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dear readers



We are delighted to present you with another edition of LILIPOH! After wrapping up a special issue celebrating our 25th anniversary, we have spent some time contemplating what is next for the magazine. (If you

haven't yet grabbed a copy of the special issue, make sure to check out our website: lilipoh.com!) One of my favorite things about our publication is the breadth of topics we cover. From education and early childhood to interviews with artists and essays by doctors, there is something for everyone on the pages of LILIPOH!

The issue you are holding now is no different. You will find an article about the transformative power of music, one about a Kenyan Waldorf school, and a piece about how we can reconnect after the long separation of the pandemic. You will also find essays and articles from several of our long-time contributors and columnists, who have been writing for LILIPOH for many years. For me, this diversity makes the magazine unique, and I

always hope that readers who pick up LILIPOH for one reason will end up reading something that might not have interested them otherwise.

Speaking of long-term contributors, I would also like to extend a special thank you to our poetry editor Ellaraine Lockie, who is stepping down after this issue. Since 2010, Ellaraine has carefully curated the poems that appeared in LILIPOH, introducing us to many outstanding poets. We are so grateful for her years of guidance and support!

As summer draws to a close, I hope you find some enjoyment and inspiration in the pages of this issue.

Best,

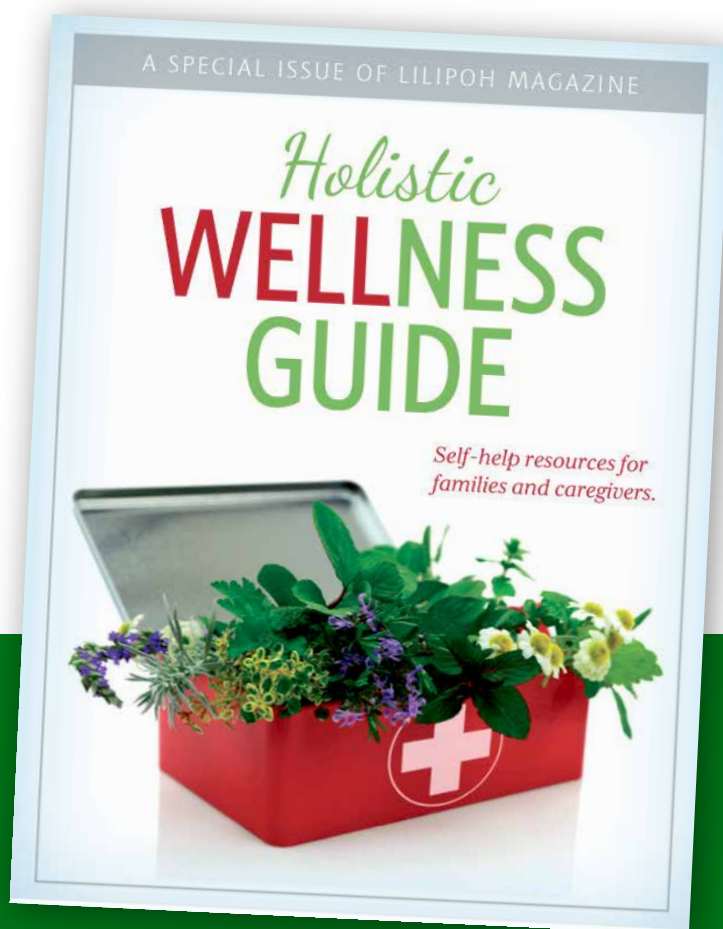
Kaysa Korrow

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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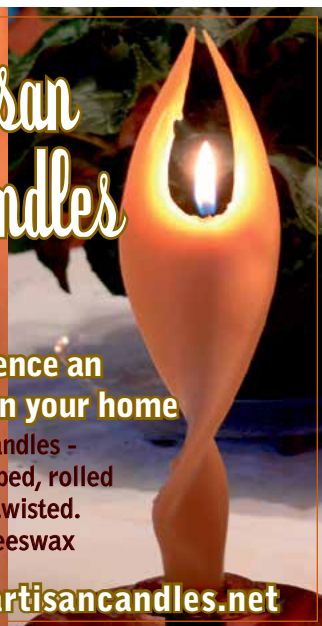
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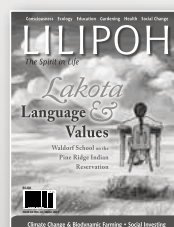
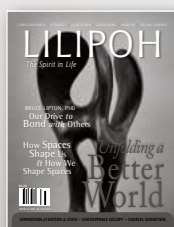
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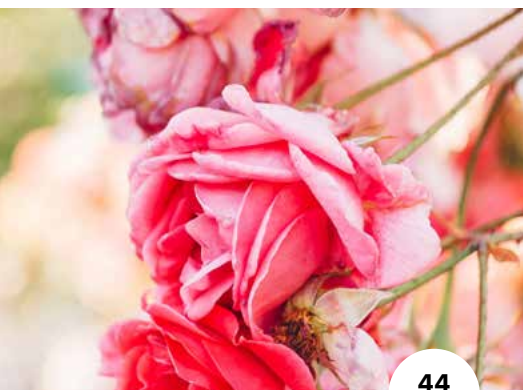


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Alma Partners Retreat,
February 2023.

Left to right: Masumi Hayashi-
Smith, Aiyana Masla, Randolph
Carter, Linda Williams

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALMA PARTNERS

“DECADES OF FIRSTHAND
EXPERIENCES HAVE SHOWN US
THAT, IN MOST COMMUNITIES, A
GAP BETWEEN IDEALS AND ACTIONS
OFTEN OPENS OVER TIME.

becoming *inclusive*
Waldorf communities

Fulfilling Our Promise

VICKI LARSON

“OUR GUIDING
PRINCIPLE
IS LOVE.

Our Alma

Alma Partners is a multiracial, multigenerational group of eleven individuals from diverse backgrounds living in the US and Canada. We launched the organization in the spring of 2020, founded on the belief that institutions are, first and foremost, *communities* that have an opportunity and a responsibility to build cultures of belonging, courage, and honesty in collaboration with the people they serve. Decades of firsthand experiences have shown us that, in most communities, a gap between ideals and actions often opens over time. We came together to address

those gaps, identify them, and take steps to close them.

We do our work so that every individual and community we partner with, and those they serve, can speak the truth, be themselves, feel seen and valued, and develop their capacity to participate in the world with dignity, inspiration, joy, freedom, purpose, meaning, and love. We do our work because we saw for ourselves and heard from schools across the country, many years before we formed as an organization, that it was necessary work for the future of Waldorf education.

The news is hard right now—there is division, polarization, and violence. As we take in everything happening in our country and the world, we are reminded each day of the importance of relationships, of building bridges, and of telling the truth about the past and the present to build a just future. We are reminded of the importance of noticing where we have privilege, ease, power, or access that we can leverage as we forge common causes with those who are most vulnerable or overlooked in our communities.

“Diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice” has become a weaponized term. We refuse

to participate in that weaponization and will continue to work with *alma* (“soul” in Spanish), depth, and nuance. We do what we do out of respect for children and for all people, in our glorious differences and commonalities, in our complexity and humanity. Our core values, described later in this article, represent what we believe to be the true heart and purpose of DEIJ work. Our guiding principle is love.

Who We Are

Several of us have known each other for over a decade, some even longer. The seeds of Alma Partners were planted during conversations that started in the 2000s. By 2008, several of us were leading diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) work in our schools. We invited each other to come and speak in those schools. We read what others in our network were writing. We inspired each other, checked in, and stayed in touch. We listened to each other, looked for opportunities to come together, and looked out for each other.

In 2020, the six co-founders – Randolph Carter, Meggan Gill, Keelah Helwig, Katie Ketchum¹, myself, and Linda Williams – came together to launch Alma Partners. Within six months, we were working with more than a dozen clients across North America. We quickly invited six additional associates – Masumi Hayashi-Smith, Renita LiVolsi, Aiyana Masla, Joaquin Muñoz, Heather Scott, and Kenya Strong – who enriched our group immensely. Three years later, we are like family to each other.

A post we made on Instagram in October 2021 sums up who we are:

“We are [eleven] colleagues, learning from and growing with each other every day. We are Waldorf teachers and staff,

Waldorf parents, longtime educators and activists, folks without children. We are Black, Indigenous, Latino/x, Asian, multiracial, and white. We are queer, straight, cisgender, nonbinary. We are introverts and extroverts and points in between. We are a wide range of personalities, philosophies, temperaments, sizes, ages, and abilities. We have strong opinions, and we laugh a lot. We live in two countries and five states in the US. We love Waldorf education and want it to transform and serve all children. We love being a part of this group and this moment, and we are grateful to all the schools that are working with us.

We are not slick or shallow, we are not afraid of messy or uncomfortable, and we are in this for the long haul.”

Our Approach

As urgent daily activities take priority, we find that individuals in every community we work with and know struggle to find the time and energy to connect each day over their shared mission and larger goals. One of the concerns we hear most consistently from our clients is that they don’t have enough time to plan, share resources, or talk to each other about shared interests and urgent needs, in and out of the classroom.

Alma Partners aims to function as a mirror for what is and a window into what could be – for ourselves and for others. We try to provide space for reflection, connection, and inspiration, space for individuals and communities to remember who they are, who they serve, and why they came together in the first place.

To that end, we lead workshops and courses, support reflection on and revitalization of curriculums, offer institutional DEIJ audits,

Left to right: Kenya Strong, Vicki Larson, Keelah Helwig, Meggan Gill, Heather Scott, Joaquin Muñoz, Randolph Carter, Masumi Hayashi-Smith, Linda Williams, Aiyana Masla



mediation, and conflict resolution, and help clients develop and implement Bias Incident Protocols, strategic plans, and other processes and policies. We partner with schools and organizations to support alignment between institutional ideals and institutional culture, between what clients say they want to do and what they actually do.

We know that education is an integral component of transformation in society. For that reason, we work primarily with schools and educators. A big part of what we do involves integrating DEIJ principles into pedagogy (how teachers teach) and curriculum (what teachers teach) in public and private schools in the Waldorf movement in the US and Canada.

Our Core Values

Our work is built on five core values:

1. WORKING FROM SOUL

We approach uncomfortable, messy, challenging, complex, and vulnerable realities with courage and kindness. We aim to be honest, humble, and to work from depth and possibility. Our guiding principle is love.

2. CENTERING RELATIONSHIPS

We seek to model the world we imagine. With each other, we build connections, demonstrate respect, and practice care. With our work, we continuously review and adapt what we offer and how we offer it. With clients, we support healing

“WE KNOW THAT EDUCATION IS AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF TRANSFORMATION IN SOCIETY.”

and evolution. We do our best to be authentic, responsive, and accountable.

3. HONORING INTERSECTIONALITY

We strive to build a world where all people are seen, treated with dignity, and free to express their full selves. Refusing to oversimplify the subtleties of human experience, we recognize and attend to the compounding effects of oppression on the identities of each person and group. We appreciate differences and work to build shared understanding.

4. EMBODYING INTEGRITY

We express our values in our lives, relationships, and communities. We strive to define and articulate the ideals of diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice, integrating them into our actions and ways of being. We have been involved in this endeavor for decades and are committed to engaging with this work as a lifelong journey.

