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# dear readers



Green is the color of summer, no? Everything is lush and alive and bursting with energy. This year, however, the color green looks a little different. The last few weeks have seen streets filling with green signs, posters, and bandanas.

The *pañuelo verde*, the green bandana, has become a universal symbol for abortion rights. Activists have worn it in Latin America for nearly two decades, where the so-called green wave has begun reshaping some of the world's most restrictive abortion policies.

Argentina's National Campaign for the Right to Abortion adopted the symbol in 2005. It was a nod to the white bandanas ubiquitous among mothers whose children had been disappeared during Argentina's last dictatorship from 1974 to 1983. Green, the organizers reasoned, was the color of life and growth, perfect for combating the idea of abortion as anti-life.

Fifteen years and innumerable marches later, in December of 2020, Argentina legalized abortion, making it the first major Latin American country to do so.

The Monday following the US Supreme Court's decision on *Roe v Wade*, I

attended a march, a *pañuelazo verde*, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in front of the US Embassy. The crowd, mostly women and mostly Argentinian, carried signs and chanted in Spanish as they set off plums of green smoke.

Their bandanas were dirty; they were frayed or torn or tied on backpacks with the kinds of knots that have calcified with time and the elements. These were the women who had created this symbol and given it to the world, the women who had already spent years in a battle many of us are just now entering.

I felt for the first time not only that there was a path forward but that we had guides.

In the United States, we often don't feel much kinship with our southern neighbors. We feel superior, untouchable and confident in our own excellence. In this case, however, perhaps we should look south for support and inspiration. We can look to Argentina, to Colombia, to Chile, to those who have already been wearing green for years as we begin our own fight.



  
Kaysha Korow  
Editorial Assistant

LILIPOH stands for Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.

*Life can mean the quality of life, inner life, consciousness – in other words, living a life enhanced through understanding. Liberty may mean the freedom to choose how one lives. Pursuit of happiness is a high term which has often been used superficially. It can mean the joy of helping each other along the road of inner and outer health, and toward a better world.*



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ISSUE 108, VOL. 28

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PRINTED BY **Engle Printers, Mt. Joy, PA**

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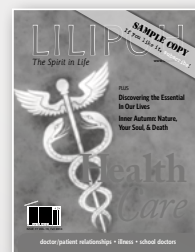
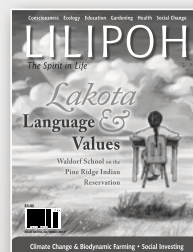
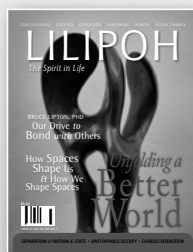
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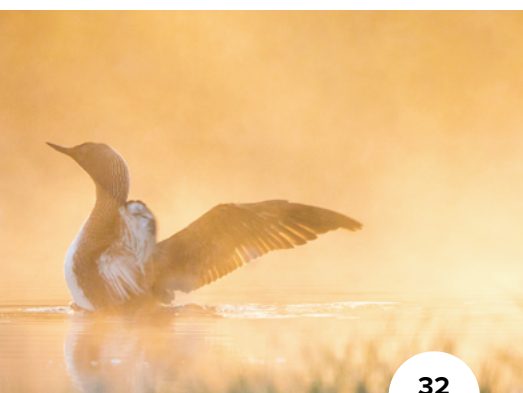
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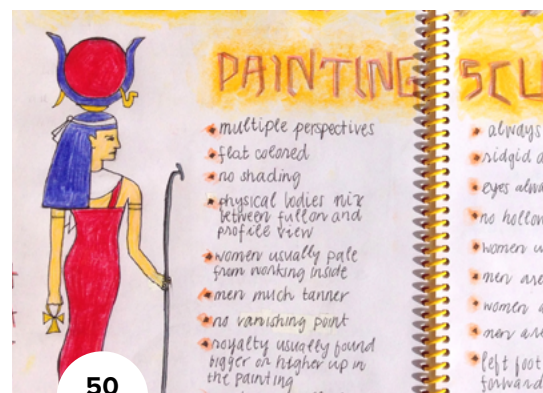
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► Please note the following corrections in "Mistletoe Therapy for Cancer Treatment: A Conversation with the Authors of Mistletoe and the Emerging Future of Integrative Oncology," (Spring 2022).

- Page 23: The year in which Suzanne Somers used Iscador with her breast cancer was 2001.
- Page 23: *Viscum album* extract, not *Viscus album* extract, is becoming recognized and highly sought after by patients.



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build welcoming outdoor spaces

# Creating a Play Garden

FAITH COLLINS

Some passions can lie dormant for years, sleepily lifting their heads from time to time until they finally get the chance to explore and be explored more deeply. For me, gardening is one such passion. I'd had occasional veggie boxes and planted flower bulbs here and there, but it wasn't until I started working in early childhood education and creating nature-based play spaces that my passion really blossomed.

As a Waldorf child growing up in an urban-rural interface in the Midwest, I spent endless hours interacting with the natural world: pressing flowers, making crowns from leaves or dandelions, catching fireflies, crawdads, and sunfish, creating caterpillar habitats, building miniature dams and canals in the creek. Now, living in Colorado, the attitude towards nature appears to be very different. Here, there is a distinct doctrine of "look, but don't touch." Nature is portrayed as something fragile, something that can be ruined if we touch it, handle it, or walk on it. Indeed, we are told that we are destroying nature every time we turn on the news. But how are today's children to develop a deep, abiding

love for the natural world if they don't get to be immersed in it?

After years of creating children's play spaces at the margins, I was finally able to buy a home with some land and started creating my own Play Garden, where I now run outdoor parent-child classes for children ages one to five. A garden is never actually finished, but six years later, it is a place with so many flowers that I don't care if the children pick them to make bouquets. It has so many fruits and vegetables that we can stop and pick raspberries, look under leaves for strawberries, pull up carrots, and pop cherry tomatoes or grapes into our mouths as we walk by. It is fun and infinitely interesting for children: there is water and sand and mud and swings and slides and lots of kid-sized spaces, but it feels much more like a garden than a playground. In my garden, I strive to create a space that is beautiful, relaxing, and engaging all at the same time for adults as well as children.

Today, my goal is to share some of my own sources of gardening inspiration and offer some approachable projects if you would like to create



your own nature-filled spaces for children and adults to enjoy.

## The Garden Awakening

During my first year of Play Garden classes, a visitor asked if my garden had been inspired by the book *The Garden Awakening* by Mary Reynolds. I immediately ordered it and read it cover-to-cover. In her book, Reynolds writes about “re-wilding” our garden spaces, letting them be a bit less tame, less manicured, more like a forest or a meadow or a wonderful secret garden that you stumble across unexpectedly. She writes about the gardener and the land

This book completely changed my relationship with my garden. For one thing, I stopped pulling out all of the so-called volunteer saplings that kept appearing in my garden beds and instead just thinned some and let others grow. Ask me in five years if this was a good idea—right now, it’s charming. There are willows and aspens and cottonwood saplings springing up along my dry creek and throughout my hilly areas. Next, I built a spiral path leading to a weeping cherry tree and began making plans for it to expand into a triskele (a triple spiral representing the birth/death/rebirth cycle). Its center is a stepping-stone path across my dry creek that splits in the middle. Nobody will know that symbol is there, but I will, and my

---

“HOW ARE TODAY’S CHILDREN TO DEVELOP A DEEP, ABIDING LOVE FOR THE NATURAL WORLD IF THEY DON’T GET TO BE IMMERSSED IN IT?”

working together. The gardener listens to what the land wants and supports it to be its best self, the self it longs to be. She writes about incorporating symbolism, meaning, and poetry into our hardscape and garden design. I found her work really exciting, especially one garden that she designed completely around a poem. And unexpectedly, she mentions Rudolf Steiner with a hat-tip to biodynamic gardening.

garden will. Around that time, I discovered that a poem in which I had long loved one particular stanza, but other stanzas were strange and one completely bizarre, suddenly made perfect sense. I realized that it was not my poem but my garden’s poem. My garden has a poem! I printed it out and taped it to my bathroom mirror. I don’t have room to share the poem here, but it is “For No Reason” by Hafiz. My garden and I began a



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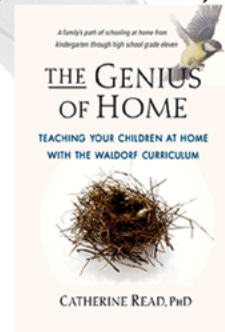
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newer, much deeper phase of our relationship with one another.

All this time, I was planting more and more flowers. I first attended, then started hosting gardening swaps where people happily dug up plants to share from their gardens, and I would end up with as many plants as I could get into the ground. I started flowers from seed, focusing especially on ones that I could sow directly into the soil. My blue flax, larkspur, columbines, California poppies, lupines, hollyhocks, and black-eyed-Susans began to wander around my gardens from year to year as their seeds spread, moving downhill or downwind or occasionally dying out. I knocked on strangers' doors and asked if I could dig up some of their prolific lilies, asters, or catmint—they all said yes. I found free and cheap yard furniture on Facebook Marketplace, a free playhouse on Craigslist that just needed some TLC, and I stashed away kitchen utensils for my future mud kitchen. I bought bags of shells from thrift stores and buried them in my sand play area for children to discover as they dug. I made a gathering space for puppet shows with mulch, stumps, and a shade sail overhead. Last year, I got a pizza oven so we could bake outdoors, and in the fall, I bravely decided to make fires in our fire pit for parents and children to roast apple slices with cinnamon as the weather got cold. The families loved it, and my Play Garden went from being fun to being truly magical.

Suppose you're starting to think about your own backyard and how great it would be to have an abundant, beautiful, and interesting place to hang out. Good! That's what I want! We adults are the gatekeepers for children's access to the outdoors, and the more we are outside, the more they will be outside too. Research is clear on the value of outdoor time for children: for their physical development, improved attention and academic performance, increased resilience and

grit, and more. But it's easy to forget that time outdoors is beneficial to us grownups, too.

If you are lucky enough to own a yard where you can do what you want, I encourage you to make it into a place you truly love. Will creating a play garden in your yard be work and need maintenance? Well, yes, certainly some. However, so does grass. Most of my flowers come back year after year, and while gardens do need some weeding, I've learned to make peace with bindweed and grass in the flower beds, dandelions in the lawn, and thistles hiding on the outskirts of everything. I keep some parts mowed and embrace the "rewilding" of my land to a certain extent.

## Sources of Inspiration

So, how do you get going? How do you make a plan and move from the plan into action?

If you'd like some ongoing inspiration, I highly recommend joining LifeWays North America's online class this fall, *Learning in Nature 2: The Mystery and Wonder of Exploring Nature with Children*. You can find it by going to their website [lifewaysnorthamerica.org](https://lifewaysnorthamerica.org) and clicking on Upcoming Classes.

