meaning to send something for some time as a small thanks for your newsletter. Your newsletter is a delight.

THE DANCE OF CREATION

The Dance of creation dances us. All pain and suffering are caused by attempts to stop the Flow of Energy from the God-head. Literature, art and music are filigrees through which the Light of Creation flows in exquisite patterns of variety and complexity... Since the Flow can never be stopped all such attempts are only temporary wrinkles or folds in the Flow. It is a game we play with ourselves... We create whatever we wish and then we forget we are doing it. It is the dance of Creation in action and Coyote is always laughing behind the illusion.

Ginger Bennett

Lovettsvale, VA

Here is some "stuff" from the lakes.

WORDS

**O poet, beware.
If it needs explaining
 Forget it.
If it needs clarification
 Don't say it.
If it needs elaboration
 Stop, pick another craft.**

**Those who love life,
 Reach out
Use those strange symbols.
 Paint a tapestry**

**Harmonize a jingle
 Evoke a feeling
Use the only tools you have,
 Words.**

**Take the small letters
 Breathe fire into them
Let them reach out
 Let them be words,**

**Words that sing and dance
 And laugh and cry
And respond to the human condition.**

**O fortunate being of many gifts
Is not language the greatest?**

Dick Bernhart

Denver, CO

Here's a little piece I'm submitting.

I WILL DANCE...

I will dance in the meadow with sunbeams reflecting off the pond. I will eat moonbeam ice cream. I will wear beautiful, multi-colored garments woven from specially dyed yarns. I will sing magical songs to my grandchildren which they will remember all their lives and sing to their children. I will correspond with mythic heroes and heroines, long dead, who will share their secrets with me and I will incorporate those stories into my own writing.

I will travel on magic carpets to far-away lands and meet people whose language I will miraculously understand and whose food I will find delicious. I will become a wise woman whose experiences everyone will learn from. I will achieve immortality before I die. I will be outrageous, dancing in the meadow of my life, wrapped in moonbeams, decorated with stars and singing ancient songs with words I never knew before. I will grow into myself, I will become who I truly am. I will write all this down to share with others. I will keep my promises to myself.

Judith Mahrer

Galena, OH

I am delighted to receive your Newsletter. It gives me the desire to actively be with my poetry... It gives me that little extra opening to let the feeling spring into words. I thank you for your openness in sharing of your life and experience of your inner mystery. Something about sharing these things between people feels right!

Bruce Butcher

Elverta, CA

It's nice to have someone to share poetry with—a rare thing.

BETHANY

my daughter seeks, I think, to crawl inside my skin.
She would like to take my life and try it on for size.
my remnants would become her mirror:
How do I look, mama, how do I look't

When she dresses her doll she pulls and tugs
until laces rip, wrenched against unyielding plastic hips
While gossamer veils snag on unseen hooks
losing their beauty with the strength of her determination,
and glassy eyes stare heavenward in smiling supplication.

Sometimes, I sneak through the house,
hiding as I hear her footsteps.
and listening.

Does she need me?

I am here.

By unseen threads we are connected
she and I.

She is my Janus face
and when she pulls on the strings
I, like the doll's clothes, strain,
tearing against the hips that birthed her,
the arms that hold her,
hiding behind the smiling face that breathes the balm of
Bethany's scent.

Unnatural mother,
my other face turns,
seeking the empty path
which beckons in mystery and solitude.

Sometimes I hide in closets
holding my breath that she may pass.

But ever she comes,
lightly down the hall calling
mama, are you there?
mama, are you there?

My daughter seeks, I think, to crawl inside my skin.

She is there.

Carmel Valley, CA

Enclosed is a poem that reminds me very much of the Creative Edge and "The Royal Way" which your Kingship thoughts brought to my mind.

