

Quotes and Poetry

This page contains some of our favorite inspirational quotes and poems submitted by YogaEverywhere visitors over the last decade. Please feel free to share this page with your yoga friends, your community and your loved ones.

Sanmukhi Mudra Six-Mouth Breaths

By Leza Lowitz

Who owns the wind?

Who owns my breath?

These impossible riddles

haunt me.

Turning into the wind

The wind turns into me.

Those possible answers

Keep me breathing.



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Inspirational Love Poem

XLIII. "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways..."

by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861)

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of everyday's

Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;

I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.

I love thee with a passion put to use

In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints, --- I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life! --- and, if God choose,

I shall but love thee better after death.

Breath

Breathing in, I know I'm breathing in.
Breathing out, I know
As the in-breath grows deep,
The out-breath grows slow.
Breathing in makes me calm.
Breathing out makes me ease.
With the in-breath, I smile.
With the out-breath, I release.
Breathing in, there is only the present moment.
Breathing out, it is a wonderful moment.

-Thich Nhat Hanh

Prayer

I have just 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.

- A great thanks to Stephen Mitchell's translation of Lao Tzu's Tao te Ching

Watch your thoughts; they become words.
Watch your words; they become actions.
Watch your actions; they become habits.
Watch your habits; they become character.
Watch your character; for it becomes your destiny.

- Upanishads

Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers,
but to be fearless in facing them.

Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain,
but for the heart to conquer it.

Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved,
but hope for the patience to win my freedom.

- Rabindranath Tagore, Indian Poet/Saint

I thank You God for most this amazing
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(I who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any--lifted from the no
of all nothing--human merely being
doubt unimaginably You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

- e.e.cummings

Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts,
the depths where neither sin nor desire can reach,
the person that each one is in God's eyes.

If only they could see themselves as they really are.

If only we could see each other that way,
there would be no reason for war, for hatred, for cruelty ...
I suppose the big problem would be that
we would fall down and worship each other.

- Thomas Merton

God regards with merciful eyes not what you are nor what you have been but what you wish you to be.

- The Cloud of Unknowing

Letter to a Friend

I salute you. I am your friend and my love for you goes deep. There is nothing I can give you which you have not got; but there is much, very much, that while I cannot give it, you can take.

No Heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in today. Take Heaven! No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present little instance. Take Peace! The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, yet within our reach, is Joy. There is radiance and glory in the darkness ... could we but see and to see we have only to look. I beseech you to look.

Life is so generous a giver, but we, judging its gifts by its covering, cast them away as ugly or heavy or hard. Remove the covering and you will find beneath it a living splendor, woven of love, by wisdom, with power.

Welcome it, grasp it, and you touch the Angel's hand that brings it to you. Everything we call a trail of a sorrow is there; the gift is there, and the wonder of an overshadowing presence. Our joys too; be not content with them as joys. They too conceal diviner gifts.

Life is so full of meaning and purpose, so full of beauty ... beneath its covering ... that you will find earth that cloaks heaven. Courage then to claim it, that is all! But courage you

have, and the knowledge that we are pilgrims together, wending through unknown country, home.

And so at this Christmas time, I greet you. Not quite as the world sends greetings, but with profound esteem and with the prayer that for you, now and forever, the day breaks, and the shadows flee away.

- Fra Giovanni written in 1513 A.D

A Buddhist Prayer Before Practicing

By the power and truth of this practice.

May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness

May all beings be free from sorrow and the causes of sorrow

May all never be separated from the sacred happiness which is sorrow less

And may all live in equanimity without too much attachment and too much aversion

And live believing in the equality of all that lives.

-The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your Peace,

Where there is hatred let me Love,

Where there is injury, pardon,

Where there is doubt, faith,

Where there is despair, hope,

Where there is darkness, light,

And where there is sadness, joy.

Oh divine master,

Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,

To be understood as to understand,

To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

As long as there is breath in the body, there is life.
When breath departs, so too does life.
Therefore, regulate the breath.

- Hatha Yoga Pradipika – Ch.2: S.3

May all beings give and receive compassion,
Live free from fear,
And dwell in peace.