If you want some immediate inspiration, you are welcome to peruse some or all of my many Pinterest boards by following @joyfultoddlers. If you prefer to hold something in your hands, a book I've returned to many times is *A Child's Garden: 60 Ideas to Make Any Garden Come Alive for Children* by Molly Dannenmaier. I am currently reading *Natural Playscapes: Creating Outdoor Play Environments for the Soul* by Rusty Keeler, and I've ordered but haven't read yet *Creating a Family Garden: Magical Outdoor Spaces for All Ages* by Bunny Guinness. And, of course, *The Garden Awakening: Designs to Nurture Our Land and Ourselves* by Mary



Reynolds. However, be aware that Reynold's book is text-heavy rather than image-heavy.

If you're not much of a book person and you'd rather just get going, here are five projects to make your garden a little more magical. I've ranked them in order of ease, and I've included photos of them from my own gardens. You'll notice that almost all of them involve inviting plants upward, off the ground. This creates a three-dimensional space where we feel surrounded by nature rather than just looking at it from above. Make changes for your space and your climate as needed.

## Play Garden Projects

### A BEAN TEEPEE

This project (right) is inexpensive and simple. Take a dozen bamboo poles from a garden center, twine to tie them together at the top, make horizontal stripes to hold the structure together, and plant some beans. I was nervous about my toddlers pulling up the sprouting bean plants, so I planted pretty flowers at the base



that we practiced watering and smelling and touching just with one finger. By the time the beans were climbing, the toddlers were able to interact with the plants appropriately. Scarlet Runner beans are the easiest/best for

coverage and have pretty red flowers, but any type of runner or pole bean will do. Avoid bush beans. My favorite is to grow a combination of Scarlet Runners, Kentucky Wonder pole beans, and Yellow Wax pole beans. Children will eat all of them off the vine, and you can add them to your meals.

### WILLOW ARCHWAYS

Depending on where you live, these willow archways (see photo on page 8) may be even easier than the bean teepee. Here in Colorado, where it's extremely dry, it took some effort. But even here, a person can grow willow simply by cutting branches and soaking them in a five-gallon bucket of water for a few weeks. Add fresh water as needed, and when the branches grow a good number of roots, dig a hole next to your archway and put them in. Water generously the first year;







trim as frequently or infrequently as you wish. With some types—like weeping willows—the branches will meld together over time if they touch one another. Others, such as the wild volunteer willow that I dug up, do not do that.

### A TRELLIS HOUSE

This project (top photo) is also cheap and simple. It involved two 2' x 8' trellis panels from a home improvement store, one made of wood, and the other flexible plastic, a couple of garden stakes, and some zip ties. I chose a place where two fences met and curved the flexible trellis into an arched shape. I supported it on the tall end with the garden stakes, which I attached using the zip ties. I cut the wooden trellis in half, so each half was one foot wide, and used them to create a more rigid front of my very tiny playhouse. This front was also attached using zip ties. I planted a grape vine next to it, which I trained over the trellis house and along the fence.

### A MUD KITCHEN

Mud kitchens (below) can be as basic or as fancy as you want. I started with three outdoor benches and got a small sink and some





“ IN MY GARDEN, I STRIVE TO CREATE A SPACE THAT IS BEAUTIFUL, RELAXING, AND ENGAGING ALL AT THE SAME TIME FOR ADULTS AS WELL AS CHILDREN.

gas stove burner covers from the Habitat for Humanity ReStore. Gradually I added the trellis walls, the little picnic table, and all of the cooking accessories. The most important “ingredient” for your mud kitchen is water. I use a five-gallon water dispenser so that if a child leaves it open, no more than five gallons will drain away. We refill the dispenser from the hose as needed.

### AN OUTDOOR ROOM

This is potentially the most expensive and complex of the projects (opposite, bottom left), but I strongly urge you to consider something along these lines. Do you remember what I said about adults being the gatekeepers to children’s access to the outdoors? Having a comfortable, shady, relaxing spot for adults to sit—close to the most active play areas—increases the time we’re willing to spend outdoors with children who want or need us to be nearby. It’s also lovely as a restful spot for children to be with their adults.

I turned my outdoor pergola into a so-called real room by putting down an outdoor carpet (now I don’t have to mow under the furniture, and it doesn’t get muddy), installing a pull-down shade on the sunny side, and of course, growing plants

up the sides! I have concord grapes on one side and hops on the other. Hops grow to thirty feet in length and will cover the pergola in a season, but they die back to the ground each winter, and they are also mildly invasive in some climates. Another nice covering vine option is silver lace vine, which bears tiny white flowers that float down around you. My clematis won’t grow taller than about six feet, and my trumpet vine is beloved by wasps, so I don’t recommend either of those.

## The Takeaway

Children learn from what we do, not what we say. If we show them through our actions that being outdoors and interacting with nature is enjoyable, valuable, and worthwhile, they will grow up with that expectation for their own lives. The fact that we get to enjoy the benefits along the way is even better. Enjoy your gardens! 🌱

1 Reynolds, Mary. *The Garden Awakening: Designs to Nurture Our Land & Ourselves*. Green Books, 2016.

**Faith Collins** is a teacher, speaker, and author of the book *Joyful Toddlers and Preschoolers: Create A Life that You and Your Child Both Love*. To see more photos of her Play Garden, visit [www.joyfultoddlers.com/play-garden](http://www.joyfultoddlers.com/play-garden).

*how CSAs became established  
in the United States*

# The Radical Roots of Community Supported Agriculture

JARED SPEARS

Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) is one of those rare ideas which combines transformative potential with elegant simplicity. The CSA model of funding and sustaining locally-rooted agriculture has grown exponentially around the globe over the past four decades. Since the first formal CSA at Robyn Van En's Indian Line Farm in South Egremont, Massachusetts, in the early 1980s, CSAs have become a household fixture across the US and elsewhere; the most recent estimate by the USDA (2012) counted approximately 13,000 CSA farms in the US alone.<sup>1</sup>

The success of community-supported farming has coincided with the rising demand for organic food since the late 1970s. But the model's

popularization has meant that, sometimes, CSAs can be misrepresented as just another way for consumers to purchase fresh, seasonal food. Important elements embedded into the CSA model, such as that of shared risk among members, make the arrangement more than merely transactional. In fact, the origins of the CSA movement in America have radical roots, drawn from the environmental movement of the 1960s and 70s and a subculture dissatisfied with the prevailing economic system.

A 1985 paper titled "Community Supported Food Systems," newly digitized from the Schumacher Center archive, clarifies the deeper motivations which brought CSAs to the US in





“THE CSA MODEL...REMAINS A VITAL, COMMUNITY-BASED ALTERNATIVE TO INDUSTRIAL AGRIBUSINESS.

their present form. It is a timely reminder of the transformative potential the broader concept of relocalization through Community Supported Industry still holds today—especially in light of our urgent need for dramatic carbon emissions reduction and greater resilience in our supply chains. Given the renewed interest in the concepts of local food security and food sovereignty as principles of climate action and economic justice, it is worth revisiting the transformative potential of the CSA model as grasped by those who first put the idea into action.

## Importing the CSA model from Switzerland

The community-supported farming movement popularized in the 1980s had multiple antecedents around the globe. With examples of localized farming initiatives from Chile, to Japan, to rural Black communities in the Southern US, this movement may be best thought of as a spontaneous, distributed reaction to the conditions of globalized food markets. Growing concern around the health impacts of chemical pesticides, as well as the environmental costs of fossil fuel-based fertilizers, added impetus to the organization of organic farming on a more human scale.

That said, the formalized CSA model, which subsequently spread across the US and beyond,

was pioneered in the Southern Berkshires. And as the “Community Supported Food Systems” paper shows, its character was highly informed by models developed earlier in Switzerland. The ethos and organizing principles of these Swiss examples were documented and brought to Massachusetts by one Jan Vander Tuin.

As Vander Tuin recalled in a 1992 article in RAIN Magazine, he went to Switzerland in the early 80s from the US, having “felt burned economically... with an eye open for alternatives to market agriculture.”<sup>2</sup> As he described the attraction of Switzerland at that time: “The early 1980s were inspiring years for Swiss activists. The youth were rebellious, and citizens at large asked questions of the nation that epitomizes capitalism. I saw many evolving solutions to problems that I, coming from the States, had written off as unsolvable.”<sup>3</sup>

After some time working first-hand on an organic farm outside Zürich, Vander Tuin was directed to a successful producer-consumer food co-op in Geneva, which had been inspired by the cooperative movement in Chile during the Allende administration. Vander Tuin called the project the most radical food co-op group he had ever encountered: it “addressed almost every problem I’d encountered in modern farming.”<sup>4</sup> This project’s philosophy went beyond ecologically sustainable practices and pesticide-free produce, addressing the steep economic



challenges faced by organic farming in an era of big, corporate agri-business. The basic notion that consumers personally cooperate with producers to fund farming in advance, he wrote, “makes for more efficient use of land...and much less stress for farmers....”<sup>5</sup> In short, Vander Tuin recognized that this model made organic farming for local consumption not just economical but also more elegant and communitarian—in a word, more beautiful.

What drove Vander Tuin, as expressed in the paper, is “the feeling that existing food infrastructures are hopelessly entangled in the societal/cultural systems, especially the ‘free’ market.”<sup>6</sup> Rather than wait for planners and experts, Vander Tuin noted how, in the Swiss examples, “concerned consumers and frustrated food workers”<sup>7</sup> decided to provide responsibly-grown organic food for themselves. Shared values—such as organic growing and energy-conscious distribution—were identified from the outset. Everything down to how shares were calculated—based on the amount of produce the average non-vegetarian consumes per year—underscores the ambition for local self-reliance in food production.

The document also highlights a strong desire for economic fairness at every step in CSA practices. The costs of start-up investment and land would “ideally...be divided up equally (or by sliding scale).”<sup>8</sup> In the Swiss example, wages for farm labor were to be estimated at “the average wage of worker in region—not banker unfortunately”<sup>9</sup> Vander Tuin added with a dose of humor. “The emphasis in all economic thinking,” it concludes, “was not to work the maximum profit principle but on the need/cost coverage principle. This meant more trust and more participation.”<sup>10</sup>

## Finding like minds in the Southern Berkshires

Vander Tuin documented these practices, eager to bring them back to the US for implementation. He caught wind of a group in the Southern Berkshires who had set up a sort of buying club for locally-grown produce, including a handful of local growers meeting the demand. The Self-Help Association for a Regional Economy (SHARE) was a community micro-loan program that grew out of the activities of the E.F. Schumacher Society (precursor to the

“IMPORTANT ELEMENTS EMBEDDED INTO THE CSA MODEL, SUCH AS THAT OF SHARED RISK AMONG MEMBERS, MAKE THE ARRANGEMENT MORE THAN MERELY TRANSACTIONAL.

“GIVEN THE RENEWED INTEREST IN THE CONCEPTS OF LOCAL FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AS PRINCIPLES OF CLIMATE ACTION AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE, IT IS WORTH REVISITING THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF THE CSA MODEL AS GRASPED BY THOSE WHO FIRST PUT THE IDEA INTO ACTION.

