



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

a california nonprofit corporation

**NEWSLETTER No. 21  
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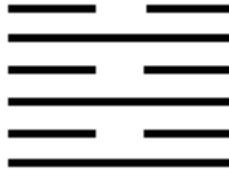
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## THOUGHTS ON CREATIVITY (NL 21)

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

### *Hexagram #63 Chi Chi / After Completion:*



#### *THE IMAGE*

*Water over Fire:  
the image of the condition in  
AFTER COMPLETION.  
Thus the superior person takes  
the thought of misfortune and  
arms against it in advance.*

#### *The I Ching*

The image is of a kettle or cauldron filled with water over a fire thus generating energy (steam). But the resulting tension demands caution. If the water boils over, the fire is extinguished and its energy is lost. If the heat is too great, the water evaporates into the air. Proper balance between these two elements is required because they are basically hostile to each other. Thus, extreme caution of the experienced sage is necessary to take precautions and prevent misfortune.

There is a powerful paradox in this Hexagram from the Book of Changes! The constructive energies of fire and water become available through relationship with their opposites. Human relationships between men and women are like this. And a similar situation exists in the inner make up of each person. To live a fiery passionate life, we must develop the inclusive strength and courage to live with the watery gates to emotions open. Thus we become the fiery crucible for life's experiences beyond the creative edge!

Our most powerful emotions are our fiery passions--joy, love, anger, grief, hate and greed, to name a few. Passions are beyond the edge! They include boundless enthusiasm and extreme despair. They also include powerful sexual desires--desires that initiate and help sustain evolution of life itself. Inviting these wild forces into our lives takes courage because we often lack the strength or ability to

control them. Unbounded and unpredictable, they are as dangerous as a winter storm or summer hurricane! For when emotions are uncontrolled, they generally create chaos--often a most creative chaos we are usually unprepared to handle until much later in life, if ever. As I talked about in the last newsletter, in our society we are generally trained to shut down emotionally at a very young age and avoid many powerful human passions rather than develop the resources necessary to master them. The word root of passion literally means "to hurt" or "suffer." Only when we wrestle with our own pain and human limitations do we understand and resist creating pain for others.

As we successfully develop as human beings, we are increasingly marked or hurt by the experiences of life--this can give us character and the will to engage more of life with curiosity, strength and courage--the deep feeling of the heart. Or, overwhelmed by fear, we may die--literally or figuratively hiding from the light of life and its dark companion, death. We may discover we are wearing a thick invisible coat of armor for protection as I once did. However, most often the painful sting of life experience develops strength and inner resources of the psyche--the divine resources of the soul. It may not prevent death, but choosing the inclusive way of the soul adds rich quality to life experience. This is true in all dimensions, mental, physical, emotional and spiritual. Successful experiences give motivation to seek out further fulfillment of desires and longings--acceptance necessary to face the hard work and suffering required to master fully human passions. On the other hand, to endure and survive the trials and tribulations of life we also need nourishing support. Often we need a safe haven for healing and to develop new resources necessary for life's increasing challenges. Thus to seek a passionate way of life is to seek an inclusive way of life, balancing the many complex forces leading to relationships with these terrible powers.

As any artist can tell you, awareness and openness to flow of feelings and emotions are what brings intuitive insight for creative expression or action. The Muses are always associated with mystical springs of water. However, ultimately emotional and intuitive flow brings whatever already exists within, including repressed pain, suffering and whatever else is hidden in the human heart.

Life is not possible without both pain and pleasure and they often cycle into our lives when least expected. However, our capability to inclusively seek these forces makes a significant difference on how we eventually experience life. Our choice of a creative attitude toward experience is our most cherished human gift. When it is positive toward emotions and all other experiences in life, we can learn and find meaning--this is our greatest creative potential. When we are caught in the arms of fear and defended against the stuff of life, we are isolated from the rewards of life. This is particularly true with our most valuable assets,

relationships with self and others in the world. The ancient wisdom says to start with oneself--particularly the emotional self. As we know and accept our selves and our powerful emotions, we become congruent and whole--ready for a passionate life with others. We develop integrity and the fullness of our human potential. Thus with experience, we gain compassion for all life and the richness of the world in which we live.