5. MAKING CHANGE

We are dedicated to having a practical, meaningful impact. We aim to be accessible for a range of budgets and types of organizations and for people of different abilities and learning styles. We ask for and integrate feedback. Offering

resources, building capacity, and sharing a life-long commitment to our own learning, we begin with self-study and inner work as a necessary foundation for collaboration, community education, and transformation.

Our Impact

Alma Partners has had a busy three years and has experienced tremendous learning and growth. Since our founding, we have worked with about sixty clients, including private schools, charter schools, small initiative schools, a YMCA camp, two Camphill communities, and a large international nonprofit with about thirty affiliate communities across the US. We have also worked with Waldorf teacher training institutes and leadership bodies, including the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA), the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN), Alkion Center, and Sunbridge Institute.

- We have offered nearly one hundred workshops, serving more than 3,500 participants.
- We created a proprietary curriculum mapping tool now being used in more than a dozen schools.

- We have helped about ten Waldorf schools create a Bias Incident Protocol to identify and reduce incidents of bias.
- Our online course, *Fulfilling Our Promise: Becoming Inclusive Waldorf Communities*, is currently active in eight schools, and an individual online cohort of the course launches in July 2023.
- Another course, Pedagogical Storytelling for Early Childhood, had a successful pilot run last year with about thirty-five participants and featured special guests, including Melody Birdsong-Shubert (River Valley Waldorf School), Nancy Blanning (WECAN), Aimee DeNey (Birdsong Children's Garden), Keelah Helwig (Waldorf School of Garden City), and Celestine Stadnick (Lakota Waldorf School). The second version of the course launches in July 2023.

Next year, we will be engaged in at least three strategic planning processes. By the end of 2023, we will have completed about ten DEI audits, assessing organizational alignment with DEI goals and best practices in the areas of curriculum, community life, and policies/procedures.

What Comes Next

As we support communities to develop bias incident protocols, sharpen marketing and admissions strategies, create strategic plans and review governance models, focus on hiring and retention practices that build genuinely and sustainably diverse organizations, and audit their work, we engage in the same kind of self-reflection and ongoing evolution that we aim to support with our clients. Because we work in so many different communities, we can see patterns and respond. We are continuously reviewing and refining what we offer. We design new tools and approaches as needs emerge.

Left to right: Heather Scott, Linda Williams, Meggan Gill, Aiyana Masla



In order to shift perspectives, change mindsets, and engage teachers in the deep and ongoing work of being curricula scholars in their particular time and place for their particular students and communities, we offer seven core workshops. We recently completed a months-long analysis of the scope and sequence of these workshops and made many updates. We are in the process of further refining our online course in preparation for sharing it this summer with a cohort of individual students. As we head into our fourth year of continued growth, we plan to invite others into our work to expand our capacity.

We are deeply grateful for the support and collegiality of so many these past three years. We remain hopeful about what the Waldorf movement and the world can be and about the role we can play in that transformation.

¹ In 2021, Katie Ketchum stepped back from Alma Partners to focus on other work and family, but she stays in close touch with us. We are grateful for her support, her many gifts, and her ongoing collaboration.

Vicki Larson (she/her) has been involved in anti-racism initiatives and community organizing for social justice for more than twenty years and a Waldorf parent for more than fifteen years. She has held positions in publishing, resource development, translation and interpretation (English/Spanish), international women's human rights, marketing, communications, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ). She is a co-founder of Alma Partners and a founding member of the Sunbridge Institute Diversity Scholarship Fund Committee. Before moving into full-time consulting, Vicki worked at Green Meadow Waldorf School in Spring Valley, NY, for fourteen years.



thirty-four years of
Waldorf education in Kenya

Supporting Courage

SARNIA GUITON

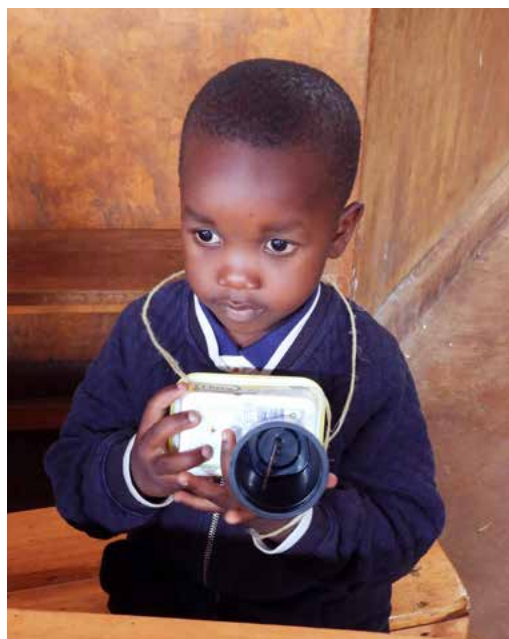
Can you imagine founding a Steiner-Waldorf school without assuming tuition as income? No? Neither can I. And yet...

The Mbagathi Rudolf Steiner School was founded as an Educational Trust in 1989 and, like many other schools, began with a rented house and a kindergarten of five children. A year later, a twenty-acre plot was bought on Maasai Lodge road, close to the southern edge of the Nairobi National Park, while a Waldorf Class One started in the rented house. The school has been growing ever since and is referred to as the mother school of East Africa.

The school's mission is to educate underprivileged children through sponsorships and donations. Using a Steiner/Waldorf pedagogy, the Mbagathi School relies on sponsorships and other donations from various sources and holds teacher training sessions for teachers from all over Africa. There were eighty at the last session. Yes, eighty! Waldorf education is alive and well in Africa!

Families in the area surrounding the Mbagathi school live in great poverty, and providing basic needs is a daily struggle. Feeding children is a primary concern, and education is rarely possible. Most children at this school come from

“MOST CHILDREN COME FROM ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED HOMES WITH PARENTS STRUGGLING TO OBTAIN THE BASIC NECESSITIES.



desperate situations, including poverty, abuse, and malnutrition, often with no competent or living parents. Some need to board for safety reasons; some walk a few miles to and from school daily, sometimes alone and sometimes with an “auntie.” Some are lucky enough to come on a school bus.

At school, outdoor shoes are lined up outside the classrooms; children stand at the door to shake hands with their teacher; you can hear the morning verse – “The sun with loving light makes bright for me each day...”

The Christian Community Children’s Service and Muslim children’s instruction are provided once a week. The students are all fed meals with food from the school’s large biodynamic garden and farm. The children grow strong and thrive on healthy food and Waldorf education. They laugh a lot and ask questions of visitors while being respectful. They know how to play! The mood of the school is uplifting and inspiring.

How can they do this? How is this possible? The answer is sponsors.

Of course, it’s a constant struggle, but the courage continues. Year after year, the classrooms are full of thirty-two children, leaving no space for another desk, and costs have gone up here in Kenya as everywhere else in the world.

Sponsorship can take different forms and can be paid per month, per term, or annually. Sponsorship for a child is US \$83 monthly, \$333 per term, or \$1000 annually. Boarding for those in greatest need requires the same. These costs can also be shared with another sponsor.

A class can be sponsored for any amount manageable per year, although with an increase in costs, they need about \$1000 per class per year to pay for the school supplies that can only come from Europe, as well as the many general costs.

Now that the cost of basic foods here in Kenya has almost doubled, a donation specifically for the meals program would also be deeply appreciated.

Can you support this courage and this extraordinary school?

To learn more, visit: steinerschoolmbagathi.co.ke or reach out to: sarnia.guiton@gmail.com

The Mbagathi Rudolf Steiner School

The Mbagathi Rudolf Steiner School lies on the Maasai plains, twenty kilometers south of the capital city, Nairobi, where animals are still free to roam outside the Nairobi National Park. The road to the school is dusty and bumpy despite years of effort to improve it. The local town of Ongata Rongai lies four kilometers from the school and is a large suburb of Nairobi. People

from all parts of Kenya arrive in Nairobi hoping to find work.

Many parts of Kenya have been facing a fierce drought, forcing the Maasai to drive their cattle far from their homelands. The drought has been biting hard, and the cattle have been dying of hunger and disease. The cattle were driven to the edge of Nairobi National Park and herded

“ THE SCHOOL’S GROWTH WAS STEADY, BUT THE ROAD WAS BUMPY WITH DEEP POTHOLES, WHICH REQUIRED CAREFUL STEERING!

into the park to graze at night, where there was still a little grass. The park wardens could no longer disregard the Maasai cattle, who were now threatening the wildlife. Main rivers have dried up in the country due to the over-felling of trees. People cut down trees to sell for wood or make charcoal to make a living, but the consciousness is coming that more trees need to be planted. By April, the rains have come; the plains shine with the glistening water after the downpours. Green is now visible – life has returned.

Nani Croze, a German artist who has lived in Kenya for many years, is known locally for her Kitengela Glass Factory further out on the plains. She had the idea to start a Waldorf/Steiner School for the children around where she lives, and her idea became a reality. In March 1989, the Steiner School Educational Trust was formed with Eric Krystall as the chairman. A kindergarten was started in September 1989 in a rented building nearby, which attracted many children. In 1990 a twenty-acre plot of land was bought, and work on the school began in earnest.

Throughout the early years, the pioneers Vojko Vbancic-Wutte and Lucy Gajancha, followed by Irmgard Wutte and volunteers, made the first steps of Waldorf education in East Africa. After the land was bought, the main house was built in

1991, and three classrooms were added in 1993; trees were planted, and a vegetable garden started. An administrator, Jules Ackenmann from Switzerland, joined the school alongside more dedicated volunteers. Initially, there was little stability in the body of teachers, and the number of children was slow to increase.

In 1995 Liz and Johannes Braun from Germany, and Judith Brown from England, joined the school as permanent staff, while the earlier staff moved on. In 1999 an East African Steiner/Waldorf Teacher Training Program moved to the school from Dar-es-Salaam, founded and run by Peter van Alphen and Ann Sharfman from South Africa. The school’s growth was steady, but the road was bumpy with deep potholes, which required careful steering! The sun shone, and the rain fell. The Waldorf/Steiner spirit consolidated.

The turn of the millennium brought new and important developments. Troels Ussing from Denmark joined us and has been advising the school through regular visits over many years. Peer Joeker began handling the finances, working closely with Mwakai Shake and Judith Brown. In 2002 the school received full registration from the Ministry of Education, and drilling our borehole well brought plenty of water, even though it is high in fluoride, which we remove before drinking. In

March 2003, our administration block was completed. Two years later, we opened our daycare/ kindergarten in Ongata Rongai. In August 2005, we built four classrooms and a toilet block supported by the German government. The Garden House, used for teacher trainers' accommodation, was also completed during that year.

August 2006 brought mains electricity which revolutionized daily life! A year later saw the completion of the first wing of the girls' boarding house. We were again fortunate to have been given funding from the German government for a new school kitchen, two more classrooms, and financial help to complete the second wing of our girls' boarding house. This project started in September 2009. In 2011 a toilet block for primary school and a new kindergarten with four groups was built with the help of the German government. In 2012 another teacher training house was built for our teacher trainers. In 2019 we received a backup generator which allowed us to continue working through the electricity blackouts, and we added verandas to two of our kindergartens.