- author unknown

First of all the twinkling stars vibrated,
but remained motionless in space,
then all the celestial globes were united into one series of movements.
... Firmament and planets both disappeared,
but the mighty breath which gives life to all things and in which all is bound up remained.

– Vincent Van Gogh

"I cannot dance, Lord, unless you lead me."

How God Answers the Soul

It is my nature that makes me love you often,

For I am love itself.

It is my longing that makes me love you intensely,
For I yearn to be loved from the heart.

It is my eternity that makes me love you long,
For I have no end.

- Mechthild of Magdeburg

The Earth Braces Itself

The earth braces itself for the feet
Of a lover of God about to
Dance.

The sky becomes very timid
When a great saint starts waving his arms
In joy,

For the sky knows its prized fixtures,
The sun, the moon, the planets
Could all wind up
Rolling so wild on the floor!

My dear, this world, its laws,
Our perception,
Are such a minute of existence.

Should not all our suffering and sadness be like this.

As just dropped from an infant's palm
That is asleep against the breast
Of God?

The earth braces itself for the feet of Hafiz.

The sky pulls a mirror from its pocket
And is practicing looking
Coy.

For the beloved has at last
Opened His arms
And is inviting to eternally
Dance!

The day candle (sun) has forgotten the hour:
The whole worlds has gone joyfully mad.

Look,
The sun's sweet cheeks are blushing
In the middle of the night

Desiring the rampage of the feet
Of Gods lovers.

- Hafiz

Miracles By Walt Whitman

Why! who makes much of a miracle?
As to me, I know of nothing else but miracles,
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,
Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,
Or wade with naked feet along the beach, just in the edge of the water,
Or stand under trees in the woods,
Or talk by day with any one I love--or sleep in the bed at night with
any one I love,
Or sit at table at dinner with my mother,
Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,
Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive, of a summer forenoon,
Or animals feeding in the fields,
Or birds--or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,

Or the wonderfulness of the sun-down--or of stars shining so quiet
and bright,

Or the exquisite, delicate, thin curve of the new moon in spring;
Or whether I go among those I like best, and that like me best--
mechanics, boatmen, farmers,

Or among the savans--or to the soiree--or to the opera,
Or stand a long while looking at the movements of machinery,
Or behold children at their sports,
Or the admirable sight of the perfect old man, or the perfect old
woman,

Or the sick in hospitals, or the dead carried to burial,
Or my own eyes and figure in the glass;
These, with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles,
The whole referring--yet each distinct, and in its place.

To me, every hour of the light and dark is a miracle,
Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,
Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread with the same,
Every foot of the interior swarms with the same;
Every spear of grass--the frames, limbs, organs, of men and women,
and all that concerns them,
All these to me are unspeakably perfect miracles.

To me the sea is a continual miracle;
The fishes that swim--the rocks--the motion of the waves--the ships,
with men in them,
What stranger miracles are there?

- Walter Whitman (1819 – 1892) was an urban American poet, essayist, journalist, and
humanist.

Peace

Om Bhur Bhuva Swaha,

Tat Savitur Varenyam,

Bhargo devasya Dhimahi,

D'Yo Yona Prachodhyat.

Earth, Mid-heaven, Heaven!

Let us meditate on that most

Excellent light of Divine sun,

That it may illuminate our minds.

Imagine

Imagine there's no heaven,

It's easy if you try,

No hell below us,

Above us only sky,

Imagine all the people

living for today...

Imagine there's no countries,

It isn't hard to do,

Nothing to kill or die for,

No religion too,

Imagine all the people

living life in peace...

Imagine no possessions,

I wonder if you can,

No need for greed or hunger,

A brotherhood of man,

Imagine all the people

Sharing all the world...

You may say I'm a dreamer,
but I'm not the only one,
I hope someday you'll join us,
And the world will live as one.

- John Lennon (1940 -1980)

Peace is every step.
The shining red sun is my heart.
Each flower smiles at me.
How green, how fresh all that grows.
How cool the wind blows.
Peace is every step.
It turns the endless path to joy.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

Peace cannot be kept by force.
It can only be achieved by understanding.

- Albert Einstein

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing,
there is a field.
I'll meet you there.

- Rumi

You can search the whole universe
and not find a single being more worthy of love than yourself.
Since each and every person is so precious to themselves,
Let the self-respecting harm no other being.