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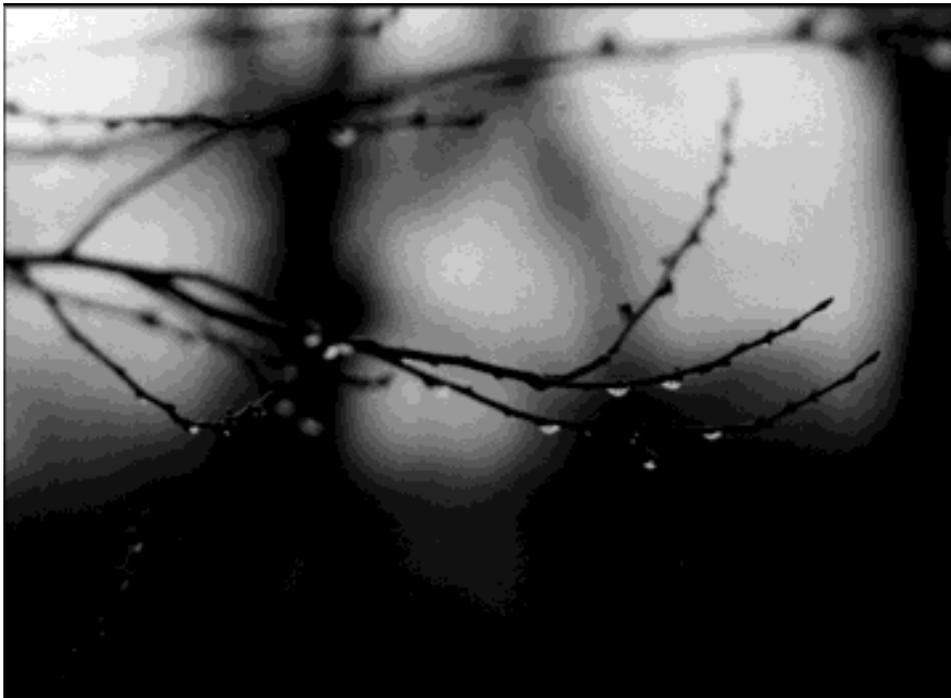
## THE CREATIVE EDGE LETTER BOX (NL 21)

*Sonora, CA*

On page 8 of the last Creative Edge Newsletter (#20) there is a short poem by Shirley N. Price:

“I came across some raindrops falling from the sky,  
E'er eluding capture no matter how I try.”

My answer: “I tried and I caught them.”



*Elaine Wing*

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*Jacksonville, OR*

**WELCOME BACK**

**Goodbye old tenants  
regrets, resentments and poor me.**

**I don't need you anymore.**

**I'm ready to wake up  
took a long time  
hard work.**

**A new life to discover.**

**Once in awhile  
sometimes at two in the morning  
I feel anxious.**

**A knock on the door  
and there they are  
the same old tenants.**

**"You again!  
What the hell, come on in."**

**I guess we still have work to do.**

*Clair Killian*

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*Fair Oaks, CA*

Today I found myself sitting in a quickly darkening kitchen, listening to the staccato notes of spring rain collecting in dense puddles around my porch. Idly glancing down at the day's mail, I was caught by the patterns of poetic words captured in the spring newsletter. Instantly I was transported to a place where unpaid bills and muddy paw prints became secondary citizens, and emotional longings and heartfelt declarations took center stage.

Once again the message came through that my soul yearns for creative nourishment and artistic playfulness. A shuffling of life-long priorities is called for, and a shifting of energy occurred. Thanks to your newsletter and everyone who contributes, for a magical afternoon journey.