In 2020 we built a small first aid room and a water tower with two 15,000-liter tanks and solar panels to pump the water for the school from our 170-meter deep borehole. During the past year, we have had to add further boarding house toilets to meet the government requirements as the number of boarding children grew. Finally, in 2022, the German government supported a teacher training project which included accommodation for East African teachers now leading the teacher training.

During every school holiday, we host a Steiner/Waldorf Teacher Training Program. This program ensures that we have trained Kenyan teachers, which is important for long-term stability. The program is run modularly; to qualify as a teacher, one must attend ten modules followed by classroom observation and practicums. Our regular teacher

trainers have come from South Africa in the past. They are now primarily East Africans, with student teachers from Uganda, Tanzania/Zanzibar, and Kenya, among other African countries. All our teachers attend the East African Steiner/Waldorf Teacher Training Program, which is approved in Dornach.

The school presently has four kindergarten groups based at the school. We now have classes from Classes One to Nine. The Kenyan Ministry of Education has changed the curriculum for the country from an exam-orientated curriculum to a Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). This year, in 2023, is the first year of junior high in this new curriculum. We are learning how to work together so that our children can transfer easily from our Steiner School to other schools, thus allowing them to continue their education in the Kenyan system. Most children speak three languages: English, Kiswahili, and their local mother tongue, but the lessons are taught in English, with Kiswahili taught as their main language lesson.

The students mostly live locally but come from different areas of Kenya and social backgrounds. Most children come from economically disadvantaged homes with parents struggling to obtain the basic necessities. A typical family may rent a room in Ongata Rongai, a highly populated suburb of Nairobi. The rooms are basic, perhaps with painted walls and a corrugated iron roof; usually, electricity is available. A room costs thirty to forty dollars a month. Water generally has to be carried daily in plastic containers from the nearest water point, also at a cost. There could be five individuals in a small room; perhaps a mattress would be pulled out from under the bed for the children to sleep on. Both parents, although many have only one parent, usually do casual work – cleaning, washing clothes, or construction – for about three dollars a day – if they are lucky to find work. The

“ [STUDENTS] HAVE THE BENEFIT OF DRINKING FRESH MILK AND EATING FRESH BIODYNAMIC/ORGANIC VEGETABLES AT LUNCH.

money brought home is used to pay rent and buy food. A typical and well-loved meal is Ugali (maize), Sikuma (greens), and beef stew – if the family can afford meat. This food is cooked with kerosene, charcoal, and, if financially able, gas.

The school also provides boarding facilities for 120 children. Boarding is in high demand, as the school takes children from difficult home situations. Some children are orphans; some are neglected or suffer abuse and/or extreme poverty. We have children from the slums of Nairobi as well as children from the Maasai communities. As most families have a very low income, they cannot pay the fees in full, if at all—those who can pay very little. Over 80% of our children are sponsored from abroad.

The school has a small biodynamic/organic farm with cows and an extensive vegetable garden called a shamba. Each morning, we provide a banana and a milk drink for the neediest children coming from home. This snack is necessary, as these children are often hungry and showing physical signs of malnutrition. They have usually had no breakfast and often no supper the night before. All the school children work in groups in different areas of the shamba for half an hour. At break time, all the children have a porridge called Uji (millet) and a hot, nutritious lunch. They have

the benefit of drinking fresh milk and eating fresh biodynamic/organic vegetables at lunch.

Our school has expanded over the past few years and now has 400 children. This expansion means the need for boarding spaces has multiplied; boarding and classes are completely full. With the increased number of children over the past few years, costs have also increased due to the need for more staff, furniture, food, materials, etc. We run on financial support from individual sponsors, and with the increasing number of children, we have a great need for more assistance.

We have had increasing inquiries from people wishing to start their own initiatives in East Africa, including from Zanzibar. Several Waldorf/Steiner Schools are starting to develop, including one in the Maasai community. We can share our experiences and offer places on our teacher training program to support new initiatives. We hope the coming years will see the school continue to grow and develop in all ways possible and that new initiatives will spring up in East Africa.

Sarnia Guiton has done many things in her life – nursing as an RN, mother, homesteader, Waldorf teacher, and administrator, as well as serving on various boards. She is now retired, lives in Kenya, and is familiar with all the Waldorf schools in the country, particularly the Mbagathi Rudolf Steiner School, where she is the North American Ambassador for sponsorships and general financial support for the school. For some years, she volunteered in medical clinics for the Masai in Kenya. Sarnia continues to organize and lead anthroposophical and Waldorf tours in Europe, the Near East and select African countries, with a website: sophiaservices.ca.



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Childhood Learned Helplessness

NANCY BLANNING



“CHILDREN
ARE DOERS,
ESPECIALLY
YOUNG ONES.

It is children's innate nature to want to grow up to be competent, confident, resilient, and capable human beings with the initiative and resourcefulness to meet their futures. They declare this to us all the time. Children are doers, especially young ones. They want to be active, to explore, to try out whatever they see others doing. Whenever an adult is engaged in visible activity—cooking, dishwashing, laundry folding, handwork, sweeping, mopping, raking, digging, woodworking—especially sawing and hammering—young children want to do it too. They see a process, and they want to try it out. Lucky is the child whose grownup is not rushed, who can allow the extra time it will take to let the child “help.” This drive to try things with their own little bodies through imitation expresses their longing to grow up as capable, upright human beings. The way children learn to use their bodies skillfully and confidently is to imitate what their grownups do and practice it over and over again until they have mastered the activity up to their developmental skill level.

And, between two and a half and four years old, comes the added demand of “Me do it!” Just “helping” through imitation is not enough. This new cry for independence can herald a rocky and frustrating time for families. Getting everyone up in the morning, dressed, fed, and out the door with schedules to meet is not easy. Daily life is fast and not generous in allowing time for this independence to develop through these first clumsy, slow attempts at self-care. We want to be kind and not over-tax our children, so we help them to dress and put on shoes and coats.

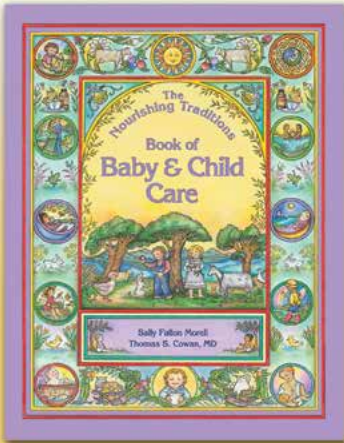
This situation is a reality that we are all trying our best to accommodate. There is no criticism implied. But the fact is that being so helpful can become a deprivation. We want our children to grow up to be competent, confident, resilient, and capable human beings with the initiative and resourcefulness to meet their futures. These capacities to encounter something new grow through practicing a new skill until one can do it. The reality is that these capacities are planted in seed form in childhood. And the environment must offer the chance to practice. Offering too much assistance out of practical necessity and kind intention has been growing for some years now. The pandemic deepened the trend and further restricted the chance to practice. The opportunity to move, explore, and socialize was restricted. Urban families were confined to small spaces. To keep the peace for parents working from home and to placate antsy, restless children, screen and audio entertainment were used to a greater degree. No criticism is intended here. Everyone has done the best we knew how to get through this very hard time.

Now we are coming out the other side. We have the opportunity to do things differently and let our children and ourselves fill up our pandemic-deprived buckets.

Learned helplessness is a term used in adult psychology and social sciences to describe a feeling helpless when dealing with new, unfamiliar, or adverse situations. Teachers across the country are reporting that children are returning to school with a childhood version of learned helplessness. In short, they seem quite clueless about how to do ordinary things for themselves and look to adults for assistance in even simple tasks. This phenomenon is akin to a kind of helplessness that the renowned Hungarian pediatrician, Emmi Pikler, observed in the 1930s. Her insight and observation confirmed that children grow up strong, confident, and competent when gifted with the time and space to achieve their developmental skills through their own initiative and practice. When this freedom was denied, it planted subtle doubt in children that they were not competent or good enough to meet the grownup’s expectations, damaging their self-esteem. This doubt discourages the child’s intention to grow up into the fullness of human-being-ness they have come to achieve.

So here we are now, and what to do? A recent visit to a little Waldorf home-care program in the Colorado foothills provided inspiration. A single teacher cares for four children each day. On this visit, two children were toddlers under two years, and two others were nearing four years old. Among the very simple play things was a child’s table set with little cups and plates. Each toddler had a small pitcher. The children let their caregiver know through gestures that they wanted water, which she supplied—about one quarter inch in each pitcher. The children went right to the table and poured out the water. Some hit the cup and some hit the table and floor. This was expected. The tiny bit of water was drunk, and the children went back for more—again and again. Their requests were never refused. How else would they learn what they could do? The looks of pleasure on their faces were evident as they practiced

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to discover and confirm their growing competence.

Bread baking is an every-day activity. The routine is so familiar to the children that they each go for an apron and climb up on their stool or little tower to reach the adult-height kitchen counter. They each sprinkle some flour at their spot and then knead the bread ready for them. The finished bread is placed on the baking sheet, and each child is, in turn, handed the cloth to wipe the counter clean—even the toddlers. Everyone knows just what to do—these things have been repeated again and again.

The biggest test of allowing competence development came at the end of lunch. Each child stands on a small stool and places their bowl up on the counter. The youngest child is only eighteen months old and small. He could barely reach up to tip his bowl onto the counter. As he stretched and struggled to reach up, the remains of lentil stew still in his bowl looked dangerously close to cascading down on his head. But his caring grownup stood patiently and respectfully aside. A final effort settled the bowl securely with no mishap. If there had been a spill, he would have cheerfully and objectively been given a cloth to clean it up. This was just an

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“WHAT A GIFT TO THE CHILD’S GROWING TRUST THAT HE CAN DO WHAT LIFE CALLS FOR.

ordinary occurrence to the child, but what a gift to the child’s growing trust that he can do what life calls for.

This beautiful little program is dedicated to helping little ones grow into themselves with confidence and independence. We cannot and do not want to turn our homes into such a haven. These examples are offered to help us begin to think about our home lives. How might we consciously create more opportunities for our children to grow confidently toward their futures?

To be very practical, we can:

- Inventory how much we do for our children that they long to develop for themselves. What can we step away from and allow the opportunity for?
- How can we prepare our space so children can be successful—hooks they can reach where coats always go, shoe rack, etc.?
- Make the morning time more spacious by having clothes laid out already in the evening. If the child is fussy about this, choose the clothes together the night before.
- Together set the table for breakfast the night before so the form already suggests what will happen and that we will sit together to eat.
- Everyone has a part in setting the table for the meal.
- Everyone carries their plate to the kitchen for cleanup.
- Simplify routines, so you have more time to do less but more fully and competently.
- On weekends, deliberately plan an activity of real “doing” in which the whole family can participate. Bake bread or cook a meal together. Work in the garden. Do not worry about the mess; concentrate on the interaction and the doing. Having a mess to clean offers more chances to wash, sweep, wipe up water, etc. Do the cleaning playfully. Sing songs, recite rhymes, and make up silly stories. Laugh.

Our modern world is full of distractions. The pace of life is fast and focused on productivity and perfection, not the adventure of living and learning by doing. The pandemic was no friend. These collectively are stealing away from children their birthright of growing up strong. We can steal it back.

