



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

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THE CREATIVE EDGE THOUGHTS ON CREATIVITY (NL 23)

by Donald W. Mathews
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The Way In

**Whoever you are: some evening take a step
out of your house, which you know so well.
Enormous space is near, your house lies where
it begins, whoever you are...**

—*Rainer Maria Rilke*
From Selected Poems — *Robert Bly*

When I was a boy, before men walked on the moon, peered deep into other galaxies or manipulated violent energies of the atom, I was called a dreamer. I dreamt of adventures with round table knights and futuristic space travelers. That was long before I learned to fly airplanes or to navigate in psychic territory, crossing the protective boundaries of this reality into unknown dimensions beyond time and space.

As I sit at my computer with its miniaturized worlds of electrons organized to serve my thoughts and aspirations, it is easy to reach out and touch others through a new web of intelligent communication — the Internet. Like Adam and Eve in the garden of creation, we now all have the choice to eat an apple from the tree of knowledge and reckon with its consequences — to become like the Gods. It is the apple of electronic wizardry taking us from the industrial age into the digital age. I believe it is also an age of expanded consciousness. However, the new consciousness will radically change us, bringing again both new pain as well as pleasure!

As I contemplate the look and feel of a computerized world, I realize we are transcending time and space by all ordinary standards. Essentially we have developed a method of innerspace travel known in my childhood as a Time Machine. Through the Internet and that part of it known as the World Wide Web, we leap instantaneously around the planet using words, images and sounds to create new realities for personal and collective use. Without leaving home we have immediate inter-active multi-media communication with others from around the world, with people both similar and diverse.

When the lights go down at a movie, we enter another realm. It is the realm of imagination evoked by screen images, theater sound and the vast sensory

experiences stored in our personal memory. The look and feel is so powerful, the experience often is seamless with ordinary reality. Through this art form we can travel safely into dangerous and inaccessible places and situations. Reading good books in earlier times, we used the same imaginative processes letting our mind detour along paths evoked by the story. Dreams are often like this, authored by the mysteries of our own psyche — offering a powerful and truthful feed back of personal and collective dynamics we often hate to face.

What digital computer technology makes possible is entry into this other-world known as Cyberspace. Not long ago these realms of imagination leading to a developed mind were only possible for a select few. By shifting from “atoms to bits” as Nicholas Negroponte outlines in his book *Being Digital*, a quantum leap is made bringing new efficient possibilities with the digital age. Essentially, computerized networks using computer information (digital bits) give us the possibility to work and play creatively, productively and cheaply, without having to use precious resources (atoms) in either manufacture or distribution — often distribution to a select few with economic wealth. This is significant for both ecological reasons and to decrease dependence on economic wealth as manufacturing down-sizing continues. Furthermore, through cyberspace travel, many actual trips are eliminated. Thus we are gifted with time — time saved to enjoy life in ways we never thought possible.

Today the world is radically changing. Like the late Berlin Wall, protective barriers around economic power structures are being shattered everywhere — shattered by the knowledge explosion fostered by the digital revolution. We need to overcome fears leading to withdrawal or isolation from the complexities of the new age. Rather, in this time of great creative potential, we need to “step outside our house” to find the wisdom to handle this vast change.

The future impact of this new technology on the world is not predictable. One must have faith in the inspiration that comes to individuals and groups from deep within — from the source many of us know as divine where the bias is in support of life. It is a time for courage to explore change and its many creative possibilities. It is a time to make a contribution to the larger community of life and its evolution from what we discover in our personal explorations. Broad numbers are learning use of the intuitive process artists, inventors, scientists and priests have always used. Beside discipline, responsibility and mastery of the creative process, we also need great appreciation for the often conflicting views found among us diverse human beings. Outside your house, *what step beyond the edge is waiting for you?*

THE CREATIVE EDGE LETTER BOX (NL 23)

Helene, MT

**When I began searching
for my Muse I had no
idea that she was
also hunting for
me.**



I believe that all of us have inner characters that dramatically influence our daily lives. Usually they remain in the unconscious and can only be found when we project them, with great emotional intensity, onto the innocents that surround us.