- Buddha

I have learnt silence from the talkative,
toleration from the intolerant,
and kindness from the unkind;
yet strange,
I am ungrateful to these teachers.

- Kahlil Gibran

Thanksgiving

"Today, I make my Sacrament of Thanksgiving.
I begin with the simple things of the days:
Fresh air to breathe, Cool water to drink, The taste of food.
the protection of houses and clothes, the comforts of home.
For these, I make an act of Thanksgiving this day!

I bring to mind all the warmth of human kind that I have known.
My mother's arms, The strength of my father, the playmates of my childhood,
the wonderful stories brought to me from the lives of many who talked of days gone by
when fairies and giants and all kinds of magic held sway:

The tears I have shed, the tears I have seen;

The excitement of laughter and the twinkle in the eye with its reminder that life is good.
For all these I make an act of Thanksgiving this day."

- Howard Thurman

The goal is not to tie ourselves in knots ...

we're already tied in knots.

The aim is to untie the knots in our hearts.

The aim is to unite with the ultimate, loving, and peaceful power in the universe."

- Max Strom always inspires and impacts the lives of all yoga students. Max built and directed Sacred Movement, Center for Yoga and Healing in Los Angeles, and now travels extensively teaching and lecturing on yoga, spirituality, and personal transformation. For more information, visit, Maxstrom.com

Too Busy to Relax By Aaron Hoopes

Too busy to relax they say... complaints, excuses everyday
They sound so weak, so stressed, so tired... a mundane world in which they're mired
No time to sit and just be quiet... their mind's a rush of thoughts, a riot
No chance they have to hear the sound... of nature's wonder all-around
Of birds and trees and clouds and air... too much work, it's just not fair
This really seems quite sad to me... so much to do, no time to be

Breathe I say and move a bit
Then after that we can just sit
And watch the world at its own pace
There is no rush, it's not a race
And if it were, what is the goal?
Where are you going mind, body, soul?

Too busy to relax I hear... these words seem like they're based in fear
Tired, weak and too much stress... how did our lives turn such a mess?
We don't need to look above... to find a place that's based in love
Turn instead and look within... find yourself, it is no sin
Forgive, let go, open your heart... it is the only place to start
Think on that and you might find... throughout your life you have been blind

Breathe I say and move some more
Run, walk, jump, stretch on the floor
Move your body, get up and go
Feel the energy, let it flow
Don't get caught in negative
Habits that won't let you live

Too busy to relax? Not true! ... this hoax must end, it starts with you
If all you do is just the same... you never will escape this game
Do something new, do something Zen... begin right now, not 'if' or 'when'
Do one thing different, or two, or five... change how you live, become alive
Do or do not, there is no try... step off the cliff and start to fly

Begin with this, you won't go wrong... remember to breathe, deep and long.

- Aaron Hoopes, founder of Zen Yoga Breathe - Move – Relax www.artofzenyoga.com

Love

Love is the strongest medicine. It is more powerful than electricity!

- Neem Karoli Baba Maharaji

Compassion is a verb.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

Excerpt from The Prophet

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said,
Speak to us of Children. And he said:
Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you.
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are set forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
and He bends you with his might
that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable.

- Kahlil Gibran

I love you for what you are,
but I love you yet more for what
you are going to be.

I love you not so much for your realities
as for your ideals.
I pray for your desires that they may be great,
rather than for your satisfactions,
which may be so hazardously little.
A satisfied flower is one whose petals are about to fall.
The most beautiful rose is one hardly more than a bud
Where in the pangs and ecstasies of desire
are working for a larger and finer growth.
Not always shall you be what you are now.
You are going forward toward something great.
I am on the way with you and
therefore I love you.

- Carl Sandburg

What happens when your soul
Begins to awaken
Your eyes
And your heart
And the cells of your body
To the great Journey of Love?

First there is wonderful laughter
And probably precious tears

And a hundred sweet promises
And those heroic vows
No one can ever keep.

But still God is delighted and amused
You once tried to be a saint.

What happens when your soul
Begins to awake in this world

To our deep need to love
And serve the Friend?

O the Beloved
Will send you
One of His wonderful, wild companions ~
Like Hafiz.