Nancy Blanning is an early childhood educator with a special interest in movement and “incarnational support” for young children. She served as a kindergarten teacher and member of the educational support staff at the Denver Waldorf School, from which she recently retired after almost forty years. Her dedicated focus now is adult teacher development and professional deepening as co-director of early childhood teacher training at Sunbridge Institute in Spring Valley, NY, and as guest faculty at other teacher training programs. Practical and compassionate support for parents is another of her passions. She and her husband are parents of four Waldorf graduates and grandparents to eight. Grandparenting is Nancy’s greatest joy, along with teaching. She writes these columns on behalf of WECAN—Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America. Please visit the website at waldorfearlychildhood.org



PHOTO: CHRISTIAN MCMILLAN

a Spatial Dynamics perspective

Bridging the Gap

JAIMEN MCMILLAN

A furtive disease is spreading due to the drastic distancing measures taken during the COVID-19 pandemic: social estrangement. Together with the COVID casualties, we are witnessing long-term, adverse impacts resulting from the hurried attempts to protect us, at any cost, from the disease. As experience with and knowledge of the virus grow, and widespread fear loosens its frantic grip, we can see a gaping social chasm emerging as a second epidemic.

There is an alarming weakening of the faculty to relate to each other, with an accompanying increase in asocial behavior. A spatial component of this diminished relation to others is a shrinking withdrawal, a retreating to seek shelter and protection. In a similar way that the children had

to be taught to separate themselves from others, they must now learn to reconnect.

We must invite our children and youth out of hiding and reawaken their interest in the surrounding world so they can interact, connect, and enjoy being with others.

Human Nature

Nature is the number one way to bring us to our senses! Opening our senses to nature builds breathing bridges from the inside world to our surroundings. Whenever possible, get out of the walls of your house. Go to a park, or, if possible, venture with your children into nature. Plant a flower, a tree, or a garden.

“THERE IS A PAINFUL AWAKENING TO THE FACT THAT WE HAVE ALL BEEN SLOWLY DRIFTING APART.”

Mother nature is simply the best teacher. The timeless rhythms of the seasons, trees, plants, flowers, insects, animals, sounds, colors, and beauty all invite us outside of our restrained boundaries to experience an unbroken continuum with our environment. Mother nature is also the ultimate connector. The necessity of interdependence is constantly on show. One does not need great expanses of nature to benefit from the natural world; the grandest lesson that nature has to offer is that “all is in the small.”

Not just gentle, nature is also the teacher from the old school of hard knocks. Her immediate consequence demands attention, interaction, and respect. (Fire can burn; Sand can get in your eyes; Wet rocks are slippery.) Engaging with nature always involves interaction and evokes the experience of the interconnectedness of all creation. An awareness dawns that we, too, are part of nature.

Losing Face

One measure still being extensively used in Asia at the time of this writing is wearing masks. Setting aside the debate about the pros and cons of the effectiveness of facial coverings, what is not debatable is that the face places a major role in conveying human emotions. In the first years of life, the baby and the young child acquire unique qualities of emotional, cognitive, and social intelligence from the facial expressions of others. Mimicking the forms of their parents’ mouths and their facial configurations when they speak are invaluable aids in both connecting and learning to speak clearly and correctly.

Observing the facial gestures of one’s loved ones can foster the development of a rich and varied emotional and social life. This is true for youth and adults as well. It is not just the face that is masked to others. Not giving our faces a

full spectrum of expression can mask our feelings from us, leading to a monotone and apathetic demeanor. Individuals who cannot learn the art of taking social cues from others are often judged as socially clumsy, developmentally challenged, or even asocial. Young children who have grown up in a masked world exhibit a lack of ability to show and read non-verbal, social, and emotional messages conveyed through facial cues that signal the emotional state and intentions of the other person. I have witnessed an increasing number of patients whose faces are either frighteningly expressionless or who simply bare their teeth when they think others may want them to smile.

Saving Face

Telling stories or reading aloud to children in an animated way can do wonders to “save face.” You might feel silly at first, giving your whole face freely over to the sounds, emotions, and content of the story, but this playfulness will bring the story to life for them. If one watches carefully, one can see that the children drink in every facial gesture as if it were nectar for their thirsty souls.

Reading and snuggling with young children are old-fashioned ways of building social bridges that last a lifetime.

Some parents and teachers make the mistake of trying to expect eye contact for too long a time. Children, especially youth, feel scrutinized, which drives them back inside instead of drawing them out! A suggestion is to simply check in with a warm gaze from time to time so that the child knows they are seen, then look away for longer periods into the distance. That way, the child can watch you instead. Let the children and youth inspect, analyze, examine, and enjoy sizing you up. As they are excellent judges of character, it is a good practice in humility, for they will take you at your true face value.

PHOTO: DOROTHEA MCMILLAN



PHOTO: JAIMEN MCMILLAN



PHOTO: CLARISSA HEMPEL

Virtual Meeting Means Almost Meeting

Many meetings have now become virtual. Electronic classes have become surrogates for in-person teaching, learning, and even get-togethers are increasingly taking place online. As close as virtual reality may come to real-life

picture quality, we must be clear, it is virtual reality. The word virtual reality means almost real. For those who grew up in real-life encounters and were then presented with virtual productions, the adjustment was difficult enough. We may remark on how real programmed material can seem, but we have the sense to know it is not real. We can connect to the three-dimensional world where the learning initially took place. However, it is a different story for those in their early developmental stages, trying to make some sense of the world. Those being force-fed distanced learning may be getting a dumbfounding upload of intellectual information, but they are not getting the sustenance that only directly-lived experience can offer. It is similar to getting a degree in healthy nutrition and then eating highly processed foods that have had all the natural nutrients taken out of them.

Back in Touch

The sense of touch lets a baby and young child know they have a body and that it is a safe place. Progressing from holding to cuddling to

“ CONNECTION IS ONE OF THE MAIN NEEDS THAT A HUMAN BEING HAS; IT IS AT THE VERY CORE OF THE ABILITY TO BE A SOCIAL BEING.

stroking to embracing are both signs we use to communicate our affection and also special spatial methods of helping children be aware of themselves in their bodies. It brings them to the surface of their skin through the warmth and caring quality of the contact. Touch invites children to come out of their bodies and make connections.

A foot rub before sleeping, or a simple slow downward outlining of the entire body with the palms of the hands, overcomes the experience of being separated in parts, bringing the body into a harmonious whole. Begin by touching ever so slowly. Then have an in-between phase when you do not touch. Pay as much attention to when you are not touching as to the contact itself. Choose a tidal rhythm to your touching and not touching. What has been lost in these hectic times is rhythm. These rhythms help your child to breathe. Now take these rhythms of doing and not doing, and give them to your child (and yourself) throughout the day, weeks, months, and years. Get back in touch with nature's rhythms.

Meeting Makes Us Human

Virtual reality takes place within the confines of a person's body. Reality takes place in the space

between people. Genuinely meeting and engaging in shared spaces makes us human. It is time to meet again. It is time to reinstate play dates. It does not have to be a large number of them, nor for long periods, but let it be regular, rhythmical, and reliable. The most important skill to learn in life is to meet and engage with others. Go for a hike, or even take short walks to talk together. Hop on a bike. Stop to admire the beauty. Use a compass. Make a map!

Create social spaces in your home. Put up a crafts table: drawing paper, crayons, paint, scissors, glue, and even puzzles. Sit down and make a card just to surprise someone or for a birthday or holiday.

Enjoy such practical arts as knitting, sewing, and weaving. Make friendship bracelets to give to others. Think as a family of someone who needs help and do something together for them, a simple random act of kindness. Go through your closets and find perfectly good things you do not need and donate them to those who do need them. Cook together. Work. Do a fix-up job; there is no difference for a child between work and play. Try a new recipe, or an old one, one learned from a mother or grandmother. Play handclapping games with a partner. Play other

games; the older, the better: I Spy. Mother, May I? Red Light/Green Light. Tag.

Try board games. Cornhole. Charades are some of the best because you use the whole body to try to get your point across. Play catch. Dance. Do simple partner acrobatics. Use a balance board. Juggle. Play any sport. Sing together. Ask each other questions. Learn to debate. Put on a play. Write a letter or a poem in tandem.

To act is just the beginning; we need to re-learn to interact. All these shared activities reach out to encounter, connect, and span the distances that have been dividing us. True meeting, the highest of the arts, integrates awareness, interest, appreciation, and empathy for the other. Meeting mends the gap. It is the essence of play, the inter-play!

small understanding of the unique punishment that solitary confinement imposes. It is not only that one does not see someone else, but also one is not seen by someone else.

Regardless of the intended or actual merits of any of these sequestering measures, the disquieting aftershocks were increased detachment and a lingering decrease in the ease of social interaction. Lockdowns turned into locking oneself in and locking others out. Suicide rates rose during long-term quarantine. There were countless tragic accounts of the elderly living and dying alone. Connection is one of the main needs that a human being has; it is at the very core of the ability to be a social being. When someone has been separated for some time, they need help reaching out to others to have the possibility to act socially.

“ OPENING OUR SENSES TO NATURE
BUILDS BREATHING BRIDGES FROM THE
INSIDE WORLD TO OUR SURROUNDINGS.

Out of Contact

As a Spacial Dynamics® trainer of movement education teachers and movement therapists, I traveled extensively throughout the pandemic period. I directly experienced a wide range of approaches to the COVID-19 virus in seven different countries. These involved intensive, invasive testing and, most notably, week-long periods of isolated quarantine. Over the past few years, I spent nearly four months confined in solitary quarantine. I got a very

Division

Many disconnecting measures contributed to this divisive phenomenon. They include covering the face, avoiding contact, shunning interaction, social distancing, avoiding family and social gatherings, making assemblies of people illegal, and periods of self-regulated or legally enforced quarantine.

In addition to these outer constraints that produced physical separation, there were divisions



PHOTO: CHRISTIAN MCMILLAN

brought about by internal battles: heated disagreements about how best to address the health-related issue of COVID-19. These arguments often led to fissures, separating friends, fractioning families, splitting communities, dividing political parties, and even isolating countries. Open discussion regrettably disintegrated into presenting the other with ultimatums. Bringing back the long-forgotten art of debate can do wonders to overcome the estrangement from the other. Healthy competition in sports for the teenage years can teach the importance of give and take.

Time to Reconnect After Social Distancing

In 1985, when I first publicly presented Spatial Dynamics® as a discipline used in education, movement therapy, and even leadership training, there was only a somnolent recognition of the importance of space and spatial development. Embodiment, personal space, interpersonal space, social space, and suprapersonal space were foreign terms at that time. Today, space is a word one hears worldwide, even if it is often

limited to such utterances as: “Get out of my space.” or “Give me my space!” Space, however, can be so much more. Space, like water, can become a connective medium. We can learn to live in space, similar to how we live in our bodies.

Take the standard watchword social-distancing. With this phrase, children are told they must keep six feet away from someone to avoid getting sick. In this case, space is the objective measurement that distances me from the other.

It is possible, however, to give this same six feet a social twist. We could just as easily tell the children that we want to adjust to others so that the other person and I share six feet of space to keep each other safe. This is not just a play on words; it is the difference between considering space as a wedge or as a bridge. We can still follow a protocol (still used in some countries and some situations) of six feet that some think is a protective measure. The difference in the second version is that the child can experience space as something we can share. Sharing this space keeps us both safe. Seen this way, space is not what separates but is an element, like water, that can unite what is not yet connected. Sharing space is a social Copernican revolution.