For an artist, staying alive means staying creative. So naturally I am interested in keeping my creative fountain full. As do many male artists, I experience its source as a beautiful, virginal woman: my Muse. But she had wanted to be recognized so powerfully for so long that when I finally did approach her, what I found was a Muse with an agenda.

For nearly a year she locked me in an intense struggle to comprehend the incomprehensible magic of human creativity, the very power that makes us

“images” of God. Seized with great emotional tempests, like Odysseus sailing into Sirens, I could release the pressure of experiencing that fiercely Beautiful Song either by jumping overboard (psychosis) or by singing back. Thank God for art (and for my family!). I sang with all my heart, in every medium I could bring to bear.

These drawings and notes are the footprints of my struggle. It is wholly material of my private process, and was never meant to be shared, let alone exhibited publicly. This exhibit came about at the urging of several close friends whom I’d allowed to see some of the drawings. I offer it in the hope that it may illuminate God’s mysterious, erotic and frightening gift of unbearable Beauty, that amazing fount of inspiration that brought our species to the evolutionary throne and continues to deliver us from what might otherwise be a deadly, mechanized approach to the problems of existence.

Tim Holms

Clearwater, FL

I’ve become intrigued with haiku poetry — excellent to practice here-and-now, in the moment recording of imagery. Just a few:

**Each snowflake’s different
But God's diversity’s gone
With lick of the tongue.**

**A swarm of black crows
Fills the sky with polka dots,
Clouds with chocolate chips.**

and then a double haiku poem:

PARADOX OF SIMPLICITY

**Simple as the bird
Skimming the water's surface
Above turbulence.**

**Simple as the bird —
Wings flapping create waves, then
Shimmers in the air.**

CaroleAnn Lovin

Orinda, CA

Speaking of following creativity wherever it wants to lead us:

BREAKING HABIT

**The chopping block
was covered with blood
that day,
red and sticky.**

**The cleaver was likewise
stained.**

**No meat was served
and the family went to bed
faintly hungry
for the first time
in years.**

I think God invented poetry to have a vehicle to poet's own heart in a way that they could never understand, and therefore could never defend against.

Sharon Davies

Cedarville, CA

I always need to prepare myself to read "The Creative Edge:" to place myself in a receptive stance ready to receive the gifts of experience, mind, and heart offered by those who write in.

What a rich offering in issue 22! The poetry of Carol Mathews-Rogers, Clair Killen, Sharon Davies, Karla McLaren, Anne DeVees, CaroleAnn Lovin are wonderfully powerful to me. Thank you all! Sharon Davies poem... "this one is a carpenter from hell. Pounds nails from the inside out." What a memorable line.

Today I'm making a silver heart pendant for my granddaughter Sophie's first birthday. I think of her as I saw and file and prepare to engrave, trying to place some of myself in the piece: knowing it will be hers long after I'm gone, and wanting her to be able to see me in the heart even then.

Jerry Blanchard

Rockford, IL

**HOT SPRINGS
ARCHEOLOGY**

**Sulfur chalk
coats oak leaves
and dragonfly wings.
Delicate, dry and
perfectly preserved
even under water,
where all is desolved
but these salty
petrifications**

FIRST WINTER FROST

**You have to learn to love winter again,
returning to this climate after years away.
You have to learn to relax into it,
in moments when you see
with new eyes
the frost tatting on the edge of leaves,
secret white messages written to you
on the windows in the morning,
The wild arrow of geese over head that call out
pointing the way to warmer climates.**

**No one really knows what these signs mean,
but they add up, together they tell us,
that soon the snow will sleep the earth to spring,
good parents, winter and summer,
ever present, constant,
tucking us in at night,**

**but something changes once again and forever,
the way a gentle touch softens a cold night,
at the edge of the lake
the first day of frost.**

Robin Lysne

DOC, Michigan City, IN

(I have been busy) preparing our 1st Annual “Christmas Show.” Done on video tape — to be broadcast here on our closed circuit T.V. station... My role is coaching.