Hafiz (1320 - 1389)

A lover may banker after this or that love,
But at the last he is drawn to the King of love,
However much we decide and explain love,
When we fall in love we are ashamed of our words.
Explanation by the tongue makes most things clear,
But love unexplained is clearer.

Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi 1207 — 1273 CE, *The Spiritual Couplets*. Rumi was a 13th century Persian (Tajik) poet, jurist, and theologian. He believed passionately in the use of music, poetry and dancing as a path for reaching God.

In all the three worlds
there is no boat like *Satsanga*
to carry one safely across the ocean
of births and deaths.

- *Be As You Are* By David Godman

An Excerpt from Man's Search For Meaning

... A thought transfixed me: for the first time in my life I saw the truth as it is set into songs by so many poets, proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth – that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man is in love and through love. I understood how a man who has nothing left in this world still may know bliss, be it only for a brief moment, in the contemplation of his beloved. In a position of utter desolation, when man can not express himself in positive action, when his only achievement may consist in enduring his sufferings in the right way – an honorable way – in such a position man can, through loving contemplation of his beloved, achieve fulfillment. For the first time of my life I was able to understand the meaning of the words “The angels are lost in perpetual contemplation of an infinite glory.”

- Victor E. Frankl

Loss

Autobiography in Five Chapters

1) I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk
I fall in.
I am lost ... I am hopeless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

2) I walk down the same street.
There is a hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place.
But it isn't my fault.

It still takes a long time to get out.

3) I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I see it there.

I still fall in ... it's a habit

My eyes are open

I know where I am

It is my fault.

I get out immediately

4) I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk

I walk around it.

5) I walk down another street.

- Excerpt from *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*

by Sogyal Rinpoche

When You Are Old By William Butler Yeats

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;
How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim Soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;
And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled

And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

Nor dread nor hope attend
A dying animal;
A man awaits his end
Dreading and hoping all;
Many times he died,
Many times rose again.
A great man in his pride
Confronting murderous men
Casts derision upon
Supersession of breath;
He knows death to the bone
Man has created death.

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) - Irish poet, dramatist and prose writer, one of the greatest English-language poets of the 20th century. He renounced the transcendentalism of his youth, though he remained preoccupied with physical and spiritual existence, masks and cyclical theories of life. He is one of my family's favorite poets. Yeats received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923.

Superman Died Today

Superman died today
How can that be
His Kryptonite was cryptic
yet unmasked for all to see
Getting to the truth
by assisting where there's need

True heroes live forever
inside of you and me

- Cheri

Grief

A parent dies.
A pregnancy is terminated.
A soldier is killed.
Civilians are hurt.
A love is lost.
Leaves turn, and drift to the ground.

Sadness

Deep as a dark, dry, dusty well.
No light, no movement.
You're torn from life's joys.
Stretched between two worlds.
Lost in the mist.

Alone.

Then, you awaken.
Exhausted and relieved.
You think it's over.
But grief revisits.
Relentless.

You're distracted by family.
Friends, children, and sunshine soothes.
Still, grief seeps back again.

Slithers and surrounds,

as it creeps across the tender moments.

Time passes.
And finally, over time.
You're over your grief.
It passes.

- Megan McCarver

One leaf left on a branch and not a sound of sadness or despair.
One leaf left on a branch and no unhappiness.
One leaf left all by itself in the air and it does not speak of loneliness or death.
One leaf and it spends itself in swaying mildly in the breeze.

- David Ingot

The Spirit of the Warrior

Although we have been made to believe that if we let go we will end up with nothing, life itself reveals again and again the opposite: that letting go is the path to real freedom.

Just as when the waves lash at the shore, the rocks suffer no damage but are sculpted and eroded into beautiful shapes, so our character can be molded and our rough edges worn smooth by changes. Through weathering changes we can learn how to develop a gentle but unshakable composure. Our confidence in ourselves grows, and becomes so much greater that goodness and compassion begin naturally to radiate out from us and bring joy to others. That goodness is what survives death, a fundamental goodness that is in every one of us. The whole of our life is a teaching of how to uncover that strong goodness, and a training towards realizing it.