In the coming years, we will have to give special attention to children and youth who were in critical stages of transitioning during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, children in their first three years, at the nine-year change, at the onset of puberty, and the transition from teens to adulthood. These crossroad years are phases of life that require taking particularly big strides to move from one stage to another. Space will be abstract unless you fill it out. When you fill it out, it is not empty; space is alive, vibrant, and filled with you. You have to be the one to bridge the gap. You have to take that next step.

These spatial stepping stones are integral to human development. They cannot be skipped

over. It will be up to parents, teachers, therapists, and communities to find ways to offer help for them to take these steps to be able to relate freely.

Circus activities and summer programs for children that foster interaction on different levels can be very helpful. One such example is *The Sword, the Pen, and the Arrow*, a program where the gross motor activity of engagement in the sport of fencing is paired with the intriguing quiet of creative writing and the laser focus of archery. All will be woven into a week-long event for youth between 11 and 16 years old (See more at: www.spacialdynamics.com)

Returning to Normal? No, Orienting Anew.

There is a painful awakening to the fact that we have all been slowly drifting apart. It is particularly alarming that it is getting more and more difficult to reach children. Talking louder, disciplining them, blaming, or shaming them will not reestablish connections but will drive the children further away. Parents, teachers, and therapists must ask themselves how to create safe and invitational spaces for children. How can we redirect the courses taken during the pandemic? We must re-orient ourselves, encompassing nature, what is real and true, and most of all, each other.

Shared Spaces

The whirlwind of the pandemic left trails of destruction behind it. Our physical health was challenged, and our social health and collective development was compromised. The purpose is not to judge any particular approach that an individual chooses to deal with the existence of COVID. It simply points out that many of the

cautionary measures employed to avoid COVID also simultaneously involved weakening, separating, or even breaking social/spatial connections. It simply suggests if something is weakened in one way as a prophylactic measure, measures must be taken to balance this disconnection by

captain of your vessel, so that you can be the skipper of your ship in the storms of life. For those who would like to study this thoroughly, SDI has a new program starting this summer for parents, teachers, therapists, and those in leadership (See more at: spacialdynamics.com)

“OBSERVING THE FACIAL GESTURES OF ONE’S LOVED ONES CAN FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RICH AND VARIED EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL LIFE.

fostering relationships. It has also taught us, more than anything else, just how important we are to each other. There is rift-mending to do. We may disagree whole-heartedly with others, and on certain issues, we should, but dismissing others, cutting off all connection because of differences of opinion, will carry its own consequences that rival the original pandemic. Estrangement weakens the ability to be social.

As adults, we must reclaim our space to share it with others. The Spacial Dynamics Institute (SDI) has trained over one thousand teachers and practitioners in North America alone; wherever you are, you are not far from a graduate trained to help others with postural problems, maintaining personal space, and enlivening and encouraging interpersonal space. Learning to live in social spaces in a healthy way is an art. It is a learnable skill to get in touch with your greater person, the

In closing, connection to others is what makes us truly human. If the inability to connect to another person is the basis of inhumanity, then perhaps consciously creating new ways to connect may be a key to opening the doors for human beings to become humankind. Warming, expanding, and humanizing the space between us may be a way for us to overcome the COVID era and move together toward a healthier future. Yes, there is work to do! But there is a joy as well, for what is needed most is to rediscover play and create new opportunities for interplay

Want to come over and play?



Jaimen McMillan is the founder and director of the Spacial Dynamics Institute in upstate New York, a training center that teaches the use of movement to aid and support the development of the human being throughout their life. A new Spacial Dynamics training will begin in the summer of 2023. spacialdynamics.com

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I part my bedroom curtains
 to an early summer morning--
 tall grass and plump green shrubs,
 birds gabbing nest to nest,
 breeze-rippled maple leaves

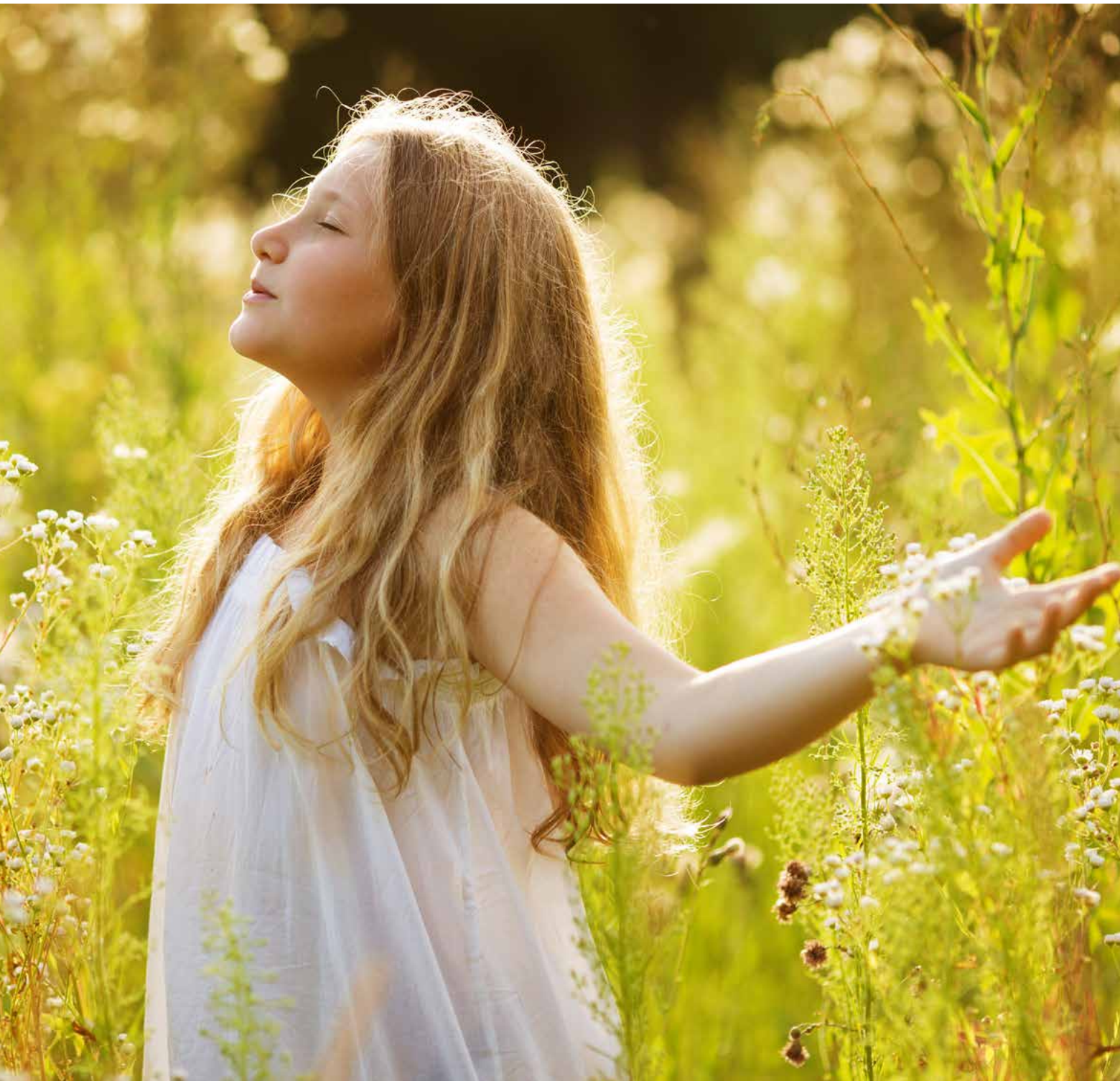
and, standing in sun-lit brightness,
 a girl dressed in shimmering white,
 her long blonde hair drifting down
 over the curve of her shoulders,

her face soft as a dream.
 And though I've never seen her
 before, I know who she is—
 she is how I feel right now.

— ROBERT K. JOHNSON

Previously published in Abbey.

Robert K. Johnson, now retired, was a Professor of English at Suffolk University in Boston for many years. For eight years he was also Poetry Editor of *Ibbetson Street* magazine. His poems have been published individually in a variety of magazines here and abroad. His most recent full-length collections of poems are *From Mist to Shadow* and *Choir of Day*.





Where Is Your “I”?

Discovering the Joy of Connection

DAVID TRESEMER, PHD

A person feeling besieged by life, asking for help, with a list of physical and emotional complaints, sits across from a counselor. Each of us has sat on either side of that encounter. A counselor can include an uncle, aunt, friend, licensed clinical psychologist, an employee of a company’s human resources department, and many others.

In every encounter, the counselor wonders, “Where is the core of the person before me?” Words are spoken—fast or slow, quiet or booming, strained or flowing, in tones that communicate more than the words. Bodies fidget or gesture. The client often doesn’t notice this as they are consumed by the maelstrom of their life sucking them down in torrential rainmaking crescendos of internal noise.

The professional counselor notices body, tone, words, and gestures. A counselor has been trained to observe. Some counselors—the aunts, uncles, and mentors—have matured observations through years of experience.

Through the waterfall of desperate words, stories of woe, and anxious fidgets of the body, the counselor asks inwardly, “Where is your ‘I’?”—meaning, seeking to peer through the waterfall of personality narratives and defenses, “Where is the essence of your being?”

That is a central task of therapy, to help the other find their “I.” The young therapist, recently graduated or recently licensed, might think that the task is to say something clever, something that interweaves separate phrases uttered over the course of the hour or sessions, something

“ THAT IS A CENTRAL TASK OF THERAPY, TO HELP THE OTHER FIND THEIR ‘I.’ ”

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that wraps it all up and penetrates a mystery, something that is life-changing! But those zings often don't endure. When clients find their own "I," they stand on a deep foundation that will serve them in the future. Quietly nudging a person to their own "I" can sometimes be misunderstood by the client as a therapist's passivity. "They didn't do anything" describes the success of not interfering with the client's meeting with their "I;" it confirms a prognosis of strength going into the future. That process of nudging requires from the counselor an eagle's attention and an elephant's equanimity. But, to avoid your reputation as being "the one who didn't do anything," the counselor might wish to describe simply what has been accomplished and how.

across lifetimes, your spirit-spark of "I-AM!"—does not hold comfort and ease as the highest goals for this life. In this School for Souls—the term we use at the StarHouse in Boulder for this Earth plane—destiny cannot be measured by the metric of wealth that is often applied. More important is soul growth, which requires a separate scale of measure for each and every "I."

Studies of psychological efficacy judge reductions of the so-called bad symptoms as success and a counselor is drawn to emphasize techniques that reduce suffering in the client. However, adaptation to life's impossibilities and numbing injustices on every side are seldom in line with the responsibility of the "I" to lead you to your destiny.

“YOU CAN RECALL THE TIMES THAT YOU HAVE NOT BEEN SEEN AND INSTEAD BEEN TREATED AS AN OBJECT, AN ‘IT.’”

It's tempting to steer the client in a direction other than the "I"—because the "I" may embrace the uncomfortable symptoms that brought the client in seeking to be rid of them. The trauma of betrayal might grate painfully on the client's personality, yet be part of the growth curriculum for that "I." Anxiety may overwhelm the identity, the small-s self, but might be necessary to the life's journey to the Self. The "I"—your individuality

Rudolf Steiner named twelve senses, including "The Sense of the 'I' of the Other." It is a sense mode under construction, so to speak, not yet matured. A good therapist has developed that sense.