Actually, it’s given me an insight. Creativity seems to be synonymous with volition. Too often I see people encumbered by stigmas that they are guilty of nurturing. Music is sort of like swimming. I recall my Granddad throwing me into a shallow pond and yelling “Swim or don’t — your choice!” Obviously I swam! As I think back to the 1st half of that summer, sitting on the bank dipping my feet in the water, I now know without that “nudge” I might never have learned to swim. Often people sit on their “Musical banks” and never get into the water. Sure, it is scary. It makes you feel almost inferior when you first try to improvise and can’t make your chosen instrument relate what you want it to. Yet, this is where everyone must start. I observe an embarrassed, almost painfully so, student attempt improvising at a keyboard — struggling and becoming frustrated. I play a progression (on guitar) of chords which allows him to select any white key and be in the proper range of notes — A little smile develops... Soon he/she is making music, real music! It’s that smile, that short moment of observing their own realization that they can make music that makes me enjoy teaching so much.

Of course few possess the discipline to master all music or even a single instrument, but it’s of little consequence. Once they feel their own creative flow, it runs over into other areas of life. My opinion is that creativity is infectious and will breed and foster more and more of itself.

We are blessed with an inherent ability to create music, draw, paint, sing, throw pottery on a potter’s wheel, sculpt, or dance nearly with thought once we learn to tap into this “right brain” function. Our levels of proficiency only change with volition and effort, but actual creative process is not limited by knowledge. Betty Edwards book *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* is a fabulous place to find a means to tap into this “right side” for the skill of drawing. She takes a person without any skill to a place inside themselves where they may find their own creativity. Teaching a little psychology, a little perspective and a heck of a lot of awareness.

P.S. I’d love to correspond with more readers of the Creative Edge!

Jeffrey “Levi” Ford

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Carmel, CA

POET TO PAINTER ON AN OUT OF SYNC EVENING

**Lying beneath your “Madonna del Latte”
I am troubled.**

And I recoil in foetal ouroborous.

**I have refused my body to your insatiable satyricon,
Preferring this night to burn upon a different pyre.
You persisted, insisting satyr-like,
I resisted insistently, come una donna.**

**You offer my sunny Roman balconies,
A life of settling into secular pannini and garrulous espresso,
While I dream on, past incarnations of wandering amid Florentine
gardens,
images floating off into the distance like plumed
condotierri;**

**I dream on,
of Firenze,
of the Quattrocento,
and how the Ecstatic Mother visited Leonardo’s silence.**

And I long to be a Beatrice to some obscure young Dante.

**While you paint on & on, icons to the Uhr-Mother,
Primeval, faceless — like a dinosaur doomed to extinction.
I shudder and hasten to escape the amphibian slime
For the drier shores of Apollo’s brilliant calling.**

Anya Kucharev

Aptos, CA

The morning of the November 4 Creative Arts Fellowship was, to say the least, most memorable. I came prepared to share a piece on “Indira Gandhi,” written 12 years ago almost to the day. No conscious reason caused me to select this from my collection of prose and poetry. Leaving early for another appointment I was unable to read it to the group.

Driving back to Aptos I had a strange feeling come over me, thinking once again about the content of the poem. Arriving home later that day, I continued to sense some inward feelings that were unexplainable. hearing the news that evening of

the loss of Yitzak Rabin compelled me to call you and send the piece... it seems appropriate to “rededicate” ourselves, to remember those who strive for peace and harmony amongst all men.

**“With faith, there are no questions;
Without faith, there are no answers.”
—Jewish Proverb**

All must share in the responsibility of their deeds, good or evil. Those who remove good from others, soon are removed or, through their own doing, remove themselves. We can only hope for God’s will to amend these things. I struggle with my forgiveness for the wrongdoer and their family.

INDIRA GANDHI

**An assassin’s bullet,
On Halloween Day,
Brought this leader down,
In the year of 84.
She walks among us no more.**

**A dreaded deed,
In a world of turmoil.
Fearing its own destruction,
India’s future in doubt.
Only time will tell us
How it all turns out.**

**Rajiv, my friend,
Not with any envy,
Walking now in the shadow,
Without the luxury of remorse.
Nominated by death,
To determine her course.**

**As the world watches.
Democracy, coup or chaos.
One act
In a three part series.
The truth of mankind,
The final test
Of all his theories.**

ISP Michigan City, IN

As I was sitting around one night with a little “free time” on my hands... I wandered over to Levi’s cube. Levi is an individual whom I enjoy spending time with due to his levels of maturity, friendliness and intellectualness. This environment has a very non-stimulating growth aspect to it, so individuals such as Levi are few, but gratefully appreciated.