SYMBOLS

**Begotten in the steamy vistas
of antiquity,
collective perceptions
secreted away
in murky niches
still unreached
by shafts
of conscious recognition.
Images raised
from boggy depths
dragging archaic feelings
like strands
of seaweed
inextricably entwined
in ancient anchors.
Coded messages
from the long-ago caldron
of man's beginning,
rarely deciphered
by rational effort,
occasionally stumbled upon
by intuitive meandering.
But ever there
beneath the surface
of everyday awareness,
awaiting acknowledgement
and transformation.**

Sharon Hermes

Carmel Valley, CA

**My voice has a heart
impulsively loving,
My sadness has soul
and will live for eternity.**

**Beyond stars, yet here
in this sweet moment—
Here I am
at last with new hope,
thoughts of new dreams
still unknown
while the future is
already open
full of choices
to surprise and bring
renewal.**

Kim Lee

Burbank, CA

I'm 78 and have played tennis until June.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

What is the meaning of life? Like a mirror it can reflect light into dark places where the sun would never shine... deep holes, crevices, dark closets. We may be but a metaphor for what I might do with my life... like a mirror whose whole design I don't know... With what I have, I can reflect light, truth, understanding, knowledge... into the black places, into the hearts of men, and change something in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise! Hopefully just me.

Bob Slavik

Carmel, CA

Here is my registration for Ashly's workshop in January. I thought you'd be amused to know that the very act of sending this off called the Muse to my attention. When I went to the box of stationary for this paper, the first piece of paper I saw was the the enclosed. Aha!

**Until one is committed
there is hesitancy,
the chance to draw back,
always ineffectiveness.
Concerning all acts of initiative
(and creation),
there is one elementary truth
the ignorance of which
kills countless ideas
and splendid plans:
that the moment one definitely
commits oneself,
then Providence moves too.
All sorts of things occur to help one
that would never have otherwise occurred.
A whole stream of events
issues from the decision
raising in one's favor
all manner of unforeseen
incidents and meetings and material assistance
which no man could have dreamed
would have come his way.
Whatever you can do,
or dream you can,
begin it.
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.
Begin it now.**

—Goethe

Maureen Girarad

Connie Hunt

Monterey, CA I was cleaning up folders and came across this tidbit to share.

It is as if life, when it is truly being lived, were a series of birth canals. We go along for a period of time, then suddenly or gradually we are no longer satisfied, our job is no longer a challenge, our partner is no longer exciting, the old ways no longer suffice. If we relate to the natural rhythms of the psyche, we find ourselves in a womb, withdrawn from the world, no longer sure who we are or where we are going. If we can stay with the pain of the death of the old, and bear the crucifixion of the transition, eventually we are born anew. We may enjoy the new plateau for a few years, then the opposites begin to break apart again, forcing us to new levels of consciousness. Sometimes we feel we are moving up, sometimes down - whichever way is both up and down. The lotus flower that opens to the sun has its roots deep in the nourishing mud.

Connie Hunt

Pacific Grove, CA

This fragment was written in response to a Creative Edge Seminar discussion about dreams. My dream images were quite disjointed the night before but one moment was luminous and powerful.

DREAM CORNER

Last night I caught the corner of a dream...lucid, urgent.

You are dreaming. Yes, dreaming. No, not as you sleep now, but in your life... in your life. You are dreaming in your life and you must wake up.

“Let me show you,” the dream voice said.

And, suddenly, in my dream, I felt awake in life as if for the first time—reality different, more alive, clearer, substantial. And I saw, felt the scintillating awareness of a new way of being.

“Find this place!” said the dream. “Do not forget. Remember this dream and awake!”

I am holding tightly to the corner of my dream

I wrote these words while sitting by myself pondering some of life's mysteries.

TO EROS

**Dancing with you,
I play hide and seek.
I yearn to drown in your
Sweet, rich fire.**

**I want to bury in you my soul
For a moment...
Perhaps a lifetime.**

**But you are so mysterious
That I hold my longing back,
Safely dancing to the shadows
Wondering who would leave me
Who would stay
If I should let you in
To be my breath,
My voice,
My motion,
And my feeling heart,**

**Wondering who would hold me close again
If I should wake one day
And find you gone.**

Rose Reynolds

Loomis, CA

Thank you for keeping me on your mailing list. I enjoy your publication immensely. I would love to be closer to attend some of the activities listed

Marilyn Jasper

Carmel, CA

Your very thoughtful piece on the unity of the soul/body brought to my mind a poem I had written many years ago...There always seems to be this duality to life holding that space between for our own personal choice. Perhaps that alone is the meaning of life: Will we come from our inner love or our outer fears in the choices we make each day.