*Carol Mathew-Rogers*

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*Sacramento, CA*

I'm so happy to be a member of the family!

*Mary Kupper*

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*Carmel, CA*

Here are a couple poems for the newsletter.

### **SAME BLUE POOL**

**Each day  
Every hour  
Every second  
a fresh note  
high, low  
on the scale,  
each add their voice.**

**Water cascading  
notes splashing,  
clashing  
Fall--**

**We're all the same blue pool  
Swim!**

**This long journey,  
each musical molecule  
winds about--  
Turbulence.  
Rocks echo--  
silence.  
The sweet sun dances to our beat.**

**This long journey  
through murky sounds,  
through crystal nectar,  
each note engulfing  
the following  
creating a third--  
Vestal force rushing in  
to tidepools of rest--**

**Sun sounds radiate  
into single seconds  
to  
De-  
Compose  
Jewels of mortal breath.**

## **TWO ROSES**

**Two roses  
side by side  
one, voluptuous--  
one, curling--  
graciously with death.**

*Paola Berthoin*

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*Monterey, CA*

## **LIFE'S RIDDLE**

**I am tears. I am pain.  
Without me you are a hollow vessel,  
Devoid of true meaning or purpose.**

**I am warmth. I am joy.  
With me you are filled, content, happy,  
Secure in the arms of Mother Life.**

**I am worry, fear, sorrow.  
Abandoning me is to taste of Death,  
Feeding only on ashes of bleakness.**

**I am tears of laughter.  
With me your horizons are limitless,  
Bounded only by the focus of your joy.**

**I am foolish, but wise.  
With me you can be stupidly silly,  
Yet be filled with knowledge beyond ken.**

**I am youth. I am old.  
Timeless in my outlook, sometimes I fill  
Only moments; yet often fill lifetimes.**

**I am shared--given away.  
for, if held too tightly, I can sicken,  
Spoil and turn inward, feeding on myself.**

(continued)

**I am gentle and strong.  
As fragile as a gossamer wing; but  
Steady and surging as an ocean wave.**

**I am hard. I am soft.  
Pitiless in my intensity, you can  
Drown in me; or be a garden of comfort.**

**I am desire, contentment.  
For I cause you to want--and to have  
Passion and sweetness--both or neither.**

**I am steady and fickle.  
Everyone's legacy; no one's hoard,  
I can be given away--and grow by it.**

**I am cries in the night,  
I am quiet happy warmth in the day,  
I am brief. I am eternal. I am LOVE**

(Copywrite 1995 as unpublished work)

*Jeff Hudelson*

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*Pacific Grove, CA*

Your poem, "The Drought", brought to mind one of my oldies-but-goodies I thought you might like, so am sending it to you in thanks for all the good work you obviously do. Also, in a lighter vein, I am enclosing a copy of my latest one, (the one that broke my drought).

### **THE RIVER**

**I am the source  
And the banks through which I flow.  
I am the timeless depths  
Of the sea to which I go.**

**I am the river and the raindrops--  
I fall,  
I flow.**

## BUBBLE BATH

Great twin peaks  
Speckled brown  
Jutting through clouds  
Face to face.

A pair of rounded atolls  
To the north--  
Shaman's medicine-rocks  
Magically centered--  
Their paler mounds  
Barely visible.

Flowing north to south  
Between paired sentinals  
The river of life--  
Mysteriously hidden.

*Dale*

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*San Jose, CA*

I studied the contours of his face--the lines that hid a disguise. He smiled but his words hit blows to my blossoming pelvis, muddying the Venus who rises from her shell, blackened, bruised, unable to emerge with sumptuous beauty. He would not touch me--either as friend or lover. His body moved, distanced, apart. In the sand he smashed rocks, distorting their shapely curves into angular, jagged pieces. He whispered of other lovers with which he burned molten moments, moments echoing in my empty bed. Moans--breathless delight is dead!