The one aspect I am drawn to in Levi are his creativity levels. He told me this one evening in question, “Hey Rick read this.” The Creative Edge was what he handed to me. I went back to my cube, lit a cigarette, made an ice coffee and began the journey Levi had sent me on.

As I laid there on my back looking in the direction of the ceiling, but not seeing it, my thoughts seemed to be exploring my soul and unlocking doors. As either new thoughts, or old ones’ emerged, I felt like I needed to write you and at least express to you and the people who contributed the articles of Newsletter #22 a heartfelt appreciation for the nourishment.

Thank you and the people in Newsletter #22 for awaking a piece of me I didn’t realize I could use here.

(Later)

I must express my gratitude for your kindness, and your encouragement or as I interpreted it “your point of direction.” You indeed stimulated a self-quest within me to try something new outside of drawing. I’ve tried something that reflects what the Creative Edge is about. I have written a poem for the first time in my entire life. I might not have a serious future in poetry, but I’m beside myself for what your words of encouragement did to me. I stood for a moment (more like about 4 hours) within that wellspring you mentioned in your letter to me, and panned through its sand and located a very special gem. Your nudge for me to dig deep within myself for “another side of me that hasn’t yet been discovered!” couldn’t have come at a better time.

My daughter will be turning 4 yrs old March 7th, 1996. Her name is Lekisha and she is indeed very special. I did dig deep... to create something that no one in the whole world could give her. I did just that — I created a poem entitled LIKISHA! Thanks to you and your concern and kindness for me to grow.

(Continued)

LEKISHA

**The time has come, for your “Big Day,”
with no work, just all play!**

**With cake and ice cream, goodies and punch,
all will be fine, I have a hunch!**

**Though I am here, and you are there,
within our Hearts, we are a Pair!**

**Now close those beautiful big eyes, but do it real tight,
and let all your wants, soar like a kite!**

**With the belief, that as a child you possess,
you make a wish, for yourself the very best!**

**So take a deep breath, and don’t you dare pout.
Let our souls touch, and together we’ll blow those candles out!**

Your presence in our lives shows us there are “Angels Among Us!”

Robert Burgess

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Carmel Valley, CA

You asked, “What is the source of our inspiration?” I submit this:

**You must walk sometimes perfectly free,
not prying nor inquisitive,
not bent on seeing things.**

**Throw away a whole day for a single expansion,
a single inspiration of air.**

— Henry David Thoreau

Laura Bayless

Volcano, HI

UNTITLED

**love enters
falling in winds
reaching noisily through limbs
thirsty trees
twisting trees
twisting
turning**

**stillness becomes;
beating wings
dancers steps
the pulse of rain**



**ILUNA
above
the forest
the uplands
wrapped in a vaporous wreath
'IO circles
then swoops in a heavy arch
down
across a grassy clearing
and up into high Ohi'a
from the landing
tufted — bright
Lehua — swollen
cold rain shudders
raining down
in the fullness of life
the body of the Woman's
Love
gives birth to the land
and the tree
and the blossom
and the bird
and the rain.**

Kaluna West

Santa Monica, CA

I so enjoyed your issue 22, its fine poetry and your beautifully expressed thoughts on creativity!

YES TO THE CREATIVE EDGE

**A rare collection of spirits
Who urge each other on:
Say what you believe!
Say what you feel!**

**This message was missing
From my childhood.**

**And so my process is mute
I am busy hearing others
Applauding courage
Not my own.**

**I sit with my fear
Still a frightened child
Hearing laughter
Feeling mocked**

**Escaping to the safety
Of observer.**

Duffie Bart

Lovettsvale, VA

**SEEKING
They come, they pray
They pray in different ways
They pray in different places
But they pray**

**They've always come
They've always prayed
And they prayed
Differently**

(Continued)