- Excerpt from *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* By Sogyal Rinpoche

Life

If you want to become whole,
let yourself be partial.
If you want to become straight,
let yourself be crooked.
If you want to become full,
let yourself be empty.
If you want to be reborn,
let yourself die.
If you want to be given everything,
give everything up.

- Tao Te Ching

I do not know what I may appear to the world;
but to myself I seem to have been
only like a boy playing on the sea-shore,
and diverting myself in now
and then finding a smoother pebble
or a prettier shell than ordinary,
whilst the great ocean of truth
lay all undiscovered before me.

- Isaac Newton

When I examine myself and my methods of thought,

I come to the conclusion
that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me

than my talent for absorbing positive knowledge.

- Albert Einstein

Smiling is infectious,
you catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today,
I started smiling too.
I passed around the corner,
and someone saw my grin,
When he smiled I realized,
I'd passed it on to him.
I thought about that smile,
then I realized it's worth.
A single smile, just like mine
could travel round the earth.
So, if you feel a smile begin,
don't leave it undetected,
let's start an epidemic quick,
and get the world infected!

- from a leaflet I picked up from Raja Yoga Philosophy

The life of one day is enough to rejoice.
Even though you live for just one day,
if you can be awakened,

that one day is vastly superior to one endless life of sleep....
If this day in the lifetime of a hundred years is lost,
will you ever touch it with your hands again?

- Zen Master Dogen

When You Are Old

When you are old and gray and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
And paced among the mountains overhead
And hid his face among a crowd of stars.

-W.B. Yeats

If we could read the secret history of our enemies,
we should find in each person's life sorrow and suffering
enough to disarm all hostility.

- Longfellow

Know What It Is To Be a Child

Know you what it is to be a child?

It is to be something very different from the man of today.

It is to have a spirit yet streaming from the waters of baptism,

It is to belief in loveliness, to believe in belief.

It is to be so little that the elves can reach to whisper in your ear.

It is to turn pumpkins in to couches, and mice in to horses,

lowness in to loftiness and nothing in to everything.

For each child has his fairy godmother in his own soul.

It is to live in a nutshell and count yourself king of the intimate space;

it is to see a world in a grain of sand,

Heaven in a wild flower,

To hold infinity in the palm of your hand,

And eternity in an hour.

- Francis Thompson

An Old Musician

How

Should

Those who know of God

Meet and Part? The way An old musician

Greets his beloved

Instrument

And will take special care,

As a great artist always does,

To enhance the final note

Of each

Performance.

- Hafiz

When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bonds; your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties and talents become alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to be

- Patanjali

Our Light

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our Darkness, that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?

Actually, who are you NOT to be?

You are a child of God.

Your playing small does not serve the world.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We were born to manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It is not in just some of us; it is in everyone.

As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

- Marianne Williamson

Every action has both good and evil results.
The best we can do is to intend the good.

- Wolfram, Medieval Poet

Enlightenment is the "quiet acceptance of what is". I believe the truly enlightened beings are those who refuse to allow themselves to be distressed over things that simply are the way they are.

- Wayne Dyer

Tat Tvam Asi: "That thou art!"

It is the affirmation of God to Man.

Tat Tvam Asi: "That thou art!"

It is the recognition among Mankind of the Godhood in each of us.

Tat Tvam Asi: "That thou art!"

It is the acceptance of, and surrender to God by Man.

Tat Tvam Asi! "That thou art!"

- a primal Sanskrit teaching from the Upanishads

Garden Yoga: Healing Body and Soul

This article is dedicated to my dear friend, talented gardener, and student of yoga. This past summer, she celebrated her 70th birthday and a successful completion of five and a half months of aggressive Chemo Therapy.

As a traditional yoga instructor from San Juan Capistrano, California, my mission in her

life is to meet her weekly (sometimes bi-weekly) in her home by Mission Viejo Lake— where all things grow, for a private yoga lesson. In her beautiful courtyard, original nature is captured. It is filled with vine-covered trellises, mixed shrub planting, and colorful floral combinations. This garden sanctuary became life's metaphor during her arduous journey.