PARTNERS

**And so I was born...
Just as I was meant to be
Dancing through life, so free...so free
Opening my eyes, opening my ears
Experiencing the physical with no fears.
Now I am growing so fair and tall.
Now I am feeling my joy in all.**

**But a shadow is creeping
Into my being seeping
Warming me, scolding me, shaping and bending me
Twisting stretching and pulling me out.
The outer me conforms, but the inner me shouts...
No, No, let me be: can't you see my beauty?
The outer is fearful, anxious and vain.
The outer is causing the inner such pain.
Each resists one another, then reconciles
All the while learning to beguile.
So the contest begins for my soul here on earth
The time for the testing of my spiritual worth
Though life we two will struggle for the work is not done
Till the outer and inner become the one.**

Sherry Litchfield

Carmel Valley, CA

ALMOST

**We write notes to each other,
my granddaughter and I.
Simple love letters
that find their ways
on small white squares
of telephone pads, transferred
to stark refrigerator door,
Scotch-taped with hint of instruction:
“Turn over” composed to keep our declared
love almost secret.**

**But were you to see how our eyes meet
across any length we happen to span,
you would find that turning words to walls
cannot keep them concealed.**

**So I speak sacred phrase: “I love you”
include family code “all the way to the moon and back”
and we hug, holding solidly, so tightly
that the space created by her grandfather’s death
almost disappears.**

Illia Thompson

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

I don't know if you realize what gift you provide, and I'm sure there are those who feel that we (as convicted felons) are unworthy of any voice, but the sense of pride and accomplishment that is received from others seeing value in something positive that we've done or come to understand and being recognized, for it is incredibly Powerful Medicine... Just think what our world would be like if everyone were able to acknowledge others for some strength that might have been taken for granted and missed, or striven for but never feeling a headway. Instead of feeling insignificant or unsuccessful and powerless in a society that doesn't seem to care, motivation to improve and hope arise instead. Then, rather than feeling the need to forcefully overpower another or degrade someone in order to create the illusion of self-empowerment... a block for foundation on which to build is provided in a way that benefits all mankind. Everyone has a skeleton or two in their closet that imprisons their judgement and surrounds them in fear. It's been costly, but I'm lucky, my arrest and conviction exposed my skeletons—then, close scrutiny and understanding forged into the weapons that rendered the monster harmless. There were no longer masks and disguises to enable its existence.

Kevin Lock (Levin Lock served his sentence and is presently on parole: Ed)

Pacific Grove, CA

I personally enjoy reading THE NEWS thoroughly and although my time has not allowed me to partake of your meetings, I am sure one day I'll show up at your door.

I also place THE NEWS in my waiting room and I know many people read it because each issue gets dog-eared and is always left in one of the treatment rooms at the end of the day.

Joel Shain
Forest Hill Chiropractic

Pacific Grove, CA

Unfortunately I haven't been able to make it to any of the meetings lately. Anyway, I have enclosed a poem for your use in the newsletter if you can find the right space for it.

THE SOUL'S LAMENT

**A man sinks down,
Picks up a small piece of cloth,
And hears the hidden music from the river of tears.
Something inside changes,
It's always with small unnoticed acts
That we touch the other world.**

**Our soul sings constantly to us,
Asking:
"Do you hear the lament I sing
At the threshold door?
Open that door,
Let this despairing song
Remind you of the time
Spent at the lake of sorrows."**

**Remembering, you find the true bride,
The one already wearing the ring,
Who brings you treasures
You cannot imagine.**

Ian Warder

Toronto ,Canada

I'm quite bowled over with the amount of work you put into your Creative Edge and your newsletter... I've enclosed an article I wrote this week for our IN TOUCH Newsletter, the Newsletter of our Therapeutic Touch (TT) Network, of which I'm co-founder and present Secretary. I love the implications of the non-local mind... it adds another pathway in that "mystical experience of inclusive relationship with the mystery of all that exists" you mention in your newsletter.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE NON-LOCALITY OF MIND

...It seems to me that TT is a continuous personal experiment in exploring human consciousness and in expanding our own reality... And one of the "by-products" of being involved in TT is that we are forced to consider some mystical questions, pondered for centuries by the greatest philosophers. "What is mind?" "What is consciousness?" And, "Am I connected to the energies of the universe, and if so, how?" Being involved in TT is a constant testing of what we believe to be and accept as our reality and an opportunity to share our feelings and our thinking with like-minded people... If healing is indeed a coming into awareness of one's non-local nature, TT is a natural stepping-stone for us on this path Physicists are constantly looking for that finite, and so far very elusive, basic building block of the universe. We, on the other hand, are comfortable connecting with the infinite universe.