Schumacher Center) in Egremont. Vander Tuin became aware of the group after reading a news article about their novel SHAREcropper initiative, according to Susan Witt, Executive Director of the Schumacher Center. Community members would pool to list requests for locally grown produce in the SHARE newsletter, enabling them to identify farmers to grow the food locally. Those growers, in turn, secured a demand for their crops in advance.

In other words, SHAREcroppers was managing, in an ad-hoc way, what Vander Tuin envisaged as a systematic alternative to corporate, monocrop agriculture.

When Vander Tuin presented his proposal to members of SHARE, they promptly sent him down to the road to meet one of their growers: Robyn Van En, who ran Indian Line Farm. Robyn

not only held equally radical ambitions but possessed the roll-up-her-sleeves attitude needed to make them a reality. With a community around them dedicated to the cause and willing to help see through the implementation, they could set to work.

Having moved to the Southern Berkshires several years earlier from California, Van En was pursuing her own alternative vision for growing at Indian Line. She brought deep ethical convictions about humanity's relationship with nature to inform the early CSA movement. She later articulated the "Ideals of Community Supported Agriculture" for a CSA manual in such terms: "Agriculture... is the mother of all our culture and the foundation of our well-being. Modern farming... driven by purely economic considerations,



has driven the culture out and replaced it with business: agriculture has become agribusiness... Our ideals for agriculture come to expression in the biodynamic method of farming which seeks to create a self-sustaining and improving ecological system in which...everything has its place in the cycle of the seasons...The community involvement in the rhythms of the seasons and the celebrations connected with them will also enable us to find our proper spiritual connection to nature again.”<sup>11</sup>

With a new agricultural ethic clear from the start, Van En also recognized early on a need for a new economic approach. As she later described: “I knew there had to be a better way... something cooperative, that allowed people to combine their abilities, expertise, and resources for the mutual benefit of all concerned.”<sup>12</sup> When SHARE members introduced her to Vander Tuin in 1985, they “only had to talk for a few minutes,”<sup>13</sup> according to Van En, to know that what he’d brought back from Switzerland articulated just the sort of community framework she’d been looking for. As she later summarized: “The prices we pay for food may be cheaper than ever, but the hidden costs...are being paid [in other ways]. Unlike agribusiness, which has the motto: ‘The end (profits) justifies the means (exploitation),’ CSA’s motto is: ‘The means (community) assures the end (quality food).’”<sup>14</sup>

## Planting the seeds of the CSA movement

The group’s first venture in 1985 involved shares for apples and cider from the orchard adjacent to the present-day Schumacher Center. After the growing season, shareholders were invited to the autumn harvest in a spirit of celebration. (Vander Tuin reportedly even designed and built a pedal-powered cider press for the occasion).

Producers and consumers were brought together in relationship with the land and its produce, creating space for community while proving the viability of the CSA model.

The following season, Indian Line Farm became the first fully-fledged CSA in the US. Credit for the success of the model in the Southern Berkshires goes to the many members of the community who supported Indian Line in various ways. But it was only the beginning for Van En: an educator by training, she would go on to become a tireless advocate of the CSA model and biodynamic farming and a vocal critic of industrialized agribusiness. The propagation of the CSA model across North America in the following decades owes much to Robyn’s conviction and endurance.

One final aspect of the CSA concept originally outlined by Vander Tuin remained only a theory until Indian Line Farm came on the market in 1998, one year after Van En’s ultimately passing. At that time, the Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires and two area farmers formed a partnership with a local Nature Conservancy chapter to purchase the farm. Placing the land into the Community Land Trust in perpetuity was yet another innovation. Effectively decommodifying the land on which community food was grown while permitting the leaseholder to own the value of improvements, the move made good on an idea which, in Vander Tuin’s original proposal, appeared speculative: “community influenced land stewardship in the form of a ‘Community Land Trust,’” he wrote, seemed “applicable and desirable” compared to “normal ‘property’ arrangements.”<sup>15</sup>

Today, the CSA model articulated by Van En and Vander Tuin remains a vital, community-based alternative to the host of health, environmental, and economic issues posed by industrial agribusiness. No wonder, then, that the growth of CSAs has reportedly surged since 2020. Growing healthy, ecologically-sound food locally is, for a multitude of reasons, the most economical way for

a community to provide for this most elemental of needs. Cutting out intermediaries and import dependency is a cornerstone of community food security and food sovereignty, as marginalized communities around the country and the world increasingly recognize. Combined with agro-ecological farming methods, relocalized agriculture holds great potential in our efforts to address climate change: reducing carbon emissions and helping to sequester carbon already in our atmosphere. And by layering on the innovative Community Land Trust model, affordable access to farmland can be secured for future generations of growers as well.

At the most human level, reconnecting people around the growing of their own food may prove to be among our most effective means of healing our widespread sense of disconnection from nature and community. It offers the promise for any community to rediscover how working in harmony with nature, rather than merely seeking to exploit it, can be as economical as it is beautiful. 🌱

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First published as "The Radical Roots of Community Supported Agriculture" on April 4, 2022, in the Schumacher Center for a New Economics's newsletter. For more information, please visit: [centerforneweconomics.org](http://centerforneweconomics.org)

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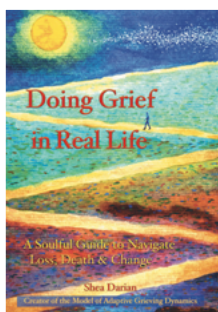
“VANDER TUIN RECOGNIZED THAT THIS MODEL MADE ORGANIC FARMING FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION NOT JUST ECONOMICAL BUT ALSO MORE ELEGANT AND COMMUNITARIAN—IN A WORD, MORE BEAUTIFUL.



CLAUS SPROLL REVIEWS

## *Doing Grief in Real Life*

a book by Shea Darian



“DOING GRIEF IN REAL LIFE WILL INVITE YOU TO PICK IT UP AGAIN AND AGAIN.”

Just opening Shea Darian’s *Doing Grief in Real Life* and looking at the table of contents will show you the breadth and depth of material covered here. Broad in its scope and deep in its analysis and spirituality, this substantial book is more of a handbook or a guide than it is a book to read cover to cover.

*Doing Grief in Real Life* will invite you to pick it up again and again when you feel the need. It will call you to review it, to go back to a particular page, a meditation, or a story.

All aspects of grieving, the road of the grieving process, as well as all the side roads and alleys of grieving, are covered in Shea Darian’s book. *Doing Grief in Real Life* would make a great gift, a great addition to a counselor’s bookshelf, or just a valuable read for yourself.

In my opinion, this book helps the reader to demystify the process of grieving and makes it a human—sometimes all too human—experience. *Doing Grief in Real Life* emphasizes the fact that grieving is a process we all face multiple times in our lives and helps the reader to gain a new perspective on that process. 📖

Gilead Press, February 2022.

**Claus Sproll** is the publisher of LILIPOH Magazine. He is a business professional with many years of experience in independent school administration, human service organizations, intentional communities and small businesses.

“THIS BOOK HELPS THE READER TO DEMYSTIFY THE PROCESS OF GRIEVING AND MAKES IT A HUMAN—SOMETIMES ALL TOO HUMAN—EXPERIENCE.”

healing through choice  
at Inner Fire

# “Will We Wake for Pity’s Sake?”

BEATRICE BIRCH

Inner Fire, Inc. is a licensed, not-for-profit, proactive, healing community in Brookline, VT, that offers striving individuals the choice to recover from debilitating and traumatic life experiences. These individuals struggle with difficulties that typically lead to addiction and mental (soul) health challenges, creating the need to strengthen oneself on a deeper spiritual level but without the use of the mind-altering psychotropic medications. Inner Fire supports striving individuals who want to avoid medication in the first place, taper to a level that works for them (which could mean off), and supports those still reeling from the horrendous withdrawal symptoms of the benzodiazepines.

Organizations such as Inner Fire need to be available for everyone regardless of race, religion, and financial situation; it is crucial that we simply meet in our shared humanity. However, at this time, there is no state/insurance funding, so such organizations are dependent on donors and private pay. Inner Fire is not anti-medication

but believes in the power of choice. For some, medications have been supportive for a time. However, the lack of visible choice has been devastating for too many.

Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States.<sup>1</sup> While antidepressants and other mind-altering psychotropic medications are designed to decrease symptoms, they often have the opposite effect. These medications have been known to increase suicidal thoughts and actions for people from all walks of life and all ages. The impact suicide has on the lives of family members, friends, co-workers, and the community is devastating. The loss of human potential is enormous.

“But will you wake for pity’s sake?”

In Christopher Fry’s play, *A Sleep of Prisoners*, he writes:

*Thank God our time is now when wrong  
Comes up to face us everywhere,  
Never to leave us till we take  
The longest stride of soul men ever took.  
Affairs are now soul size...It takes*



*So many thousand years to wake,  
But will you wake for pity's sake?"<sup>2</sup>*

As the Founder and Executive Director of Inner Fire, I have met many young, thoughtful, sensitive, and intelligent people who hated being medicated with mind-altering psychotropic medications. They were not aware that there was a choice, and after being told they would have to be on these medications for the rest of their lives, they chose suicide. They were not prepared to live in a fog of pain, disconnected from the clarity of thinking, heartfelt feeling, and creative initiatives: the essential qualities of being human.

Not many people know that, indeed, there is a choice. There are legitimate ways to work through, understand, and digest the debilitating and traumatic challenges of simply being human. But one needs to be proactive and willing to break old patterns, including unhelpful self-images, in the understanding, loving, and supportive company of family or friends.

With the best intentions and in good trust, parents or individuals seek professional advice when wrestling with life challenges for themselves or their children. Of course, there are exceptions, and experiences differ. However, typically, due

to big pharma prioritizing profits and insurance restrictions, within a few minutes and without really being listened to or offered supportive, empowering alternatives, struggling individuals are stigmatized with a mental health disorder. They are told the chemistry in their brain is out of balance and given one psychotropic medication, soon to become a cocktail of psychotropic medications, that they could depend upon for the rest of their lives.

Wouldn't we all agree that human beings are dynamic and complicated? One honest psychiatrist stated: "The brain is the last and grandest biological frontier, the most complex thing we have yet discovered in our universe...The brain boggles the mind."<sup>3</sup>

Isn't it time we look deeper? Some individuals experience the state of the soul, the seat of our emotions and habits influenced by life situations, as informing the brain. Could it be that the medications are actually what significantly disrupts the chemistry in the brain, which is naturally flexible and forgiving?

Could the term "mental health" be a reductionist term for "soul health?" Are we not speaking about "soul trauma" when one is caught in the out-breath, where we have no center, trying to escape

“WHAT LIFE HAVE WE CREATED FOR OUR YOUTH? ARE WE LISTENING TO THEM AND HELPING THEM TO CONNECT WITH THEIR DIVINE, CREATIVE, RESILIENT SELF?”

this body of pain, or stuck in the in-breath, afraid of breathing out for fear of falling apart?