Even after teaching yoga for 14 years, I continue to be a student, learning from life itself, and more so from my students. Her recovery is an amazing inspiration, testifying to survival and witnessing nature at it's best. During the five and a half months she suffered, her garden never lacked joyful color and a life force full of gratitude, love and enthusiasm. On days she had strength; she would prune and parade with delight. On days she felt depleted and depressed, she would sit with a view of her garden and listen to the hummers or rest to the morning dove's lullaby. Her garden, the reflection of her heart, was a healing force for her body and soul.

When asked to write of yoga and gardening, my eyes swell with big tears of joy. Again, I witnessed another great yoga discipline: the view of her garden, the persistence and practice of a yogi letting go to become well, while treasuring the present moment each and every day.

By Megan McCarver

The many great gardens of the world,
of literature and poetry,
of painting and music, of religion and architecture,
all make the point as clear as possible:

The soul cannot thrive in the absence of a garden.

If you don't want paradise, you are not human;

and if you are not human, you don't have a soul.

- Thomas Moore

Nature

Tadasana Mountain

By Leza Lowitz

This is the place
The journey begins.
Half rooted in the earth,

half floating in the endless sky.
What would it be like
To be the mountain?
The air is perhaps thinner,
Thought the sky is not always clear.
The view is sometimes shrouded in fog
Sometimes in plain and glorious sight,
But the ascent or descent can kill.
The earth is stable
Or sometimes not.
So it is
At base or summit,
Yet the mountain never asks
Why or for what purpose
It exists.
This is the one difference between the climber
and the climbed.



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Leza is a published author, yoga instructor and co-owner of **Sun and Moon Yoga Studio** located in Meguro, Japan.

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct.

I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined; he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings.

- Great thanks to Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), another great American teacher of freedom and non-violent resistance, representing one of the most authentic and individualist voices in all American thought.

Yoga is not an ancient myth buried in oblivion.

It is the most valuable inheritance of the present.

It is the essential need of today and the culture of tomorrow.

- Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Think Different

Here's to the crazy ones.
The misfits. The rebels.
The trouble-makers.
The round pegs in the square holes.
The ones who see things differently.
They're not fond of rules,
and they have no respect for the status-quo.
You can quote them, disagree with them,
glorify, or vilify them.
But the only thing
you can't do is ignore them.
Because they change things.
They push the human race forward.
And while some may see them as the crazy ones,
we see genius.
Because the people who are crazy enough
to think they can change the world,
are the ones who do.

- Apple

Security is mostly a superstition.
It does not exist in nature,
nor do the children of men as a whole experience it.
Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run,
than outright exposure.
Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing.

- Helen Keller

The Fall of the Year By Howard Thurman

For many of us the fall of the year is a time of sadness and the long memory. All around us there are the evidences of fading, of withdrawal, of things coming to an end. What was alive and growing a few short days or weeks ago seems now to have fulfilled itself and fallen back into the shadows. Vegetation withers but there is no agony of departure; there seems to be only death and stillness in the fall.

It is the time of the changing of the guard. It is the season of the retreat of energy. It is a time of letting go. It is the period of the first exhaustion. There is a chill in the air in the fall. It is not cold; it is chilly, as if the temperature cannot quite make up its mind. The chill is ominous, the forerunner of the vital coldness of winter.

But the fall of the year is more than that. It marks an important change in the cycle of the year. This change means that summer has past. One season ends by blending into another. Here is a change of pace accenting a rhythm in the passing of time. How important this is! The particular mood inspires recollection and reflection. There is something very steadying and secure in the awareness that there is an underlying dependability in life – that change is a part of the experience of living. It is a reminder of meaning of pause and plateau.

But fall provides something more. There is a harvest, a time of ingathering, of storing up in nature; there is a harvest, a time of ingathering, of storing up in the heart. There is the time when there must be a separation of that which has said its say and passes - that which ripens and finds its meaning in sustaining life in other forms. Nothing is lost, nothing disappears; all things belong, each in its way, to a harmony and an order which envelops all, which infuses all.

Fall accentuates the goodness of life and finds its truest meaning in the strength of winter and the breath of spring. Thank God for the Fall.

A Litany of Thanksgiving By Howard Thurman

In Your presence, O God, we make our Sacrament of Thanksgiving
We begin with the simple things of our days: Fresh air to breathe,
Cool water to drink,
The taste of food,

The protection of houses and clothes,
The comforts of home. For all these we make an act of Thanksgiving this day!