The Sense of the "I" of the Other can be more or less mature. You can recall the times that you have not been seen and instead been treated as an object, an "It." You might have begun to

notice when you treat others as “It.” Over time you can develop a sense for the “I” in others, which permits you to have an “I” blossom in yourself.

In the circle of twelve senses, the polar opposite sense to the Sense of the “I” of the Other is the Sense of Touch. At every moment, your body conducts a survey of touch of your body—you sense the clothing against your skin, the pressure on sitz bones and feet. You live in a subliminal touch-scape where thousands of impressions are sampled in every moment. This is a clue to the “I”-scape in which you are also immersed, even

everyone. That includes a touch of the shoulder—“good job, well done!”—or touch of the hands in a handshake, or bandaging a scraped knee, or any of the ways in which you can help a child come to know their own body. Especially in youngsters, whose bodies crave simple touch to attest to changing boundaries of the body, prohibitions on touch make it more difficult to mature the Sense of the “I” of the Other. A healthy Sense of the “I” of the Other comes to know the other not as “It” but as soul-in-action. From these realizations comes a sense of oneself as deserving of a con-

“ TOUCH AFFIRMS THE EXISTENCE OF THE PHYSICAL BODY AND THE VITAL (ETHERIC) BODY.

when seemingly alone. In every moment, we exchange “I” experiences with many people, as subtle as noticing the clothes on your skin. The two senses can work together. You can touch the “I” presence of others, as confirmed by the times you suddenly feel a distant friend has fallen ill or died. You can learn from touch to attend to the “I.”

Touch affirms the existence of the physical body and the vital (etheric) body. Touch affirms the support of the elder for the younger. The abuses of children by people supposed to mentor them—coaches, clergy, and others—are horrible. More impacting than those transgressions in <1% of encounters are the rules, over the long term, reactively set in place that prohibit touch for

nection with an “I.” When I treat others as “It,” my own being becomes an “It.” When I treat others as dangerous—cringing from being touched or touching them—and I feel it dangerous to sense their “I,” their inner destiny, I become an energetic porcupine to them and to myself.

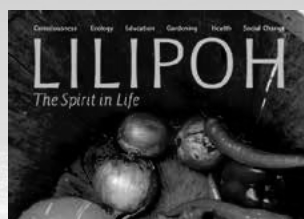
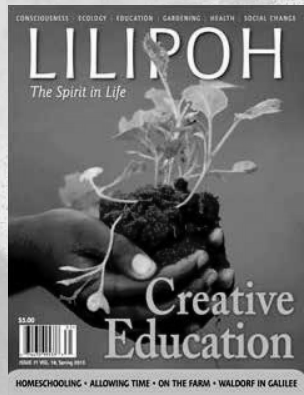
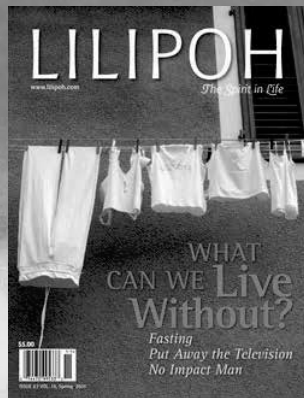
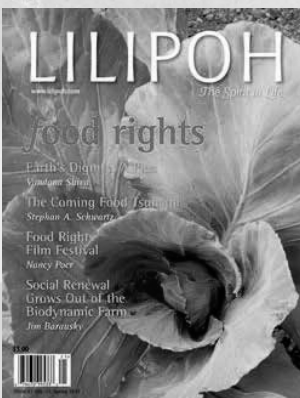
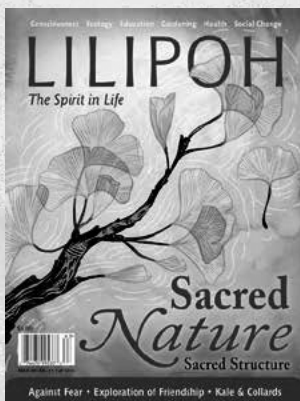
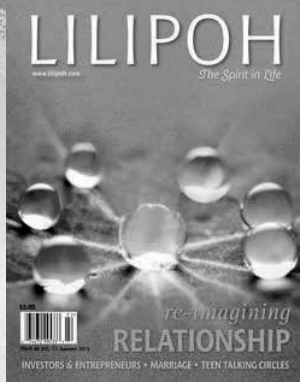
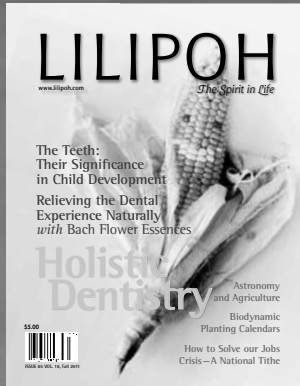
Thus true conversation—“I” to “I” in every sense mode—discovers, again and again, the realm of destiny for oneself and for all, as well as the joy of connection. When I find your “I,” I also find my own.

David Tresemer, PhD, has taught in the certificate program in Anthroposophic Psychology (AnthroposophicPsychology.org), and presently at the StarHouse in Boulder (TheStarHouse.org), with his spouse, Lila, about the 12 Senses (on-line course recently available), and New Astrology Emerging (with Brian Gray and Robert Schiappacasse).

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By Elizabeth Candelario

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By Trevor Janz, MD

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Sanctuary

Looking at my patio—
its borders of low branches,
the ivy-draped fence, its rose bush
that offers the bright air
an array of soft red petals—
all in the morning light,
what does anything, past
or future, matter

compared

to the joy that flows in me now
like a sun-lit drop of dew
that slowly slides from leaf
to leaf to leaf.

—ROBERT K. JOHNSON

Previously published in Reach Poetry.

Robert K. Johnson, now retired, was a Professor of English at Suffolk University in Boston for many years. For eight years he was also Poetry Editor of *Ibbetson Street* magazine. His poems have been published individually in a variety of magazines here and abroad. His most recent full-length collections of poems are *From Mist to Shadow* and *Choir of Day*.



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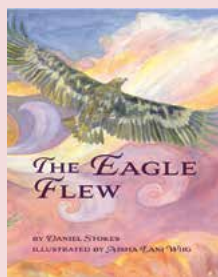
— Angelica Hesse (FORMER WALDORF STUDENT)



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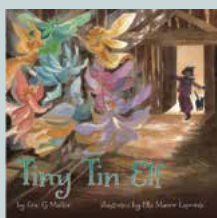
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THE EAGLE FLEW

by Daniel Stokes
for ages 4-9

A young eaglet is afraid to fly until one day she sees something in the distance which stirs her heart and gives her courage to act. With the help of Oak Tree and Brother Wind she finds her wings...and something else inside of her that she will learn to trust.



TINY TIN ELF

by Eric G. Müller
for ages 3-7

Gracie loves to visit her grandfather on his farm. One day she makes friends with an elf who shows her a secret in the old barn. There she meets the dwarf Keynotteroom who makes her aware of a task that only she can fulfill. When Gracie finds out what is stored away in the barn, and why, she is determined to take action.



THE MERMAID OF AMARVIN ISLAND

by Eric G. Müller
for ages 7-12

Swannie's life is changed forever when she saves a beached dolphin. In gratitude, Matmaka, the thankful dolphin, drops hints about her unique heritage. How does he know? Swannie is holding out hope that her father who went missing during a raging storm might still be alive.



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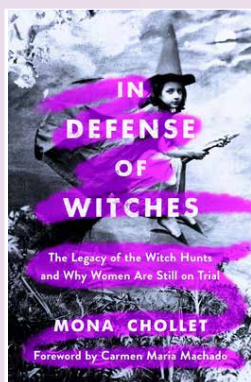
KAYSHA KORROW REVIEWS

In Defense of Witches: The Legacy of the Witch Hunts and Why Women Are Still on Trial

a book by Mona Chollet (translated by Sophie R. Lewis)

Between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, tens of thousands of individuals were tortured and murdered on suspicion of practicing witchcraft. Somewhere around 80% of the victims were women. Many aroused suspicion because they didn't conform to societal standards of feminine conduct and beauty; witches were frequently independent, unmarried, childless, and perhaps older. They were often healers or craftswomen who lived a life of their own making. However, despite the clear divide of victims along gendered lines, historians and academics have made "astounding contortions" (14) to avoid condemning the witch hunts as "a war against women" (14).

This is the starting point for Mona Chollet's feminist survey "In Defense of Witches: The Legacy of the Witch Hunts and Why Women Are Still on Trial," translated from French by Sophie R. Lewis. Rather than an unfortunate, isolated incident dwelling in our distant past, Chollet argues that witch-hunts were part of a larger tide of misogyny and "anti-woman sentiment" (14) that still affects women and influences gender roles in today's



society. The "mass crime" (5) of the witch-hunts is often distanced from the present and justified by associating the event with the "regressive and obscurantist period" (6) of the Middle Ages, as well as blamed on hyper-religious attitudes and the violence of the inquisition. However, Chollet points out that most witch-hunts took place during the Renaissance, a time usually celebrated for the proliferation of art, culture, and rational thought. Furthermore, the majority of convictions occurred in civil courts, not religious ones. She argues:

"By wiping out entire families, by inducing a reign of terror and by pitilessly repressing certain

behaviors and practices that had come to be seen as unacceptable, the witch-hunts contributed to shaping the world we live in now" (5-6).

Over the intervening centuries, the witch archetype has shifted and evolved. She has been reclaimed by Western feminists as a symbol of female power that permits women to imagine another form of femininity outside of societal expectations, illustrating "that unthreatening prettiness and cooing sweetness [are] not the only fate imaginable for women" (3). Chollet studies modern-day examples as diverse as the Wizard of Oz's Glinda, "the first 'good witch' in popular culture" (19), and rock icon Patti Smith, "the epitome of a modern witch" who "goes on practicing her art without the least concern for looking pretty, restrained or delicate, as is generally expected of women" (182).

These contemporary witches are the descendants of the witch-hunts' victims; they are strong, independent, and live on their own terms. However, they also exist in a society that remains influenced by the same misogyny that created the witch-hunts and still excludes women deemed deviant. Over four chapters,

“OVER THE INTERVENING CENTURIES, THE WITCH ARCHETYPE HAS SHIFTED AND EVOLVED.


“

CHOLLET ILLUSTRATES HOW TRAITS THAT SO-CALLED WITCHES WERE PERSECUTED FOR CONTINUE TO THREATEN MODERN WOMEN.

Chollet illustrates how traits that so-called witches were persecuted for continue to threaten modern women. Drawing on a vast array of sources from pop culture to academia, Chollet argues that a woman who is not a wife or mother, who lives alone, lets her hair go gray, or otherwise exhibits and asserts power still experiences harassment and exclusion from contemporary society.

First published in France in 2018, “In Defense of Witches” quickly became a bestseller and helped to reignite the feminist movement in the country. Although the book reads a bit like an academic paper, the prose remains clear, insightful, and even entertaining. The text is peppered with personal anecdotes from the author, who describes herself as “a walking sexist cliché, a genuine scatterbrain, the archetype of the irrational little lady [...] useless in all the areas women are meant to be useless” (195). Chollet unpacks the consequences of these clichés and archetypes, illustrating the systematic way gender has been constructed to situate women as inferior. She discusses her own decision not to have children and provides a particularly astute analysis of how society views aging women.