*Lara Cone*

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*Seal Beach, CA*

I wanted to share with you a poem that I wrote after one of the year end conferences with Brugh Joy. Now that I am not in school I begin to have an idea that I will find time for the things that matter to ME!

## **COMMUNITY AND SOLITUDE**

**In the sheltering arms of our individual solitudes  
We create ourselves, evolving moment by moment  
Into deeper expressions of ourselves**

**We come together in community  
Allowing others to experience something of who we are.**

**We each bring our joys and sorrows and searchings  
And imbue each other with their essence.**

**Our sorrows may be soothed by sharing and understanding,  
Our joys multiplied by mirrored joys in the eyes and hearts of  
Others and our searchings meet other searchings to explode or  
Perhaps ooze into new awarenesses.**

**Dancing into and out of solitude and community I am filled  
With a deepened sense of who I am, who you are and an  
Appreciation for the tapestry we weave together.**

*Karen McKee*

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*Beverly Hills, CA*

I was so very much in accord with what you had to say and the direction of your thinking about the creative process as I read through all your Newsletters. I started to make notes and then several times I turned the page to find you saying much the same thing as I had jotted down! Particularly concerning getting “close to something” when I am working. I get agitated--sleepy--need to go out and escape it and then have to return to face the challenge. You talk about the “anxiety producing edge” or limit in newsletter #7...

I like what you say about periods of inaction--the fertile darkness, intuition, wrestling with some “wild images” which may emerge.

I wrote something about living joyously and being grateful for the opportunity I have to make art and participate in some way with the larger creative forces of the universe--and then I read your phrase about participation in creation at the deepest level! I do feel that way.

I have been thinking about the black figures in my paintings as representing the aspect of dying which the psyche must go through to be reborn or the theme of destruction which is necessary for change to take place that gives the work some hopeful interpretation instead of being as gloomy as some people have found them (See last newsletter #20). But then again everyone projects his own stuff on the the work of art.

Someday I'd like to talk more about “beauty” and art--that term is so abused and is understood differently by different people. Not all art is “beautiful.”

*Eleanore Berman*

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*Palo Alto, CA*

Enclosed... a couple of my creative expressions of recent times.  
About the poem, it was a dream--I wrote it down exactly as presented on  
awakening that morning! The poems I try for don't seem to work as well! Thank  
you and all your fellow artists for sharing The News with me.

### **DREAM**

**I am 90  
I am dry, I am old  
I am a leaf blown  
Blown by the breath  
Blown, blown only  
By the breath  
The breath of God  
I have no will of my own  
I have no flesh  
Only bone  
I tumble I flutter  
Random-seeming  
Along edges  
Of road of sidewalk  
Caught, held, blown again  
Swigled upwards**

**I am free  
Free of choosing  
Free of wishing, wanting  
Just to be  
Be blown like Hildegard's  
feather  
I am dry, old, a leaf blown  
Blown on God's breath.**



*Vanessa Salt Swan*

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*Pacific Grove, CA*

**The Goddess is descending asking for earthly embodiment  
mine  
What does she want of me--what do they all want  
The lost gods demanding recognition  
wanting to be human  
They tear me apart with their requests  
--forcing my very soul to try and remember  
the reason for life  
Is not God himself asking me to make him conscious  
only that**

*Mary E. Thomas*

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*Mountain Ranch, CA*

Two poems from my book *The Single Parent Wilderness*.