We bring to mind all the warmth of humankind that we have known:

Our mothers' arms,
The strength of our fathers,
The playmates of our childhood,
The wonderful stories brought to us from the lives of many who talked of days,
gone by when fairies and giants and diverse kinds of magic held sway;
The tears we have shed, the tears we have seen;
The excitement of laughter and the twinkle in the eye with its reminder that life is good.

For all these we make an act of Thanksgiving this day.

Howard Thurman (1900 -1981) was an author, philosopher, theologian, educator and civil rights leader.

When The Holy Thaws By St. Teresa of Avila

A woman's body, like the earth, has seasons;
when the mountain stream flows, when the holy thaws,

when I am most fragile and in need,
it was then, it seemed, God came closest.

God, like a medic on a field, is tending our souls.
Our horns get locked with desires,
but don't hold yourself too accountable;
for all desires are really innocent.
That is what the compassion in His eyes tell me.

Why this great war between the countries

-- the countries -- inside of us?

What are all these insane borders we protect?
What are all these different names for the same church of love
we kneel in together?
For it is true, together we live;
and only at that shrine where all are welcome will God sing
loud enough to be heard.

Our horns got locked with the earth and sky in some odd
marriage ritual; so what, don't worry.
We should be proud of ourselves for everything we helped create in this magic world.

And God is always there, if you feel wounded.
He kneels over this earth like a divine medic,
and His love thaws the holy in us.

(Love Poems From God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and West
versions by Daniel Ladinsky. Saint Teresa of Avila was a most remarkable woman, author
and an ascetic with great heart. She reformed the order of the Carmelites during the
sixteen century leaving a tremendous mark on the Catholic Church even to this day. Her
achievements led the Catholic Church to honor her as a Saint in 1622, and a Doctor in
1970.)

Please Call Me By My True Names

Do not say that I'll depart tomorrow

Because even today I still arrive.

Look deeply;

I arrive in every second to be a bud on a spring branch,

to be a tiny bird, with wings still fragile,

learning to sing in my new nest,
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry,
in order to fear and to hope,
the rhythm of my heart is the birth and the death
of all that are alive.

I am the mayfly metamorphosing on the surface of the river,
and I am the bird which, when spring comes,
arrives in time to eat the mayfly.

I am the frog swimming happily in the clear water of the pond,
and I am the grass-snake who, approaching in silence,
feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,
my legs as thin as bamboo sticks,
and I am the arms merchant, selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve year old girl, refugee on a small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by a sea pirate,
and I am the sea pirate, my heart not yet capable of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the Politburo, with plenty of power in my hands,
and I am the man who has to pay his "debt of blood" to my people,
dying slowly in a forced labor camp.

My joy is like spring so warm it makes flowers bloom in all walks of life.

My pain is like a river of tears, so full it fills all four oceans.

Please call me by my true names
so I can hear all my cries and laughs at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can wake up and so the door of my heart can be left open,
the door of compassion.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

Butterfly Yoga

Namaste to the butterflies that are parading through the beach cities of Southern California celebrating spring's arrival. They are one of the most impressive and certainly one of the most visible signs of time and transition. Yes, springing forward to longer and lighter days are inspiring. Yes, the brightly colored flowers painting the hillsides share an uplifting fragrances of beauty. And yes, the abundance of eggshells and baby animals are heartwarming to the wonder sounds of oohs and aahs.

Especially remarkable are the butterflies as miraculous messengers. They remind us that there is a "master plan" beyond our power as dependable as the seasons and as fleeting as time itself. Practice a walking asana and observe the gentle transitions of nature ... small miracles abound everywhere. OM SHANTI.

- Megan, Gary and Rose McCarver

"Walk slowly! Talk a little! Love breath! Be thrifty with affairs! Think clearly!
The body will consequently be light and the hundreds of arteries
will flow and irrigate. The four limbs communicate pleasantly.
The Yellow Court Canon, therefore states,
"The thousand calamities disappear and the hundred illnesses are healed.
One does not fear being injured by the cruel tiger or the wolf.
In addition, one gets rid of old and extends life forever."