At a recent David Whyte Workshop I wrote this:

**It doesn't interest me
to find out if there are limits in the universe.
What I want to know is
can I risk moving to the edge of my own limits
and even moving beyond
into the unknown territory of true limitlessness.
Can I let my heart, my soul, and my very core
expand beyond my own imagination,
Confidently not lost in my spaceless place.**

Crystals Hawk

Carmel, CA

SEA OF SADNESS

**A time in solitude and stillness, lie,
Pierce the perimeter of the present,
Smash the mask, the perfect pose,
Dare to feel, lay bare the real.
Let pain and passion pour forth,
Empty into a sea of liquid longing
For what was and no longer can be:
The child with energetic innocence,
The girl with delightful dreams,
The siblings with bountiful banter,
The parents with loyalty and love,
The young woman with golden goals,
The marriage with meaningful moments,
The husband with hustle and hope,
The child's child with playful jubilation.
Floating fantasies of fun and frolic,
Moving magical memories
Now awash in a sea of sadness.
Flounder, drift, then stay the course,
Even when the gravity of grief
Exerts its powerful downward pull
To the dank depths of despair.
A time in solitude and stillness, lie,
Dare to feel, lay bare the real.
Languish in the pain, and cry
For what was and no longer can be.**

Patricia Hitzl

Carmel, CA

Thank you so much for sending me the newsletter. It was a delight to read the beautiful poems.

Carmen Priolo

Department of Corrections, Michigan City, IN

Here's a lyric to a ballad I wrote the other day.

THE STORM

**Just the other night I had a dream
I was sailing upon a stormy sea.
The waves were high, the surf was rough
It looked like the end to me.**

**The winds were wild, how the ship was tossed!
Lightning struck the forward mast
Rain in my face, water on the deck
Hope was fading fast.**

**Suddenly appeared an angel in the sky
She whispered "Turn the helm over to him..."
And as I did the sea grew calm
The storm had come to an end**

**I awoke in a silent sweat.
Thinking about this life I've lived
How it was like the raging storm
How close I was to giving in.**

**I've never been a prolific man
That is, words aren't easy for me
But I got down on my knees with an open heart
And confessed each and every sin.**

CHORUS

**Said I to the sky, dear God above
Have you the time for me?
The storms grown to be just a little too much
I could use your direction it seems.**

**Take from me this worldly mind
Oh, let me know Thy will
Fill my heart with your sweet love
Make the seas calm and still.**

Jeffry (Levi Tailor) Ford

c/o DOC #901029 E-W-95 ISP DOC
PO Box 41, Michigan City, IN 463601-0041

Thousand Oaks, CA

Thanks so much for the Fall (1993) Newsletter—Really full of worthwhile reading. Enclosed are copies of two drawings I did during my recent trip.



He who looks to the future



She who mourns the lost traditions

I feel extraordinarily challenged and find that it is the stuff of life that shows me how I handle things and how wonderful most people are to one another. The future is bright with opportunit somewhat hidden from me now, however I know I have a lifetime of experience, love, support, courage, faith, training and knowledge to find the great blessings it all represents.

Katherine Stadler

San Jose, CA

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

O, gracious Father...

Bestow on me your nature.

Impart in me your Holy Character.

**Sanctify my steps and direct my thoughts in a pathway
of loving service.**

Fill me with your wisdom that does all things well.

Vitalize me with Your infinite energy.

Whatever is lacking to my being, O Lord, supply that to me.

Make me like yourself, most richly blessed.

Lead me by your own hand through this uncertain maze of life.

I am Your warrior, ready to act in accordance with Your will.

**When my mortal end shall come, make my earthly existence
an honor to Your Holy Presence.**

Receive me into Your endless service on high. Amen

Father Jack LaRocca

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

(cedonald@aol.com)

<http://www.creative-edge>