For some people, these addictive medications keep us in the victim mold. They disconnect us from working with our life challenges which need to be dealt with for us to continue to grow and evolve. Challenges are growth opportunities; they are not meant to hold us down!

Looking through the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), one would imagine that simply being human is an illness. For example: if you mourn the loss of a loved one for over a certain amount of time, you may be labeled as depressed and then medicated to no longer feel. Why? Don't we all have tear ducts? Tears are a reflection of the soul breathing out, of letting go. Imagine how it would be if we could be reassured that we will cry for as long as we need to, and when we have worked through the loss

and the need is no longer there, we will simply stop crying. Perhaps we could choose to see tears as enablers, assisting the soul's recovery and digesting process.

As human beings, we are creators, but, at times, we certainly can feel like victims. In my experience, we more or less consciously seek out challenges that stretch us to go beyond our box. We are surrounded by, and history is filled with, inspiring individuals who have made their way through unenviable and unbelievable hardship guided by the resilience of their spirit.

An English doctor-colleague referred to us doctors as the pushers. Look at all the people addicted to pain, sleeping, and other medications. Any addictive substance we take disempowers us at the expense of cultivating our own inner strength. The subliminal message is: you are a victim of life circumstances, and you need me or





this pill to fix you. Well, this fixing is not working! We are not machines!

These psychotropic medications are turning too many of us into zombies. We are experiencing an epidemic. Opioids, alcohol, sugar, and the prescribing of mind-altering, psychotropic medications are causing chaos in our society. The spiritual essence of the human being is being eclipsed.

I'm reminded of Henry David Thoreau's quote, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation."<sup>4</sup> Ask anyone wrestling under the influence of their medications how they feel. When we lose touch with our feelings, incredibly awful things can happen. What are we doing to our people? Never in the history of the world have so many people been so intensively medicated, via both legal and illegal drugs, as they are in the US today. The United States accounts for about 4.4% of the global population and yet consumes more than 30% of the prescription opiate drugs in the world. Some estimate US prescription opiate consumption to be as much as 80% of global demand.<sup>5</sup>

What life have we created for our youth? Are we listening to them and helping them to connect with their divine, creative, resilient self? How else will they develop the confidence to take on life's challenges?

An elderly, wise friend once asked: what sensitive, thoughtful person today would not be depressed? We have so much to transform: we have many schools like prisons where our children do not thrive, while our prison system is punitive and has little belief or interest in transformation. We can feel paralyzed by the overwhelming challenges, but the secret, I believe, is to get involved with whatever you feel needs transforming. Find your colleagues, and try as best you can to walk the talk. Remember, you never know when you might save a life simply by taking the time to be interested and to listen with your heart. Please do not underestimate your efforts and your positive

thoughts. They are more powerful than you might imagine.

I want to believe that all those struggling individuals for whom life became unbearable under the influence of psychotropic medication cocktails have not died in vain. I have chosen to see their action as both a sacrifice and a statement to all of us: "But, will we wake up, for pity's sake?"

Will we remember that a human being has a body, a soul, and a spirit with an innate wisdom that, despite challenges, is always in the process of seeking balance and healing? Will we take the time to listen and support rather than shut up and medicate? Will we allow people to feel and work through the challenges which belong to them? Can we be motivated and catalyzed to bring a deep and lasting humane alternative to the so-called best practice of medicating? Will we choose to nurture out of love for our brothers and sisters, believing in their resilience and healing journey?

As Inner Fire grows, so does our need for conscientious and compassionate guides who believe in the human being as a creator rather than a victim. Please enquire with [beatrice.innerfire@gmail.com](mailto:beatrice.innerfire@gmail.com) if you would be interested in supporting people to reclaim their lives while strengthening themselves on a deeper soul and spiritual level. 📧

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**Beatrice Birch** is the executive director and founder of Inner Fire. She is a Hauschka Artistic Therapist and has worked in integrative clinics, rehabilitation centers, and prisons in England, Holland, and the USA, where her work calls upon the whole human being: body, soul, and spirit. Her belief in the creative human spirit and the choice to be proactive in the healing journey is foundational to all her work. For more information on the work she does at Inner Fire, please visit: [www.innerfire.us](http://www.innerfire.us)

# The Moment of Diagnosis: Maintaining the Integrity of the “I”

DAVID TRESEMER, PHD

A person sits across from you—you as a licensed professional or life coach or mentor or elder or friend—and asks in words or in a tone of voice, “What’s wrong with me?” A list of symptoms pours out, intermixing with this question. Then comes a very important event: the moment of diagnosis. You name a construct. You gather all the symptoms together in a bundle and give that bundle a label.

The word diagnosis comes from “gnosis”—knowing—and “dia”—parting a vague lump into two, the essential and the non-essential, discerning what is the truth at the core and separating that from what isn’t true. A diagnosis can guide you in how you will help to make the symptoms go away, which is why the client is there, right? Not necessarily. We have to look closely at that moment of diagnosis.

The cascade of reported symptoms can include many levels of experience. They can be physical—“My heart aches, and I feel shortness

of breath.” They can be behavioral—“I don’t like to go outside the way I used to.” They can be emotional—“I really don’t like the way he smirks when I make a mistake.” They can include patterns of action, thinking, or feeling. When asked further, the client can add more and more reports of what’s wrong, though sometimes the words are inadequate—“I just don’t feel like myself.” Then you must watch for how the body moves and listen for the tone of the voice.

The spoken reports are like a gaggle of geese honking and moving this way and that without a leader. Nearly always, the flushing out of symptoms is accompanied by anxiety. The practitioner often gets the sense of being the last resort, that many other activities have been tried, and now the client is desperate. The pressure is on to do something about this clamor.

Not only the one who suffers is applying the pressure. Lurking in the background can often be medical insurance programs, reporting



requirements of a government agency, prejudice against admitting weaknesses as in the military, or concerns about what the permanent medical records will say. For example, mental health and substance abuse programs often require a dual diagnosis, also called co-morbidity or co-occurring disorder. Most common is the combination of a substance abuse disorder and a generalized anxiety disorder or any of a number of so-called disorders. Some programs require the naming of two supposed psychological disorders. To help the client into a program, a practitioner can feel pressed to tick two boxes.

*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* of the American Psychiatric Association is now in its 5th Text-Revision form (DSM-5-TR). At over 1100 pages, it is the most comprehensive view of what can go wrong, mostly emotionally and behaviorally, but also pressing into the physical side of human experience. The DSM codes coordinate with the ICD-10-CM (International Classification of Diseases, 10th revision, Clinical Modification) of the World Health Organization, whose 72,748 codes (a number that grows annually) give names and descriptions to many human experiences of “what’s

wrong with me.” As the ICD has now moved to version 11, there will be pressure to update the DSM as well.

The DSM system gives you numbers that you can tick off on an evaluation form, the most common being F41.1, which used to be 300.02 (and for some agencies still is), often abbreviated GAD, which clinicians know means Generalized Anxiety Disorder—easy to tick that box as it describes nearly every client sitting with you. You can also tick off F41.9 (which for many diagnostic tick-the-boxes forms is still 300.00). In some agencies, this is a kind of catch-all because it means Unspecified Anxiety Disorder; in other words, you don’t know where the trauma came from, but it’s there in front of you in your client. Ideally, a diagnosis of unspecified is temporary, as you seek more information about the client, but it indicates that you’re dealing with something that you agree is severe.

I recently heard one of the main editors of the DSM speak, describing with pride the hundreds of highly-experienced people who have worked together in various committees to create the categories and codes of the DSM, a mighty accomplishment of cooperation. He explained

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“ A DIAGNOSIS CAN GUIDE YOU IN HOW YOU WILL HELP TO MAKE THE SYMPTOMS GO AWAY, WHICH IS WHY THE CLIENT IS THERE, RIGHT? NOT NECESSARILY.

how wonderful it is to have codes that can be attached to people's situations so that they may be treated more effectively. He emphasized that the DSM does not move past diagnosis into treatment modalities, recognizing that many treatments are available for any particular diagnosis.

But that's not exactly true. When you perceive the world in a certain way, it directs your actions. For example, the rise in the diagnosis of trauma has changed how we view human experience. One can welcome the change of diagnosis of shell shock—for soldiers after World War I, with the primary treatment mode of telling individuals to "just get over it"—to PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), which recognizes the impact on body and mind of nearby explosions and shocks as acts of aggression meant to kill you. However, experiences that were once thought to be learning experiences are now seen as emotionally scarring and named trauma or PTSD. Experiences that were once considered

character-building now qualify individuals for medications.

Other diagnostic systems are used around the fringes of mainstream psychology and medicine. Someone versed in the four humors, as revitalized in anthroposophy, would ask, "Do I see before me someone who is more sanguine or more melancholic?" An astrologer might ask, "What the client is saying—is that an indication of a Mercury challenged by Mars either in the birth chart or by transiting planets [planets moving through the sky strumming the strings of patterns set at birth]?" (I admit to being partial to the combination of mythic and specific in intelligent astrology.) A pulse diagnosis might reveal the energy meridian that can respond to dry needling. There are many other systems to narrow one's focus.

A diagnosis can direct your attention to a specific system under stress within the construct that you find most helpful.

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“WHEN YOU BEHOLD THE HUMAN BEING BEFORE YOU AS AN OBJECT THAT NEEDS TO HAVE A DIAGNOSTIC NUMBER ATTACHED, THAT HUMAN BEING BECOMES AN “IT.” AS A CONSEQUENCE, YOU BECOME MORE OF AN “IT,” TOO.



# “WHAT IS THE SENSATION THAT YOU EXPERIENCE WHEN YOU FIND A LABEL THAT FITS THE SYMPTOMS?”

Here is the key to diagnosis. What is the sensation that you experience when you find a label that fits the symptoms? You examine all the criteria, and you say, “Aha, F60.0, that’s it!—the client shows four (of the seven) indicators of Paranoid Personality Disorder.” What happens at that moment?

To answer that question, it will help to explain one of the twelve senses recognized by anthroposophy for the human being. (A full description of all twelve can be found in The 12 Senses course through TheStarHouse.org—we here emphasize one of them.) One of the senses in the development of humanity is the Sense of the ‘I’ of the Other. When you behold another human being as the bearer of individuality, a soul-in-training, confronted and occasionally overwhelmed by life’s dramas—as the vehicle for an “I am” incarnated to this earth in order to mature—then you realize that any troublesome symptoms may express the tribulations of that journey, rather than diversions from it. The sufferings aren’t wrong, per se, though they may be very challenging. When you feel the “I” of another, you open more deeply to your own “I”—your spirit flame.

When you behold the human being before you as an object that needs to have a diagnostic number attached, that human being becomes an “It.” As a consequence, you become more of an “It,” too.