### **STEALING TIME**

**I must steal time  
to give thanks to the earth.  
I must steal time  
to give thanks to the sun.  
I must steal time  
to give thanks to the Spirit  
that feeds them both.**

**I am suspected of vagrancy  
wanting to meditatively sit  
& give thanks to no-one.**

**I am suspected of treason  
wanting to write poetry  
& paint pictures  
as an offering  
to the invisible  
real low  
& organizational  
form.**

**I am suspected of unmanliness  
thinking my time better spent  
being with my sons  
than playing monopolistic  
games of gain.**

**I am suspected of insanity  
wanting to express my feelings  
about what is really happening with me  
instead of what I am supposed to be.**

## **JOSEPH LEADING AN ASS**

**I am tired  
of being Joseph  
leading an ass.**

**I am tired  
of being an ancient  
poor priest mumbling  
religio-erotic praise  
to a perfect pedestal  
plaster of Paris  
iconic queen.**

**I am a lover.**

**I am not  
a hari-kiri  
platonic machismo knight  
waving the *Wall Street Journal*  
as if I were Lancelot  
about to enter  
the tournament of plastic roses.**

**I am not Arthur  
wheeling his Round Table  
like a science fiction space station  
through cosmic corridors  
of spiritually stage-struck  
stars.**

**I am a creator  
of the whole body now...  
not just a futuristic  
provider for the created.**

**My sons are best provided for  
by being with them now.**

(continued)

**I cannot give them my vision.  
I cannot give them my hope.  
I cannot give them the fruits of my labor.  
I can only give them my love.**

**They will go blind  
with my vision.  
They will despair  
with my hope.  
They will die  
with my fruits.  
They will find themselves  
with my love.**

*Conrad Levasseur*

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*Perris, CA*

Thanks for sending me the current Creative Edge Newsletter... Attached is a thought for my sharing--participating, etc.

**IS THERE A SHAMAN IN THE HOUSE?**

**Images, visions and dreams,  
bound into streams,**

**People, place, past  
a circle unbroken**

**Animals and energy, life and death,  
myth and madness;**

**All creation  
a poem, a path.**

*Chris Maat*

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*Pacific Grove, CA*

**ASILOMAR BEACH--1995**

**March 12**

**Moon set, rise of sun  
extending field of balance  
Equinox nearing**

**March 25**

**Wild flowers popping  
dancing grace notes of color  
springtime concerto**

**March 29**

**Puffs of pastel cloud  
bedecking sunrise heavens  
in shades of Monet**

*Belicia Govine*

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*Pacific Grove, CA*

May 13. An exercise with David Whyte at Point Lobos.

- 1) Describe an object in detail.
- 2) Write feelings as the object is examined.
- 3) Write a prose poem merging the first two parts.

My Object:

A great gray-brown rock sitting in the sea. The sea boils around it's base. White breaking waves rise at it's base and fall away, movement constant--fierce and quiet, then fierce again.

Shaped like a cone and, then, as I look closer, like two cones. One smaller and in front of the larger one. From this distance it appears that the great gray rock has a mighty crack which gives the illusion of two cones. There must be smaller crevices in the front part of the rock for when a wave hits for an instant I see many tiny, white waterfalls flowing down from the middle of it.

The top of the rock is lighter than at the base. The top part is covered with dark specks, shadows maybe, bird droppings perhaps. Hard to tell at this distance. The rock sits at the end of a ridge of other rock formations very proud and prominent taking the first hit of breaking waves. Behind it in the distance a large jut of land rises to the left as great green hills full of trees. Above, the sky is gray.

My Feelings:

There are many grays here. The steel gray of the sea. The brown gray of the rock, the lighter gray of the clouds and lighter still the gray of the sky overhead. Inside are grays also. Inner neutrality against the rock and the cold sea spray and the chill of the wind.

The rock stands like the Rock of Gibraltar in my vision, while waves, sky, and birds change around it. Birds fly and it stands, changing itself in geological time, aeonic time, not human time.

Physically I feel the edge of a virus that attacked yesterday. The chill of the wind, a satisfied belly from a sandwich, banana and a sweet for lunch.

But grays dominate and strange feelings of being watched by the blind prophet Tiresius persist--triggered perhaps by the mention of a blind beggar earlier this morning. Why Tiresius? I am feeling a strong pull of this figure shrouded in the heroic words of a past era. It is as if he looks with eagle or hawk eyes down through the centuries at me... like this rock, utterly unmovable with the world, ancient and future crashing around him, looking now at us, and, my god, at me with his seer's vision piercing like white flames into this present moment.