Writing from a journalistic background, Chollet pulls in all manner of cultural, philosophical, and theoretical references to support her argument. However, she generally relies more on pop culture than feminist theory, making the book accessible to various readers. Chollet seamlessly weaves together examples from film, literature, politics, and celebrity culture to form a creative and cohesive tapestry of how and why sexism persists. Although writing from France, nearly all of Chollet’s references will be familiar to her English-speaking audience, with nods to French culture and feminism that contribute to painting a more nuanced and global perspective. As a huge fan of translated literature, I think there are few things more valuable than reading as widely as possible, de-centering ourselves and our experience as much as possible by exposing ourselves to all the different perspectives we can find. With so little contemporary nonfiction appearing in translation, don’t miss the opportunity to pick this one up.

St. Martin’s Press, 2022 

Kaysha Korrow is the managing editor for LILIPOH magazine. She holds a Master of Arts in multicultural and transnational literature and works on various freelance writing projects. She splits her time between Whidbey Island, Washington, and Buenos Aires, Argentina

“

CHOLLET SEAMLESSLY WEAVES TOGETHER EXAMPLES FROM FILM, LITERATURE, POLITICS, AND CELEBRITY CULTURE TO FORM A CREATIVE AND COHESIVE TAPESTRY OF HOW AND WHY SEXISM PERSISTS.

Love Bravely:

Exploring the Transformative Power of Music and the Arts

MATT MATRE SAWAYA

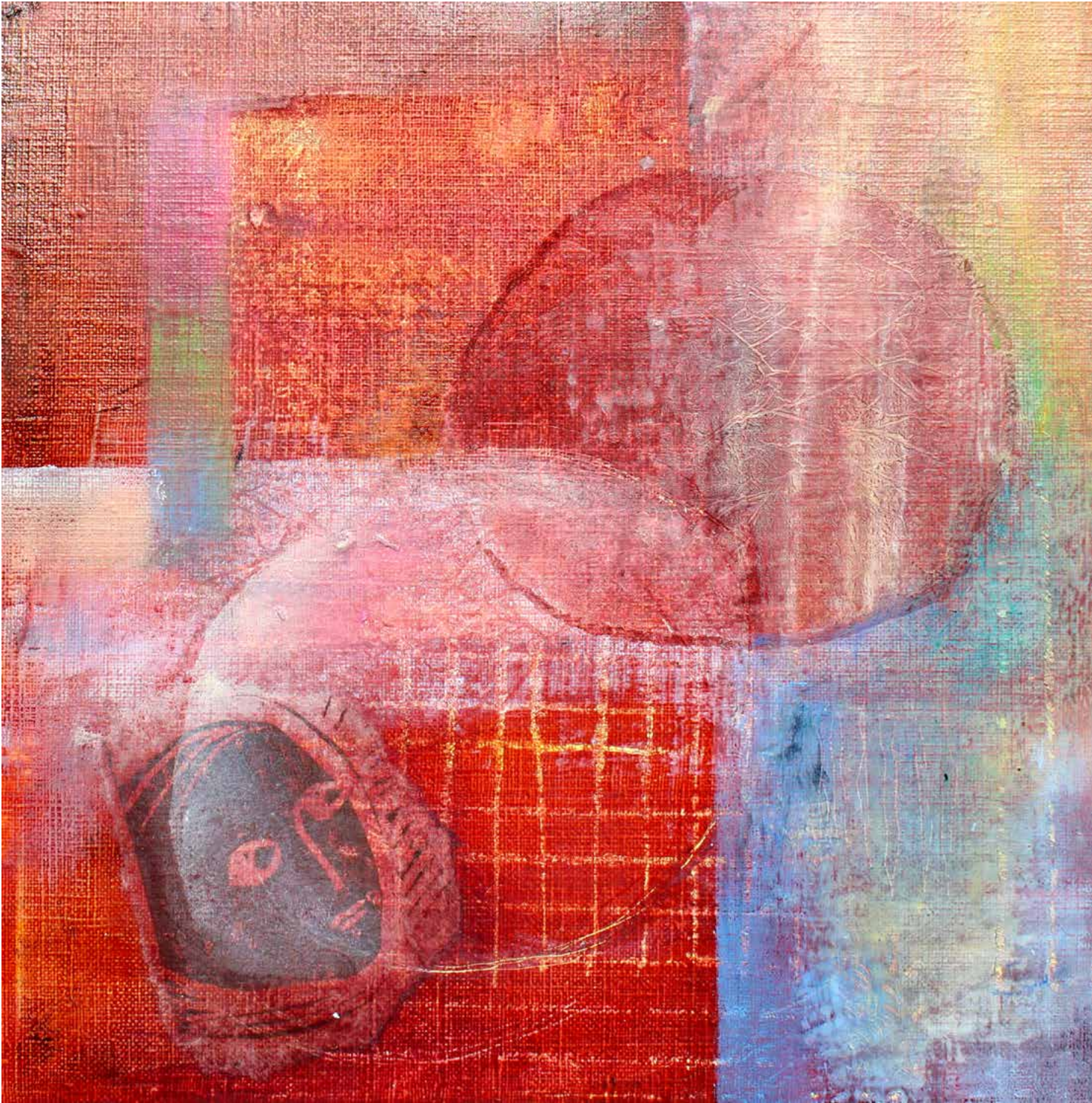
Over the past few years, I've experienced divisions between people in a way I never had before. I found myself thinking very differently about things compared with some of the people I'm close to. This started happening all around me—between family members, friends, and colleagues. “Fire Pond” is a recent song release that speaks about this experience in my own life—about the process of trying to stay in a loving relationship with someone whose opinions were painfully different from my own. It's about discovering in myself something deeper than

my own opinions and judgments and seeing that something new became possible when I could take an interest in someone else's experience—when I was able to listen and really stay open to their story, and when they were able to do the same for me.

A friend of mine once told me that taking an interest in someone is a form of love. I've found this to be profoundly true in this process, and it's been an incredible opportunity to deepen my understanding of love. This process has been difficult, but it has also been one of the most

“A FRIEND OF MINE ONCE TOLD ME THAT TAKING AN INTEREST IN SOMEONE IS A FORM OF LOVE.”

Painted by Laura Summer in response to the song "Department Store" (soon to be released by Matt Matre Sawaya)



“WE CAN PRACTICE THE WILLINGNESS TO BE IN THE UNCERTAINTY AND THE UNKNOWN REQUIRED FOR THIS EMERGENT SPACE TO OPEN.

significant growth experiences of my life and one I'm deeply grateful for.

“Fire Pond” is the first song release from a new music project called Love Bravely—a cross-genre music group and creative community dedicated to exploring the transformative potential of the arts in our time. This exploration has been a central inspiration in my own life, and my artistic practice has been an entry point, continually showing me new aspects of working creatively and inviting me to deepen my understanding of what the arts can offer the world around me.

In my experience, writing music is a practice of listening—a practice of leaning my attention toward the potential of what's newly emerging. When I can do this—and sit in the openness and uncertainty it requires—a different kind of space or landscape opens. This landscape is the terrain where new things come from—new inspirations, thoughts, and possibilities. It's distinctly different from the landscape of our conventional world, where we encounter the things that already exist. The creative experience for me is like sitting at the borderline between these landscapes, and doing this as a continuing practice has helped me to recognize the essential and significant difference between the two—the existing world and the world of ever-new emergence.

This experience—felt and described in different ways—is one that many artists have; a willingness to be in the unknown and to give our attention to what wants to emerge. This process isn't only relevant for those things we call “art;” it is necessary for creating anything truly new in our world, and in a time when we are urgently in need of new ways forward, this practice feels critically important.

We can experience this through the process of creating art ourselves and when we experience other works of art. For me, an inspiring song, painting, or movie can feel as if it's inviting forward that which wants to emerge from within me. Experiencing this is like being on the other side of the creative borderline. Instead of me listening in on the landscape of emergence, something else is pointing towards that landscape in me. I can begin to see myself both as an explorer of the creative landscape and as an extension of it.

In this way, the arts, as we conventionally define them, offer experiences that can help us understand that this capacity for hosting emergence and creating exists in all of us. We can begin to see that this isn't only about the disciplines we call “art” but about anything we engage with. In conversation with another person, for example, we can listen in this way—we can



While creating economic safety and security for their families twenty-first-century parents absent from the family and home for longer and longer working hours face the classic problem of our times: how can we give the best we can to the children we love, while also satisfying personal needs as well as the demands of society? This book offers perspectives from several adults who care for young children in different ways.