The moment of diagnosis can lock in an “It-It” relationship. It can also lead to an “I-I” relationship, where the diagnosis narrows the field of all possibilities to something more specific yet remain open to metamorphosis and change. You become less the mechanic and more the helper who can assist the client in seeing further down the road of their maturing process. When a client says, “I just don’t feel like myself,” that may not help you to find a DSM code, yet you can translate that statement into, “My personality does not experience the embrace and guidance of my ‘I.’” Such a statement may guide you to help them find their “I.”

You may have to use DSM or ICD codes to connect the client with the way the world functions. Yet the moment of diagnosis can, with effort, be kept open and living rather than deadening.

Watch your moments of diagnosis, with clients, with people you pass on the street, in a million different situations, to assess tendencies toward the “It” or to the “I” of each. It makes all the difference in the world. 📌

*In June, Dr. Tresemer gave a presentation titled “The DSM and the Moment of Diagnosis” for the Anthroposophic Psychology and Research Association, India. The presentation is available for LILIPOH readers at [lilipoh.com](http://lilipoh.com)*

David Tresemer, PhD, has taught in the certificate program in Anthroposophic Psychology ([www.AnthroposophicPsychology.org](http://www.AnthroposophicPsychology.org)), and presently, at the StarHouse in Boulder ([www.TheStarHouse.org](http://www.TheStarHouse.org)), with courses on New Astrology, the 12 Senses, and other online courses.



# Wait, Just Wait

Standing out here, alone on the road that used to be Route 66 as it moves across the Mojave Desert, you stare at this broken down gas station crumbling into the sand, and you think about those loons you heard in Canada. They called to each other, back and forth across the lake and the sun was coming down. When the first one called, your dad put his hand on your shoulder and said, “Wait.”

“What?”

“Just wait.” Then a loon maybe a half mile away answered, and you gasped a little because you understood that you knew the language of birds, and all it took was for your dad to help you to listen. “Wait some more,” he said. Sure enough a third loon called back, its mournfulness bouncing across the water.

You think about the old man, and how he would have loved it out here, would have loved to see this gas station being swallowed slowly. Then again, maybe he wouldn’t. He drove out to Los Angeles on Route 66. This was a place he knew. Maybe it would be tragic for him. Maybe he would have wept.

There’s only one way to know, so you call to him: “Dad?”

— JOHN BRANTINGHAM

*First published in McQueen’s Quinterly*

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**John Brantingham** was Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks’ first poet laureate. His work has been featured in hundreds of magazines, *The Writers Almanac*, and *The Best Small Fictions 2016*. He has nineteen books of poetry and fiction including his latest, *Life: Orange to Pear* (Bamboo Dart Press). John can be reached at [johnmbrantingham@aol.com](mailto:johnmbrantingham@aol.com)



the role of the teacher and the ego  
in yoga and in life

# Walk Your Own Path and Chain Up Your Ego

MILES MORTENSEN

**T**he Friday morning before my retreat began, I started the day in a slight haze. A smokey mixture of mezcal, tacos, and beer. The remnants of a night filled with new friends and laughter. It was one of those nights in which there was no intention, but rather the energy flowed, and it took its natural course.

But, like Cinderella, I still managed to put myself to bed before curfew. Then, finally, morning came, and the sound of the rooster next door beckoned me to peel my eyes open. I did some breathwork, shoved myself into a cold shower, rid myself of the dust of the night, and perched myself upon my balcony to watch the earth warm as the sun rose, listening to the morning birds' sound sipping on my black coffee.

I opened my inbox, not to be greeted by much, so I decided to read through the newsletters that

were collecting dust that I kept telling myself I would get around to reading. I follow a few different ones for different purposes that inspire thought and writing. One newsletter that I pulled from the shelf was from Young Pueblo titled "Power, Love and Doing the Work." My kind of vibe for a Friday morning.

It spoke about two things that, for me, have always been an interesting point of conversation and which I thoroughly believe in:

- 1 That we don't need a guru or teacher to do the work.
- 2 Just because you're doing the work doesn't make you better than someone.

So as I began to read, the sun rose, the coffee flowed, as did my thoughts, words, and fingers against the keyboard. And these are my two cents on the matters at hand.









## Stop eating out of the hand that's feeding you

In yoga, we have our teachers. It's a necessity. But one thing I notice as an observer, being a practitioner and a teacher, is that people become reliant on their teachers. Or they think they might find all the answers and validation they seek from sitting at the feet of a guru in an ashram in India

In life, in practice, both on and off the mat, we need guidance. We receive it from our parents as

becomes their church. Working on a studio's FOH team, I saw many disciples lining up for their blessing weekly.

I am not saying there is anything wrong with having your teacher or weekly class at that set time. My wondering is, when does it become to our detriment?

The biggest challenge and so-called real practice is learning to observe one's mind so that we can build our internal scaffolding and not become reliant on the support and validation of others. It's moving through this life in a way that

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“WE PLACE OUR VIEWS, OPINIONS, PRACTICES, AND BELIEFS ABOVE OTHERS WITHOUT APPRECIATING THE DIFFERENCES AND SEEKING TO LEARN AND UNDERSTAND.

we grow up, we learn from our teachers in school and university, and we receive it when we go to classes to learn new skills. But I believe any good teacher should teach the student to empower themselves, walk their path and take their life into their own hands.

It's a two-way street as teachers can become envious when a student begins to outgrow them or go to other teachers, and equally, students can become fixated on one teacher, and that teacher

allows us to stand firm on our own two feet and hold autonomy. How many of us are asleep at the wheel or need others to hold our hand through a process?

As I write, I observe my tendency to rely on others for certain things or moments when I have done so in the past. But, then, a challenging situation arises, and my default has been to seek consolidation from my mother or a close friend.

I am not saying there is anything wrong with seeking guidance, help, knowledge, or support. The issue arises when we become incapable of standing on our own two feet. We seek change and evolve ourselves, but that can only come from our intrinsic awareness and exploration.

Going to an ashram in India, running around doing yoga for a month, taking a vipassana, or whatever it may be, are wonderful moments and tools to really dive into oneself. They can offer pauses in life that we may not receive when in the demands of work and a big city. Every time

It's bringing it back to a point I so often talk about of the practice being a constant process and development of courage to look internally at the patterns and perceptions that dictate our behavior. Until we do so, nothing changes. We want to change and become better people, but how many of us are willing to do the work?

It's much easier to pass the blame on to others or think that someone else will do it for us. But when we place blame or faith in someone to relinquish what is causing us distress, we devalue and disempower ourselves. We no longer

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“ WE WANT TO CHANGE AND BECOME BETTER PEOPLE, BUT HOW MANY OF US ARE WILLING TO DO THE WORK? ”

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I step out onto the road, it's a moment to gather myself and root down. And it's easier to do when I can pop myself on the beach and soak in nature or immerse myself in my practice. But if I become reliant on these, I become like a needy child constantly crying for their mother.

These things can become like an escape. And as they become an escape, we become entranced by them and addicted; we constantly seek our fix to them. Of course, we want the teacher to fix our problems, take them away, and prop us up to learn to walk again. But the real change comes about when we can take what we learn from our teachers and peers and do the work ourselves. That's when the revolution begins to take place.

hold our autonomy and instead give the keys to someone else.

No one can ever solve that which we are looking to resolve or give us that which we are looking to attain.

Everything comes from within. So if we want to live a life that cares for a mind and body that host a garden of love, freedom, and wisdom, we must do the gardening ourselves and plant the seeds we wish to sow. Too often, we direct our attention outwards, hoping to find the water and nutrients for our garden from an external source. But to be cliché, that garden will only grow when we take what we learn, take that guidance, and do the digging and watering ourselves.



## about miles

Miles Mortensen is a yoga teacher based in London who hosts retreats around the world. His upcoming events include:

Inverted State of Mind Retreat  
in Lisbon, Portugal, August 30th -  
September 5th

Yoga and Movement  
Immersion with Errin Briscoe  
in Bacalar, Mexico, October 30th -  
November 5th

Miles also teaches online and in-person at several yoga studios in London and offers one-on-one coaching. For more details about his classes, events, and coaching, follow Miles on Instagram [@milesmortensenyoga](https://www.instagram.com/milesmortensenyoga) or visit [milesmortensenyoga.com](https://milesmortensenyoga.com).





Take what you need from your teachers, seek out time to learn, and dive into yourself, but don't become the attached child afraid to let go. Don't let them hold your hand. The path towards healing and creating evolution in our intrinsic world comes from being our own architects. We must develop self-awareness and autonomy that takes what we need from those moments and lessons and use them as tools to build the mind and body we wish to reside in and challenge our perceptions and patterns.

It's observing ego, mind, and essence. It's developing discernment and proper judgment.

to walk around thinking it's bigger than Prince. It believes it is above the norms of society and others because it is more 'aware.' We all have it and do it. It's more a matter of how much we keep it in check.

Our ego likes to personalize things for them to be their way. This translates onto others. When this comes up, it's our ego wanting others to be and do like us. And when they are negative, perception clouds judgment and discernment. Think of a conversation between a carnivore and a vegan. A vegan may think they

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“ IN LIFE, IN PRACTICE, BOTH ON AND OFF THE MAT, WE NEED GUIDANCE.

These tools are critical for remaining steadfast within that path. Our ego, doing what our ego does, will create separation. I've experienced and understood this in two ways:

It will act to deter us from that path of active self-inquiry and development.

We will place ourselves on a pedestal for then doing the work.

The second leads me to my next point: just because we are doing the work does not mean we are better than someone else.

## The spiritual ego complex

When the above happens, we become hacked by our spiritual ego. It's a funny one. The ego likes

are above others because they see an animal as a sentient being when others don't, and a carnivore may believe they are above animals and that the argument for veganism is dumb. A very loose and broad example, but hopefully, you get my point.

If I share my experience with you for a moment, my spiritual ego used to appear when I got on the London underground. I would get on the central line and think to myself, "All these poor people, having to get this train every day, spend their days in a suit and at a desk, grinding themselves away. They all look so unhappy. They are all just living an automatic blind life."

And yet there I was, joining them in those rattling metal tubes. D\*\*khead.