- Sung-Shan T'ai Wu Hsien-Sheng Ch'i Ching: "A Book on Breath by the Master Great Nothing of Sung-Shan:"

Pinca Mayurasana Peacock Tailfeather

When you've perfected
this posture
throw it away –
a peacock cannot see
the beautiful feathers
behind it.



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To understand truth one must have a very sharp, precise, clear mind;
not a cunning mind, but a mind that is capable of looking without
any distortion, a mind innocent and vulnerable.
Only such a mind can see what truth is.
Nor can a mind that is filled with knowledge perceive what truth is;
only a mind that is completely capable of learning can do that.
Learning is not the accumulation of knowledge.
Learning is movement from movement to movement.

- J. Krishnamurti

There is vitality,
a life force that is translated through you into action.

And because there is only one of you in all time,
this expression is unique,
and if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and be lost.
It is not your business to determine how good it is,
or how valuable it is,
or how it compares with others expressions.
It is your business to keep it yours,
to keep the channel open.
You do not even have to believe
in yourself
or your works.
You have to keep an open mind
and be aware directly to the urges that motivate you.

- Great thanks from *The Life and Work of Martha Graham (1894 - 1991)*, born in Pennsylvania and lived in California, Dancer, Choreographer and devoted Teacher, a true pioneer to modern dance and liberator of life.

As he came naked from his mother's womb,
so shall he return as he came.
He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor
that he cannot carry in his hand.
So what is the advantage to him who toils for the wind?

- Ecclesiastes 5: 15,16

Light (for Marion)

By Duane Tucker of Ontario Canada

i.

Because it is older than time yet never grows up;
Seesawing leaves, Goosing grasses, it gets off on any weather.

Because it rushes with the crush of water, and never hurries.
It puckers on ripples like the tip of your tongue when you're teased.

It is the nimble feet of the alto sax, boots of brass and even
When it writhes it is still Praying.

ii.

Because it drinks all day and, except when it carouses
With vagabond winds,

Is rarely drunk. Even when it's parched; it splashes as we walk.

It adores shadows and chuckles
In lonely puddles.
Dawn's open wound, dusk's shrug.

Because it is in the veins of your veins, and rings in your eyes
Like your loose-screw laughter.

Because it shivers in steam, sunbathes on frost;
Lolls on surfaces,
But deepens whenever it touches.

Because it refuses to be crushed and blossoms
Even when you bang your head
On the cabinet I've left open and laugh it off.

Because it's always guilty of concealing the Radiance
Its arms like yours
Are always open.

Only as a spiritual warrior can one withstand the path of knowledge. A warrior cannot complain or regret anything. His life is an endless challenge and challenges cannot possibly be good or bad. Challenges are simply challenges. The basic difference between

an ordinary man and a warrior is that a warrior takes everything as a challenge, while an ordinary man takes everything as a blessing or a curse.

- Don Juan

Recognize the power of mind, respect the power of mind.
And also recognize the Power behind the power,
the ocean holding the wave.
Recognize yourself as the ocean,
with your stories, your feelings, as waves.
Waves can be beautiful or terrifying,
but always they return to the ocean.
Every wave always is made up of the ocean.
No wave can ever be separate from the ocean.
Waves of thoughts, waves of emotions, waves of sensations,
waves of events, are all made up of consciousness.
And all return to consciousness,
while never being separate from consciousness.
And if this becomes another story, let this go, and see what is true.

- Gangaji, who is of the lineage of the beautiful Ramana Maharshi and a direct disciple of Poonjaji (Papaji).

Learn from nature: See how everything gets accomplished
and how the miracle of life unfolds without dissatisfaction or unhappiness.

That's why Jesus said:

"Look at the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin.

- Eckhart Tolle

The most dangerous man in the world is the contemplative who is guided by nobody. He trusts his own visions. He obeys the attractions of his inner voice, but will not listen to other men. He identifies the will of God with his own heart And if the sheer force of his own self-confidence communicates itself to other people and gives them the impression that he is really a saint, such a man can wreck a whole city or a religious order or even a nation. The world is covered with scars that have been left in its flesh by visionaries like these.

- Thomas Merton