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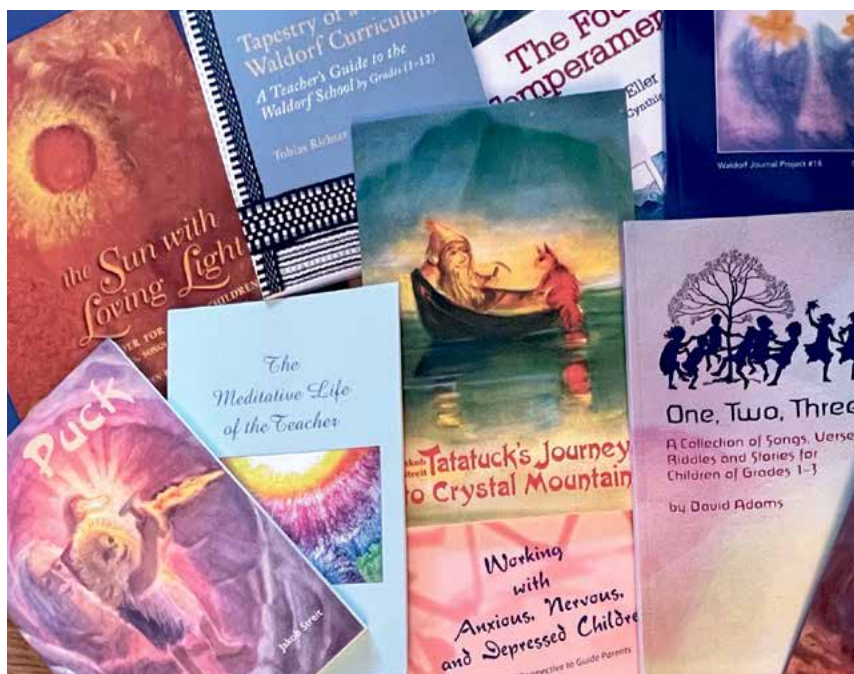
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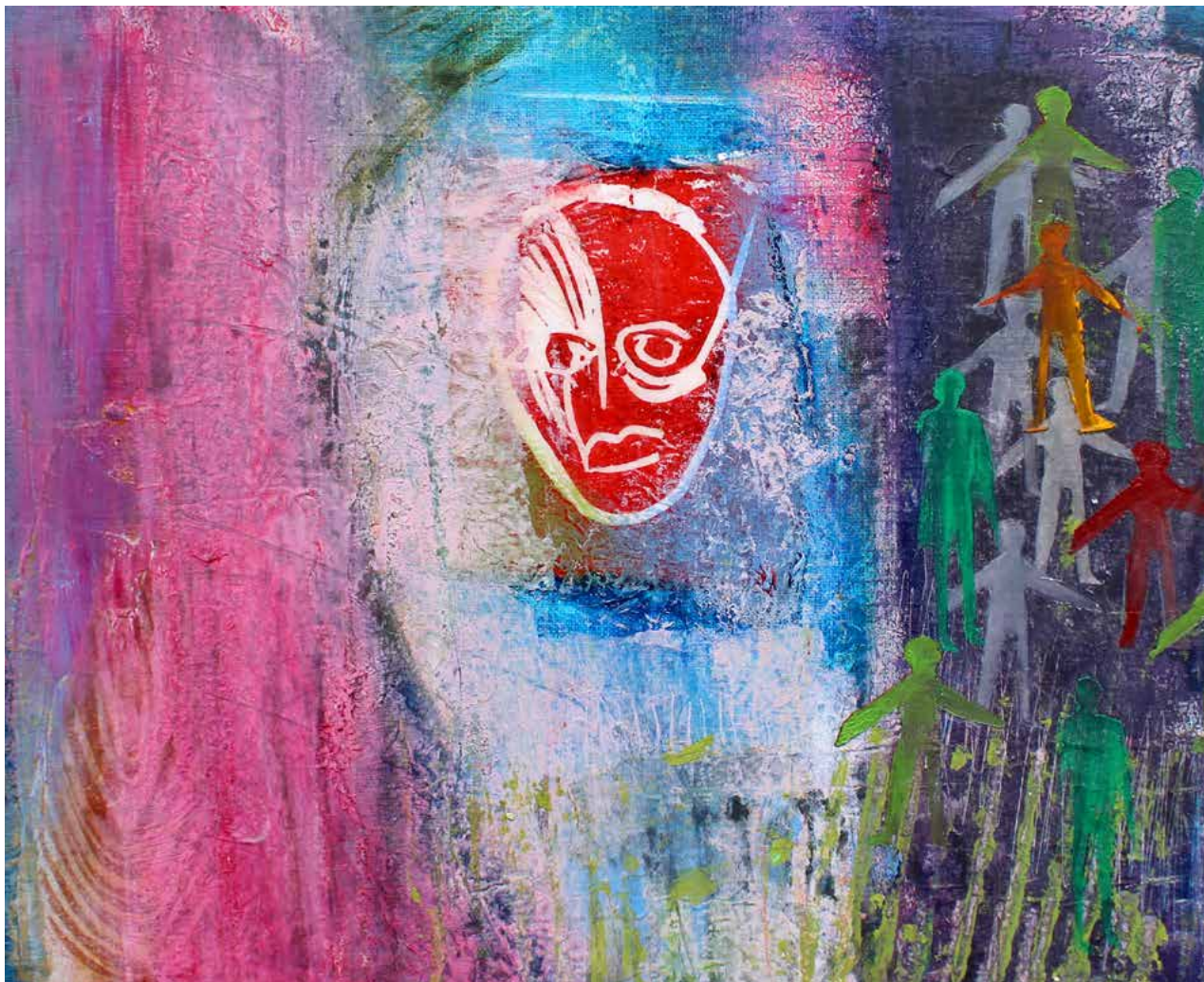


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Painted by Laura Summer in response to the song “Come Home” (soon to be released by Matt Matre Sawaya)



give our attention to that which wants to emerge in another’s experience and, in so doing, support this emergence—our attention, interest, and love for this potential can weave a container or vessel which helps to host what’s wanting to come.

We can do this in our work, regardless of the discipline. We can listen for what’s ready to emerge, what’s truly new. We can practice the willingness to be in the uncertainty and the unknown required for this emergent space to open, beginning to see the discomfort that may

arise as an invitation to let go of our desire to hold on to that which is familiar—that which appears secure simply out of familiarity, even if it’s actually unhealthy or dangerous for us. We can apply this practice to our personal, community, and global challenges and begin to recognize that we are all artists in a certain respect. The possibility of a truly new and different future may depend on our ability to embrace and celebrate this.

Faced with the challenges I encountered in relationships over the past several years, this

“ WRITING MUSIC IS A PRACTICE OF LISTENING—A PRACTICE OF LEANING MY ATTENTION TOWARD THE POTENTIAL OF WHAT’S NEWLY EMERGING.

was a practice I turned to. I sat to write, guided by these questions: “What wants to emerge through this experience I’m having?” “What possibility is this challenge making available?” I remember the experience as the lyrics and melodies of the song “Fire Pond” started to come. They felt like a gift, offering powerful new possibilities—an opening in the challenge I was experiencing through which a deeper truth could find its way. This opening brought with it the potential for new thoughts,

understanding, and inspiration. It was a new step in exploring love as a force for good beyond my own personal fears and judgments—a force I could continue to commit myself to and allow to guide me.

Love Bravely creates music, writing pieces, videos, community dialogues, and other creative collaborations. The initiative is committed to exploring new models for supporting the arts, such as Gift Release—a form that offers music with no paywalls and invites those inspired by it to support through direct contributions—and Art Dispersal, a collaboration with New York-based painter, Laura Summer (laurasummer.com). For updates about this work and to support it, you can subscribe to our Substack mailing list or visit us on Patreon. To get in touch directly, email us at mcmatre@gmail.com.

Matt Sawaya (aka **Matre**) is a rapper and singer-songwriter whose work focuses on the arts’ transformative power. With roots in L.A.’s vibrant hip-hop underground, his genre-bending music has branched out to include collaborations with artists from Latin America, Africa, and Europe, exploring the intersections and fusion of many musical styles and lineages. He has collaborated on recordings with artists including Tom Morello (Rage Against the Machine), Myka 9 (Freestyle Fellowship), and Kenyan musical pioneer Ochieng’ Nelly. He has enjoyed live collaborations with artists such as Matt Cameron (Pearl Jam / Sound Garden) and Wayne Kramer (MC5). Matre recently launched Love Bravely, a cross-genre music project and creative community, bringing together collaborations with a wide network of musicians, artists, and cultural creatives. His music is available on all streaming platforms and via the Love Bravely Substack page, together with writing pieces and other creative work at lovebravely.substack.com

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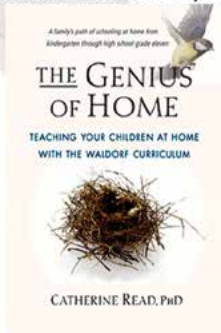
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- Goethe



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Everything Will Work Out

MARY LOU SANELLI

My Aunt Connie used to sit me down at the kitchen table to share tales of her great journey from Calabria to New York. About how young and scared she was, but also about how hopeful. A month after arriving, she went to work for the Department of Public Service and stayed there until her retirement. A rock in our family, we could always count on her. If one of us needed help, she'd cook up some pasta, open a bottle of red, and *listen*. Everything will work out, she'd say, *tutto funzionerà*.

Today, her stories stay with me, especially the one where, on her first day of work, when people asked her where she was from, she was afraid to say. Hard to believe now that nearly everyone longs to travel to Italy. But listen: she was never, not one day in her life, uncertain of how to answer. Compared to her favorite niece (I

like to think so anyway), on the matter of “where,” she was nothing but sure. Until her death, she lived in exactly two places, the war-torn village she left behind and in what she always referred to as “dis country.” But beyond a strong sense of appreciation for “dis country,” she never thought of it as “casa.” Home.

On the opposite side of our country, people move to Seattle from all over the world, drawn to its natural beauty, work opportunities, independence, openness, and acceptance. Since my earliest days of writing about this city, there have been so many new arrivals that Seattle—the perception of it—has begun to feel more like an opinion, heightened in our minds by experience, background, political leaning, and attitude. A lot of our conversations also begin with, or eventually raise, the question, “where are you from?” But it's

“ DOES THIS MAKE ME TRULY COMPASSIONATE OR JUST PLAIN CRAZY? I DON'T KNOW ANYMORE.



always the same reluctance on my part. Unlike my favorite aunt, I can still be so *unsure*.

Am I from New England, the place of my formative years, where I went to college, and why New York will always feel like “my” city? Or am I from the Northwest because I’ve lived here longer? I mean, a huge part of me still feels like I’m from Port Townsend, where I was married and owned my first home and where my sense of place keeps returning whenever I talk to friends there. But another part belongs to Seattle, home to me for the better part of two decades after I got tired of living in a small, isolated town. Still, another part is from Oahu, the island where my mother’s ashes lie, where I return whenever work slows down enough to let me be with her again. And to save time, as well as emotional toll, whenever I’m on the island and a sunburned tourist asks, “do you live here?” I don’t hesitate. I simply say, “yep.”

And then there is this: my insides feel as if they are from Southern Italy, where my DNA derives more of an urge of belonging than anywhere else, even though I’ve visited only twice. On both those trips, it felt as if I relaxed into exactly who I was meant to be. I was meant to live in this country, I thought, one smog-pink

sunset in Sorrento, the sapphire waters of the Gulf of Naples below our pension balcony. That thought repeated itself over and over as the unhurried weeks passed by.

Honestly, I can still have such strong sensations of displacement that when my sister called from her new home in Florida to tell me about all the snakes and alligators that, after Hurricane Ian, hid from view in the puddles after being flooded out of their ponds and burrows, an intensified feeling of empathy came over me. I kept imagining myself peeping out from under the murky, oil-slicked pools, clinging to the bottom with my toes, moving my hips back and forth to keep from cramping. Does this make me truly compassionate or just plain crazy? I don’t know anymore.

When I tell this story to my friend in New York, also a writer and also Italian, she laughs. As with most conversations about writing, especially between two writers, we move on to discuss our current projects at length. Writing might not offer the same challenges as scaling the side of a mountain or ascending a slippery rock, but when we talk about the ups and downs, those are exactly the metaphors we use. Finally, I ask her what she’d call this sense of home-confusion I’ve tried to describe. “Well,” she says, “I don’t know what they (meaning anyone not living in New York) would call it, but I (meaning all writers or all Italians) would call it *pazza*. But in an okay way. For someone like you.”

Someone like me.

These days, I just may be my own form of crazy, but I am fine with it. Proud of it, even. Because amazingly (so far), everything has worked out. *Tutto funzionerà.* 📌

Mary Lou Sanelli is the author of *Every Little Thing*, a collection of essays that was nominated for a Washington State Book Award. Her previous titles include fiction, non-fiction, and a new children’s title, *Bella Likes To Try*. She also works as a columnist (Pacific Publishing newspapers), speaker, and a master dance teacher. For more information about her and her work, visit marylousanelli.com.

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Time's Slow Tide

All these years ago,
we grew quietly shy
at the altar, but felt--
almost like a shock--

quick waves of warmth
when the church hour peaked
with the seal of our kiss,
and we walked out

to an amazement
of June sunlight.
Hours later, biting
the last thin slice
of wedding cake,
I found it stale.

And never
gave that a thought.

—ROBERT K. JOHNSON

Robert K. Johnson, now retired, was a Professor of English at Suffolk University in Boston for many years. For eight years he was also Poetry Editor of *Ibbetson Street* magazine. His poems have been published individually in a variety of magazines here and abroad. His most recent full-length collections of poems are *From Mist to Shadow* and *Choir of Day*.

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