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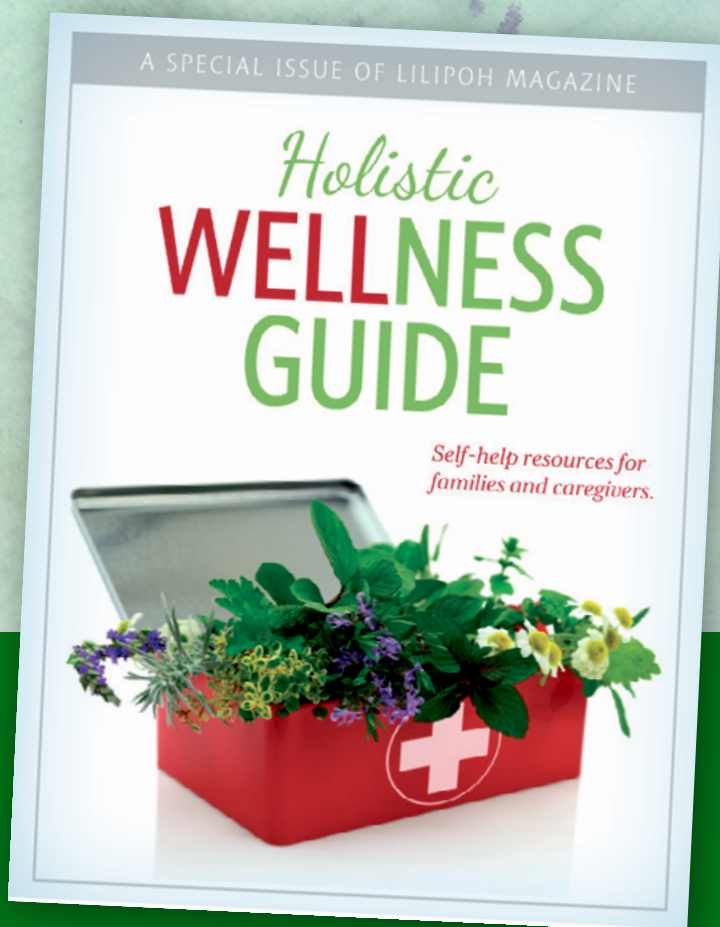
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I had no idea of anyone's job, life, circumstances, what was going on, or anything else. Someone could have been a doctor after a long surgery or prepping for one, for all I know. Someone else could be in a shitty time in their life. Someone could be going to study law to help others. And there I was, a fresh out of the pen yoga teacher, smug, thinking I am above because I practice yoga. Hell, for all I know, everyone with their eyes closed could be meditating. I was doing the work, but my ego made me think I was above.

Writing about this now, I can't help but shake my head and laugh and think, "you ignorant little p\*\*\*k."

We are so quick to judge. Judgment is an essential quality. It's a part of what keeps us alive. Evolutionary it helped us with which foods to eat and when we were in danger, just as it does now. But our ego plays with judgment differently. And we must develop discernment to catch it.

Our ego is rigid; it likes structure and hierarchy. And when someone doesn't fit into our systems, our ego revels in condescending thoughts about the other person. We place our views, opinions, practices, and beliefs above others without appreciating the differences and seeking to learn and understand.

## Seek first to understand.

When we seek first to understand, we move with compassion.

Each person has their journey and as a yoga practitioner, developing compassion to understand others is key.

Unfortunately, it is much easier to roll around in the mud of negativity that can fill our minds. So when we find ourselves there, we must shift our

attention to cultivating compassion and reframe how we may be perceiving the situation. Just because you practice movement and breath, or do any other spiritual work, doesn't place you above anyone else. Just because you practice a particular type of yoga doesn't make you better than anyone else; because you do four hours of practice a day doesn't place you above the guy who does one hour, and just because you can handstand does not mean your practice is more advanced than others.

Watch the mind, observe the ego rise, and develop the ability to judge what is truth.

## Walk your own path and chain up your ego

We don't need to seek the validation of our teachers but merely their guidance. We need not look for external sources to validate our practice, offer us moments of being, and answer the questions for which we seek resolution. But instead, empower ourselves to take inspiration and guidance and direct our attention inwards to do the work ourselves and unravel the path ahead. As we walk and unfold, we must keep sharpening, cleaning, and questioning our perceptions and judgments, discerning what is guiding us in the right direction and what is trying to steal our focus away from remaining steadfast in our path. You don't need a guru or teacher to do the work, and doing the work doesn't bring you above anyone else. So walk your own path and chain up your ego. 📌

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**Miles Mortensen** comes from club life, having spent his late teens and early twenties immersing himself in the world of techno culture. Based in London, Miles' yoga classes now weave the driving rhythms of the dance floor with the energetic and playful nature of Rocket yoga, all mixed together with a twist of philosophy to really get yourself turned inside out. For more information, follow Miles on Instagram [@milesmortensenyoga](#) or visit [milesmortensenyoga.com](#)



“ JUST BECAUSE YOU PRACTICE  
MOVEMENT AND BREATH, OR DO  
ANY OTHER SPIRITUAL WORK,  
DOESN'T PLACE YOU ABOVE  
ANYONE ELSE.





# Word By Word

MARY LOU SANELLI

That I don't dream in images, but in sentences, may seem a bit odd.

Except it isn't, really. A sentence may redefine a dream, but I wouldn't even know how to *not* dream this way.

How it began is a story in itself, intertwined with my love of reading, usually prompted by whatever book that I am reading or, more likely, by my opinion of whatever book that I am reading. I hear the words. Then, slowly, they emerge along a line the length of the sentence. That's how they come, word by word, in cursive with

Though they aren't always successful.

They are always revealing, though, even when brief as a single sound. But one word can be a full sentence. Yes? Right? Certainly.

Nor are they new to my dream cycles. When I was a child, *Highlights* was my respite and mine alone, though I was supposed to share the magazines with my sisters. I didn't share them with my sisters. In winter, I hid them under my bed. In summer, in my tree fort—open to the sky and smelling of soggy leaves and wood.

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“ I HEAR THE WORDS. THEN, SLOWLY, THEY EMERGE ALONG A LINE THE LENGTH OF THE SENTENCE.

punctuation—commas, periods, parentheses—in place, set. And I never thought the same way about dreams once the words became visible, words that want nothing more than to make my mind a truer place in which to live.

No one ever found me in my fort, and that's what I wanted. Without interruption, which I also wanted, I could finally stop trying to be someone others approved of. I was eager to know myself in the world outside of my family, my school, my



neighborhood. I've always been comforted by this feeling.

My fort was neat, sunlit, filled with the sound of cheeping birds. I liked to watch the tree swallows speed through the maples and oaks. When the afternoon sun hit the paper birch, the white bark illuminated everything around it, every tree, every plant, every insect hovering

was not obvious to him, no grace of line to his draftsman's eye, but I thought the compact lopsidedness of my three walls (it was more of a lean-to) was its most endearing quality. To this day, a simple cottage can fill me with house envy. But it's not like that when I see lavish reflections of wealth. I don't sense a shelter of safety in such grand homes, even if "safe" is what they're after.

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“BUT WHEN I RE-READ THE SCRIBBLE, I SEE HOW THE WORDS WANT TO MATTER JUST AS MUCH AS I DO, THEY WANT TO TRY.

in the air between the lowest branches and the ground. The sound of water flowing in the shallow brook below reminded me that the forest was alive, forever encroaching, and ready to reclaim its rightful branches, which, I think, is a perfectly understandable entitlement, and I grew attentive to it. It doesn't take much to grab your attention—or distract it—when you are ten, and it was about this time that I started dreaming in sentences.

My father was worried. "Don't let the neighbor kids climb up," he said, which didn't worry me; I didn't want the neighbor kids to climb up. But I couldn't imagine what he meant by "dangerous." To me, the rickety steps and weather-beaten boards weren't a hazard, but safety. The magic

It's as if I can feel certain tensions seeping out, and then, there they are, gathering in a sleepy sentence inside of my head. With its own timetable, on its own terms.

I'm not saying every huge house is chaos waiting to happen. I'm just saying that's how I internalize them. Listening to my parents' marriage implode within the solid split-level my father built, my fort became, not all at once but as the fights intensified, a requirement for the rest of my life. I felt more at home in my fort than anywhere else. I think I've been searching for that same feeling ever since.

A few of my homes have come close. Sometimes I feel as if my true place is still out there.

To remember these sentences, to keep them fresh, I keep a pen and pad by the bedside. I write terribly in the dark and most mornings I have no memory of the sentences. But when I re-read the scribble, I see how the words want to matter just as much as I do, they want to try. They work hard at coming into my subconscious. They bomb just as often. But they *try*.

My last 3 a.m. sentence said everything people like me like to say to themselves, “Writing is the ritual I found for myself in the hope that my life and my work would always be the same.” I’d read Mary Oliver before turning off the light, so naturally, my voice was serious, introspective, wistful.

Two hours later, the words were harsher. They posed a question. Two questions. Then, after lashing out, a startling truth. *The New York Times* was my portal in between dreams (never a good idea), the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a war scenario that the world has repeated too many times, scenes of human suffering I didn’t want to think about, but I made myself read every account; study every photo.

For another hour I tossed and turned in the aftermath.

It was around 5:30 a.m. when I scrawled, “How did the world view *us* when we invaded Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Korea? What about that bomb we dropped, that unthinkable bomb?” My mind raced. Then it (sort of) changed the subject. “No other country slaughters cows, pigs, and chickens as brutally as we do and were these images to be put on full-color spreads in the *New York Times*, no one could stand to look . . .” Then, half-awake, I heard two voices, one refusing to be shushed, “don’t ssh me!” it said before, “. . . but we’d *have* to look, and then maybe the days of slaughtering thirty-three million cattle a year would be over because we’d eat less meat!!!!!!”

I had never even imagined writing such a sentence. The exclamation points ran off the pad. I was *upset*.

And I remember with absolute clarity why I was so upset, aside from the Russians, the war, the bomb, and all the heaving cows: during past travels, we’d driven past stockyards in Texas. I quoted Annie Dillard’s line out loud to my husband, “Bred beef are a human product like rayon.” Yet, I had never tried to express my horror in my own writing. But earlier that evening, at my neighbor’s table, I ate red meat for the first time since I was seventeen. I didn’t know I was eating it. It was in the *sauce*. I was fine. My stomach didn’t even seem to notice, it didn’t rebel. Only my mind rebelled, apparently more sensitive to beef than my stomach, leaving a shock wave in its wake. And when I bent over to read the run-on sentence, I stopped making the bed, sat back down, and on the verge of tears, let those questions hang in the air like charring incense.

The last few years, I’ve been on the verge of tears, frankly, a *lot*.

“I realize now that my life has always been about small homes, small pleasures, small wins.” Half an hour ago, this sentence surfaced during the nap I tried to take. The words made their way in, they made mistakes (I don’t like the word “wins”), they made me see, they made me listen. To everything.

Even the memory of that fort makes me smile. I managed to forget the world’s shocks for a few hours and come back to my nest in the woods, and that’s the closest thing to happiness I can rally when I’m this tired. 🍷

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**Mary Lou Sanelli** works as an author, speaker, and master dance teacher. Her latest collection of essays, *Every Little Thing*, has been nominated for a Pacific Northwest Book Award and a 2022 Washington State Book Award. She contributes to *The Seattle Times* Opinion Page, and her work has been aired on *Weekend Edition*: NPR. For more information about her and her work, visit [www.marylousanelli.com](http://www.marylousanelli.com)

## WALKING ON CAPITOL HILL

Red Brick and Cobblestone  
 The red brick drive  
 two rows two paths  
 for two wheel sets  
 or for two feet  
 passing houses and garages.  
 An alleyway through time  
 before pavement before asphalt  
 a short-cut between blocks  
 of townhouses or government  
 buildings, offices or churches.  
 The red brick drive  
 was a way to  
 see how other people  
 lived through their back  
 porches or back decks.  
 An alleyway of time  
 with accents of cobblestone  
 wooden garage doors that  
 open only by hand  
 secret paths and doors.