**Who is the God they see?
What is the God they seek?
Some simply call out "God"
Each caller's idea of God,
Different**

**Does it matter?
From the Buddhist
Serenely and softly
Chanting "A—O—U—M—M—M"**

**To the knee-scratching
Beseecher of "JEESUS"**

**The ecstatic rolling rhythms
And clapping of
"HALLELUYAH"**

**The anguished seekers
Of jobs, relief from sickness,
A new boyfriend**

**The quiet acceptors of their lot
The peaceful and contented**

The totality of the human condition

**All seek solace in a higher power
God, Nirvana, Yahveh,
The ineffable one
The higher power, the Force, Ra,**

**From earliest known times
Man has placed his trust, his hopes
And yes, his fears
In a power or powers beyond his ken**

**So we pray, and pray
Give obeisance to that we know not**

(Continued)

**But know something greater than us
Orders the universe
Guides the butterfly
Governs all**

**And here in Loudoun County
The church-bound go
In many ways —**

**Lovettsville's St. James
Sharing joys, concerns, load of sin**

**Leesburg's Baptists singing, clapping
Exalting the spirit**

**Lincoln's Quakers silently
Patiently waiting 'till one shares
And more, or maybe not**

**Unitarians in Purcellville
Earnestly seeking ways to
Make themselves better and help others**

**Bahais in Leesburg, accepting all
Sharing all, humbly, happily being**

**Winchester's Lord's Chapel
Caring sharing seeking
Following many paths
And joyous**

**What is your path?
What is your solace?
How to seek peace?
How, fulfillment?**

Accept the higher, the not known.

Dick Bernhart



Daytona Beach, FL

**And the tanglimesh
gnomes offered the
sacred idol to the
guardian phoenix of
the eternal chasm...**

**A rite of passage...
to forage, worship,
endure.**

See Donald...
I'm still creative.

Bruce Jonas
Tomoka Work Camp

Portsmouth, NH

WIDOW'S WALK

**I walk out into the chill of a November afternoon,
uneasy, restless with widow's concerns.**

**Broad panorama of pewter ocean
and sky spreads before me,
solitary landscape to match my mood.
On the bluff, Chatham light blinks its warning.**

**I walk down through the tawny marsh,
dotted with thickets of dark cedars,
low lying bushes of topaz, russet, old gold.**

**As I bend to pick three tiny perfect pink blossoms
nestled in the yellowed leaves of the rosa rugosa,
sunlight pierces slate skies sets the marsh afire.**

Anne Dewees

Great Barrington, MA

Hello Brother Artist Dreamer Composer — Here's my support in poetry...

PROZAC

**Here's a little pill
(with one or two
[possible]
side-effects)
to take away
depression.**

**Only a dollar-
a-day
to take away
depression.**

**\$365-a-year
to eliminate
depression
(with only one or two
possible side-effects) ...
but no more
depression.**

**With every man, woman and child on Prozac
The Stock Market will never
have to crash
again.**

A POEM

Is,

**a
moment,
a signature,
a finger
print, a touch, taste,
a galaxy, a splinter, a shim;
a green**

(Continued)

envelope
on a
pink
Sink.

a poem is
an affirm
ation
an affirmation
of... black
birds...

So black
look closely
into feathers
with Sun
See
violet
turquoise
cobalt
emerald, amethyst.

a poem
is a ...
negation,
a negation
of "black"
boards

"black boards"
that
are
"green"
then
teem
with dusty lies.

a poem is a chalk
line
SSTTRreettcchhHHHH
Snap ! BLUE!

Stephen Maye

Monterey, CA

WHERE IS THE LOVE ON CHRISTMAS MORN?

**Where is the Love on Christmas morn that dances around the room?
The room is empty
The place is still...**

**The family that Loves you does not exist.
There is only cold, angry alienation in their hearts from situations
they could not control...**

**Their hearts are so rigid, constricted and flooded with hate
that this negative engery explodes from within
leaving them completely out of control...**

**The concepts of Love, Compassion, and Forgiveness
are not apart of this family consciousness.**

Where is the Love on Christmas morn?

**There is no Love to be felt from this alienated, fragmented family
to dance around the room on Christmas morn**

Rowaine W. Kram, M.A

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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