"Can you see what I see?" he says.

I stare into his blind eyes and shudder, questioning everything for a moment--the rock, the sky, that solitary bird hovering.

There is a sudden chill like the wind blowing across my face. What does Tiresias see?

My Prose Poem:

## SEER

**Tiresius, blind one, prophet--  
you appear suddenly in my mind's view  
fixed in time  
like that great gray rock  
sits in the sea.**

**I feel your eagle-clear sightless eyes  
sharply staring at me  
in this moment  
of this century  
as if I am some speck  
in your future.**

*Rose Reynolds*

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*ISP, Michigan city, IN*

I break up my day studying theoretical concepts, playing scales, arpeggios, melodic exercises, composing, arranging, and learning new material. Crazy as it sounds, I find too few hours in my days. I sit on this bunk and work. Often I'll skip a meal just not to lose my train of thought. Donald, music is... it saved me. I tried everything else. College was never my thing. Factories, restaurants, convenience stores, cable T.V., service routes, counseling, owning my own business, it all left an empty void. Music isn't that way. With guitar in hand my cup runneth over. When I catch that glint in a student's eye when they grasp a concept that hadn't been understood before or I see a lone tear streak down a listener's cheek, it's the highest compliment--it's nearly orgasmic. It has little to do with fortune or fame. It has much to do with doing something very few can do... I've found my niche, it works for me. My music has changed my thought process a great deal and 5 years of sobriety has a way of clearing cobwebs.

I've never seen a soul given a brush and paint that couldn't abstractly paint something. That is creativity... It's one of those things that just is. Most often those who do not consider themselves to be creative have never chosen to try to be, or recognized how creative they actually are. When you make a sandwich the choices made are catsup, mustard, lettuce, cheese, wheat, white, turkey, salami, bologna, etc. All are creative choices. My opinion is that once anyone recognizes how simple creativity is--they will consciously become more so. We as humans are limited by the constraints of what we perceive as to be "limits." It's the fledgling that ventures beyond the established parameters that set a new standard... Once we as vain creatures realize this and overcome inferior feelings and enjoy our creativity for what it is--then we see our true selves. The question must be then, what can we do to inspire people to let go of inhibition and vanity to experience the creative process? What activity can we present?

*Jeffry "Levi" Ford*

c/o DOC #901029 E-W-95 ISP/DOC

PO Box 41, Michigan City, IN 463601-0041

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*Lakeside, CA*

It's hard to believe how much truth lies in Campbell's words "Follow your bliss." I've told you how drawing began as an escape and way to hustle envelopes and supplies to draw with while in prison. Then how it became a way to build self-esteem and how it worked as a recovery tool... Re-entry into this fast paced society and its high cost of living took me away from my drawing for too long. I did land a job in the art department of a motion picture studio because I saved many of my original drawings that I did in prison, but I wasn't really applying those skills... But recently the producer got to see my portfolio and I'm now the conceptual artist for a TV pilot based on the first "Beastmaster" movie. So it looks like staying clean and sober with a lot of hard work and going hungry to pay bills is starting to pay off! There's no telling where the door to this path will lead, but I eagerly await this adventure.

I live with the philosophy that the past is my history, not my destiny but I can't forget the injustices I lived in prison. I'm grateful for the time it allowed me to grow, but I am still in contact with prisoners across the country who received all the benefit they will get and now slowly grow bitter. I can't write them as often as I need to, but I remember how much I gained from your words and those of others who maintained faith in me. You gave me the strength to keep going and hopefully my words will provide encouragement and hope to others.

I guess what I'm leading to is how much I commend and endorse the work of Creative Edge. If only there were some way to convince more people just how important the arts are to a person's wholeness, perhaps those related programs would take a higher priority in our society as a whole and individually--as a balance for growth and direction.

*Kevin Lock*

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