Listen closely and you  
 can hear the past.

— LB SEDLACEK

*Originally published in Hill Rag – October 2021*

**LB Sedlacek** has had poems and stories appear in a variety of publications. Her poetry books include *Swim*, *The Poet Next Door*, *The Architect of French Fries*, *Happy Little Clouds*, and *Words and Bones*. She published the free resource for poets *The Poetry Market Ezine* from 2001 to 2020. She can be reached at: [lbsedlacek@gmail.com](mailto:lbsedlacek@gmail.com)







teaching adolescents  
the history of art

# The Power of Pictures

VAN JAMES

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*People today have a tremendous hunger for pictures. This hunger is a symptom of the fact that humanity, through the destiny of our time, is being urged toward the sphere of imaginative perception. We satisfy this hunger creatively if we let eye and heart dwell in active contemplation on works of art which have themselves arisen out of some measure of imaginative perception, and which can thus help to prepare the soul for this same inner sight. So “looking at pictures” can help to meet a deep need peculiar to the present day.*

— EMIL BOCK<sup>1</sup>

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Aesthetics, the science of beauty, has to do with a heightened sense of experience and the ability to respond to phenomena. When we engage with the world through refined sense perception, we gain a greater richness and connection with the world. And when we have the possibility of this enhanced response, we likewise take on greater responsibility (response ability) for what we respond to. Responsibility for the object of our perception is endangered today because, more and more, we experience the outer world as something that is not a part of us. This is where the value lies in teaching aesthetics

through art history, particularly for adolescents. Engaging with art draws their interest at this powerful time of transformation in their lives away from themselves and directs it toward the world. Developing an interest and a caring responsibility for the world during adolescence can make all the difference in their later lives.

At this time of adolescence, suggests Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf education, it is important to balance the study of inorganic, lifeless elements in the natural sciences with that of art. Steiner writes: “At the age when the child must realize that nature is ruled by abstract law to be

[ continued on page 54 ]

# EGYPTIAN ART

## PAINTING SCULPTURE



HATHOR

goddess of love, health and death

- multiple perspectives
- flat colored
- no shading
- physical bodies mix between full on and profile view
- women usually pale from working inside
- men much tanner
- no vanishing point
- royalty usually found bigger or higher up in the painting
- paintings usually found in tombs, temples and scrolls
- paintings were for the gods, royalty and the dead

- always connected to a backstone
- rigid and stiff postured
- eyes always have a parallel gaze
- no hollows in large sculptures
- women usually have pale skin tone
- men are much darker skinned
- women are covered with clothing
- men are usually more exposed
- left foot usually stepping or pointed forward
- dull or flat colored
- usually sculpted from marble



# Religious Art



## HINDU

Many gods are worshipped in the Hindu religion, and you will often find the lotus flower next to the gods, representing transformation.



The arabesque or arabesque pictures the ever-unfolding forces of life as revealed in the plant kingdom and is a symbol for the eternal path of the pilgrim. This border is from the Qur'an (Koran).

## ISLAM



Islamic calligraphy appears both as curvilinear flowing script and as angular, straight print, such as this square Kufic script which says, "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God."



## HEBREW

Some geometric forms are shared by all the major religions, such as the hexagon on six pointed stars, Seal of Solomon.



## ZOROASTRIANISM

The faravahar or "guardian angel" is a robed archer and "winged solar disc" representing striving towards Ahura Mazda.

## BUDDHISM

A Gupta statue of the Buddha symbolizing meditation and serenity. Originally the Buddhist church eschewed portraits of the Buddha, using symbols such as an empty seat, a footprint or a wheel.





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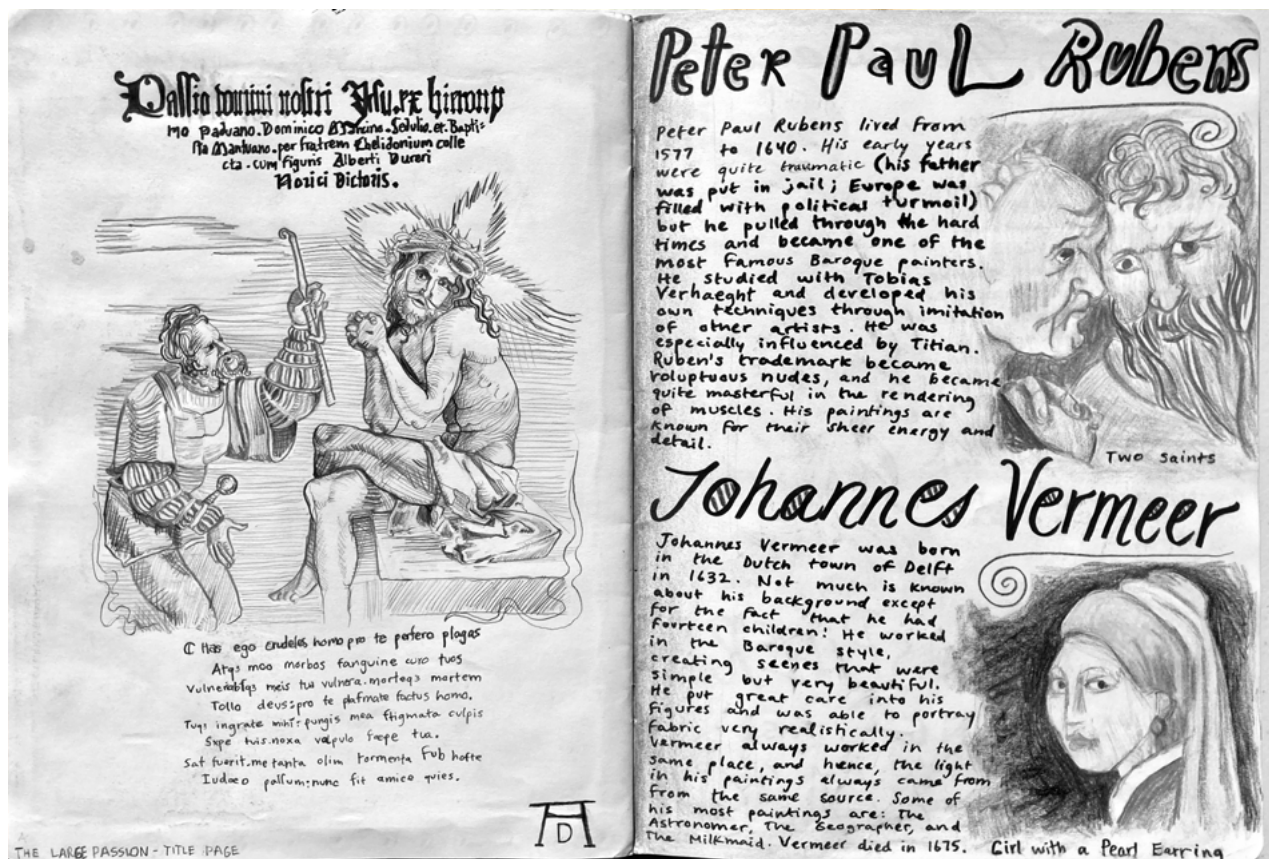
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“DEVELOPING AN INTEREST AND A CARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WORLD DURING ADOLESCENCE CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THEIR LATER LIVES.





grasped by reason, when [they] must learn in physics the link between cause and effect in given cases, we must promote an understanding of art as a necessary counterbalance. The child must realize how the several arts have developed in the different periods of human history, how this or that motif in art plays its part in a particular epoch. Only in this way will those elements which a human being needs for all-around unfoldment of one's being be truly stimulated. In this way too we can unfold the qualities which...are essential in moral instruction.”<sup>2</sup>

This approach is explored in a new book recently published by Waldorf Publications, *Teaching Art History: Engaging the Adolescent in Art Appreciation, Cultural History and the Evolution of Consciousness*, by Van James. The book includes an illustrated overview of historical paintings and sculptures, background information and descriptions of these works, explanations of how and why one teaches adolescents, and many examples of student work. Poems for the history of art and a bibliography are also included. The publication is now available through most book outlets.

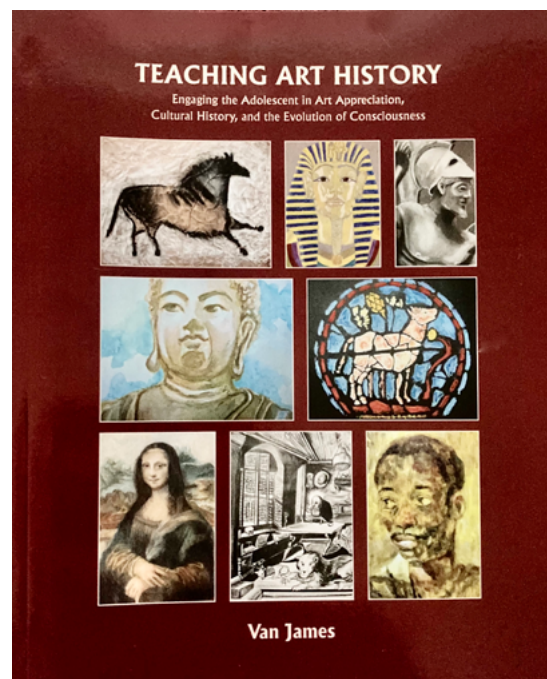
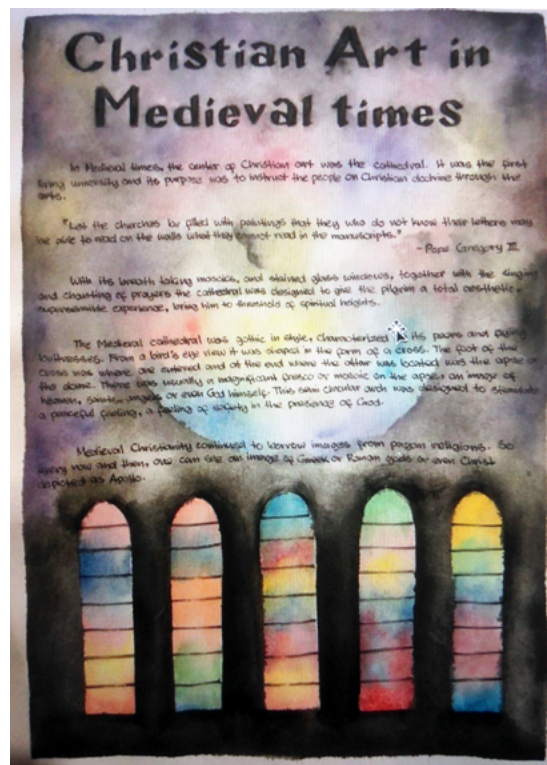
A weekly online course given by the author beginning July 9th and running through September 18th will also cover this topic. The eight two-hour sessions on Saturday evenings (US time zones) will include illustrated lecture demonstrations, discussions, and guided artistic activities with pastel drawing. Beginner adults, as well as experienced teachers, artists, and parents, are welcome.

For more information on the book, *Teaching Art History: Engaging the Adolescent in Art Appreciation, Cultural History and the Evolution of Consciousness*, please visit [waldorfpublications.org](http://waldorfpublications.org). For details on Van James' upcoming online course, please visit [nurturerstudio.com](http://nurturerstudio.com). 📖

<sup>1</sup> Bock, E. *The Apocalypse of St. John*. 1957

<sup>2</sup> Steiner cited in Stockmeyer, K. *Rudolf Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools*, p. 51. 2015.

**Van James** is a teaching artist, award-winning author, and international advocate for the arts. He lives in Honolulu, Hawaii. For more information, please visit [vanjames.smugmug.com](http://vanjames.smugmug.com).



# Words the Dog Knows

*Look, Loki! Are you ready?  
Go get it – bring it here.  
Good girl!!!*

On land this, followed by one hand  
on her neck, then *give!* and her gentle  
release into the other; then  
the expectant upward glance,  
a plea. So again I throw,  
she catches or chases.  
No matter, we play  
until one of us  
tires.

In water, she was always  
game. But lately seems tired,  
no longer in thrall of stick or ball  
or even the bright orange tug toy  
that bops goofily away with the wind.

I recognize this lessened zeal,  
the loosening of her determined grip  
on those endless games of her youth.  
No words needed, just that look  
lying between fatigue and disinterest,  
with a bit of apology thrown in.

How do dogs speak so eloquently  
without speech, while we use so many words  
to explain away our waning interest  
when so much more might be said  
with a simple, soulful stare.

— SARAH W. BARTLETT

*Previously published in Slow Blooming  
Gratitudes, Finishing Line Press, New  
Women's Voices Series*

**Sarah W. Bartlett** has authored two chapbooks with Finishing Line Press: *Slow Blooming Gratiitudes* and *Into the Great Blue*. Additional poetry and prose have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies. She leads poetry groups and has co-edited two books from her writing program with Vermont's incarcerated women: *LifeLines: Re-Writing Lives from Inside Out* and *Hear Me, See Me: Incarcerated Women Write*. Sarah can be reached at [womenwritingvt@gmail.com](mailto:womenwritingvt@gmail.com).







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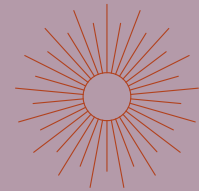
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LYNN MADSEN, PHD, MD, REVIEWS

## *Gemstones and Earth's History*

a book by Walther Cloos

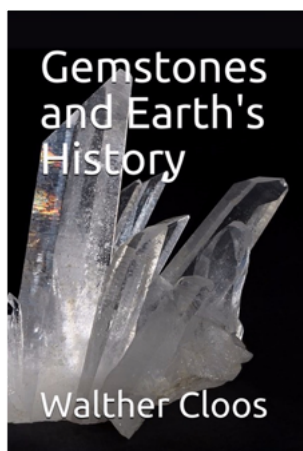
Originally published in German in 1956, Walther Cloos' *Gemstones and Earth's History* (2021) is now available in English, expanding access to this remarkable book.

Cloos provides vivid descriptions of gems and chronicles where they can be found, how they are embedded or related to their environment, and in which period of earth's history they arrived. Honestly, more than several moments of awe occurred while reading.

This book is the primer that would have prepared me with earth context for all the earth science courses of my education. Chemistry, formerly experienced as merely factual and headache-inducing, was transformed into surprise as I looked up the chemical structure of each gem while reading, eager to perceive the once tired chemical figures with fresh eyes.

The term "enlivening" is apt for describing *Gemstones and Earth's History*. This book enlivens gems along with the reader, science, history, and wonder of our earth.

Cloos clearly lays out the diversity of gemstones and relates their uniqueness to the earth's evolution, describing different times and phases manifest as different substances. In addition, someone familiar with a particular gem's geometric growth pattern can place where on the earth it comes from. This importance of place, this diversity, reflects



how each and every location on earth is unique, each plot of ground beneath our feet. A plant that grows in one place is different from another, and on and on. A diamond is not just a diamond.

I am a so-called plant person who readily gets to know a new environment from that kingdom's perspective. Cloos has expanded my sense of nature to focus on plants along with how the earth and cosmos dance together to bring about all growth and evolution, plant, animal, and mineral. They intertwine and overlap. He describes plant-like growth patterns of gemstones as "crystal formations that are otherwise only known in the rhythmic and spiral formation tendencies of plant growth."

In the study of anthroposophic medicine, I learned about processes, which, in conventional medicine, we call disease. One can surgically remove a tumor, but the process may not be removed at that time. A virus or bacteria is involved with infection, but the process of illness and healing goes beyond them. This background helped me grasp Cloos' descriptions of how animal and plant "processes" exist within the mineral realm. His words have provided me with an understanding of the earth's evolution. I can now read about old Saturn, old Sun, old Moon, and ancient Earth with more clear imagination. The way we currently define a plant with its capacity to photosynthesize is specific to this current earth; in the far distant past, the shape of a tree trunk observed in a particular mineral reflects a similar process. The same

“

A PLANT THAT GROWS IN ONE PLACE IS DIFFERENT FROM ANOTHER, AND ON AND ON. A DIAMOND IS NOT JUST A DIAMOND.



forming forces evoke similar appearances from different substances—the origin of the form is not just physical chemical makeup.

These perceptions offer intangible clues to the healing properties of various minerals. For example, why chrysolith is known as a healing force for the eyes. Cloos describes the arrival of chrysolith during the old Sun phase, the same time frame as diamonds. He quotes Goethe, saying, “If the eye was not sun-like, it could never see the sun.” Cloos goes on to state that “the eye is born entirely of the sun’s activity.” In my former prescribing of chrysolith for detached retinas, I just knew it worked. Now I hold a deeper understanding of why.

Cloos provides other examples of various gems and their relationships to the senses. In the big picture, understanding these relationships leads to further comprehension of the etheric realm.

Cloos points out how gems’ properties defy the usual perceptions of the mineral world; they are transparent yet dense, which makes them entirely different from metals (how did I miss that?). That distinction alone is worthy of attention, especially in the context of medicine and the use of gems as remedies.

Cloos’ love of minerals and our earth expressed in this book is palpable. Though this book does not have a medical focus, Cloos applied that love to his alchemical work. He developed many of my beloved remedies for Weleda as one of its first pharmacists, and those remedies are still available.

My understanding of how his remedies are formulated and how they work in the human being is greatly enhanced after reading this book.

---

“ MY CONFUSION ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF GEMS WITH WEALTH AND POWER HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A WONDER OF GEMS.

Cloos references the four different ethers in *Gemstones and Earth’s History*. Not just high heat or pressure is involved with gem origins, but also light, moisture, and where they are embedded on our earth are components of each gem’s story. For example, Cloos describes a light-filled earth that contributed to the moonstone family’s arrival.

My personal confusion about the association of gems with wealth and power has been transformed into a wonder of gems. Their beauties are sacred and unique, and their role in the earth’s well-being, as well as their force for healing, cannot be manufactured. I did not hang onto those prior gifts of pearls, turquoise, diamonds, and emeralds, given my lack of attachment to wearing them and the unfortunate tendency to lose jewelry. With this newfound reverence, I wish I had kept them, not as investments, but to honor their special natures and to know them better.

Some books warrant an immediate second read; this one did. During the first go-through, I focused on the basics, including vocabulary, such as rock, mineral, ore, and metal. The second time through, I began to grasp the earth’s history and its transformation over time. What we now witness as solid rock formations were once huge gelatinous masses that eventually solidified and differentiated, sometimes into crystals, sometimes not—and each gem had its own arrival within this evolution. The appearance of one gemstone completely enclosed within another, however, remains a mystery.

Cloos’ knowledge and understanding of the earth’s history in relation to healing forces is present not just in remedies but in all of nature and our relationship to it. This understanding provides a sage perspective on the use of all medicines. Cloos gives us confidence that nature itself is a remedy and reaffirms that how a remedy is received is as vital to its effectiveness as the remedy itself.

If I had another fifty years, I would want to become a pharmacist like Walther Cloos and continue his alchemical healing work with this deep knowledge about and wisdom of our earth. Instead, I will revisit various locations with a new vision—places like Rockhound State Park in New Mexico. This time, I will not just hike and camp but will dig in. And I will read Cloos’ other books available in English, *The Living Earth* (1978) and *The Living Origin of Rocks and Minerals* (2015). His inspiration to love and cherish our earth—what better way to bring goodness to the world?

Formative Forces Publishing, July, 2021

Translated by Jannebeth Röell and James Lee



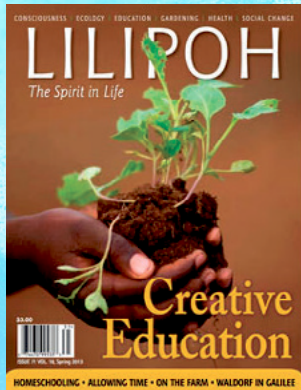
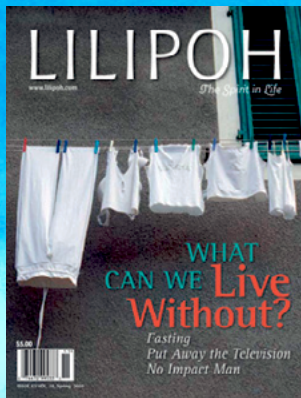
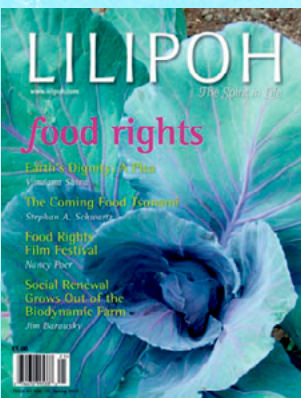
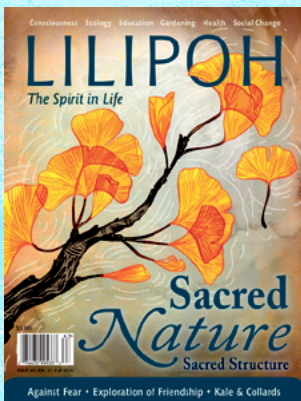
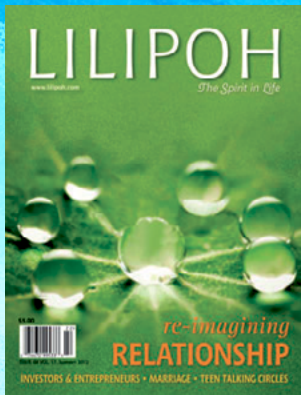
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Now residing in Portland, OR, **Lynn Madsen, PhD, MD** is a retired anthroposophic physician, writer, fiddle player, and biodynamic gardener. She will publish her fifth memoir in 2022: *Road Warrior: And Joan of Arc—Mostly*.



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