

THE JOURNAL OF Creative Aging
NUMBER 31, WINTER 2020

SAGE-ING

with Creative Spirit, Grace & Gratitude



A PUBLICATION OF
THE OKANAGAN INSTITUTE
EDITED BY KAREN CLOSE
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KNOW YOURSELF.
BE YOURSELF.
LOVE YOURSELF.
SHARE YOURSELF.

SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

The Journal of Creative Aging



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NUMBER 31, WINTER 2020 | ISSN 1920-5848

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COPY EDITOR: JOHANNA BEYERS

PUBLISHER/DESIGNER: ROBERT MACDONALD

A PUBLICATION OF THE Okanagan Institute

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Available online at: [**www.sageing.ca**](http://www.sageing.ca)

Cover image: Collision of a Bureaucrat and a Captain of Industry, by Douglas MacLeod

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**“Antiquity identified a sage as a wise person ... wisdom is a form of goodness, and is not scientific knowledge but another kind of cognition.”
– Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 1246b**

This Journal exists to honour the transformational power of creativity. We are a quarterly journal intended as an initiative for collaboration and sharing. We present the opportunity for the free exchange of wisdom gleaned from creative engagement. We invite all ages to contribute their discoveries.

Sage-ing is about seeking - satisfying inner gnawing and transforming it to knowing and action. Ageing can be alchemy when one allows the realisation that to *Know Thyself* and contribute that knowing to our culture is indeed one of life's highest purposes. That knowing brings the gratitude, grace and integrity that a life deserves. The creative journey into self is a strong aid to health and well-being for the individual and to our culture. This journal also exists for all those serious in exploring their creativity, in a chosen expression. It is a forum for publication and exposure to other artists, both novice and established. This journal is an easel for any form of artistry undertaken out of personal intuition and imagination.

SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE TO SAGE-ING

- **Article is to be related to aging and creativity, in any of its many forms, as a path to gaining wisdom and self awareness and/or the act of harvesting life's wisdom as a legacy for future generations.**
- Article to be attached as a document in .rtf format;
- 1500 words is our preferred length;
- Photos: Please attach each photo separately including: the writer's headshot photo and four or five photos, related to article . All photos should be attached in high resolution jpg format with a caption;
- Insert the word “**photo**” with its caption within the article where you would like each image placed (we'll try to honour this request as layout permits).
- Please include brief bio information (one or two short paragraphs) placed at the end of your article; this is meant to give the reader an idea of who you are, your passions and/or what you do and have done with your life that feels relevant to the article. Include contact info: email, website, blog address – whatever you want to include. For each journal, due date is the 10th of the month preceding release date. We release around the equinoxes and solstices. **For next issue due date is February 10th, 2020**
- Email the article and photographs to karensageing@gmail.com

“All the steps we take, all our dreams, our memories, our reflections lead us to the centre of our being.”
– Susan M. Tiberghien,
Writing toward Wholeness: Lessons Inspired by C.G. Jung

FROM THE EDITOR

As I began to prepare for this issue of the Journal, an early submission inspired my thoughts and reminded me that intergenerational sharing moves us forward and is essential to sage-ing. Amanda Perera’s A MILLENNIAL LOOKS AT AGING is a reflection on how her graduate studies in gerontology have been influenced by Swedish sociologist Dr. Lars Tornstam’s theory of Gerotranscendence. Amanda’s thoughts nudged me to recall how deeply I have been inspired by Joan Erikson’s musings as she watched her husband, Erik Erikson, in his final years. He was a German-American developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst known for his theory on the eight stages of psychological development of human beings. As she observed Erik, Joan developed her theory on the ninth stage in the cycle of life. She suggests “gerotranscendence” can be a choice that creates a peaceful happiness for a life well-lived:

Joan Erikson writes: “With great satisfaction I have found that transcendence’ becomes ‘transcendence,’ which speaks to the soul and body and challenges it to rise above the dystonic, clinging aspects of our worldly existence that burden and distract us from true growth and aspiration ... Transcendence may be a regaining of lost skills, including play, activity, joy, song ... Transcendence calls forth the language of the arts: nothing else speaks so deeply and meaningfully to our hearts and souls.”

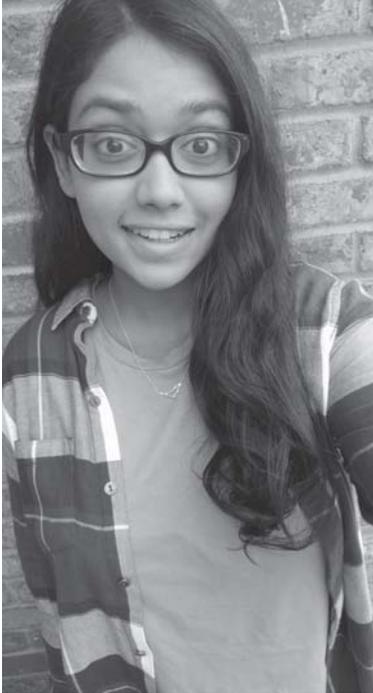
Once again I remind our readers of Carl Jung’s words discussing the stages of life. “For the aging person it is a duty and a necessity to devote serious attention to himself.” Jung explains that, as we age, our power of creativity can help us “explore and bring to life” our unused potential, remain connected to and engaged in our communities, and live with a sense of purpose and meaning that validates our existence. I hear Jung urging us to be *Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude*. I am delighted to hear resonance with his words throughout the articles in this issue.

As we enter 2020, I invite our readers to consider that a core belief of transcendentalism is in the inherent goodness of people and nature. Transcendence invites viewing existence or experience beyond the normal or physical level. Sociologists suggest gerotranscendence, what I consider Sage-ing, is a natural and individual process, characterised by new ways of understanding life, activity and oneself. This perspective deepens maturity and wisdom, regardless of age, and is normally accompanied by more life satisfaction.

Consider how you intend to transcend into 2020. Gerotranscendence/ Sage-ing can be a resolution and investment with high yield. Take a look at how another millennial has embraced the theory into his life <https://www.slowww.co/gerotranscendence/>.

Happy New Year,
 KAREN CLOSE

A MILLENNIAL LOOKS AT AGING



Amanda Perera, MA

(in consultation with Jeffrey Buchanan, PhD, and Donald Ebel, PhD). Photos by Greg Lee

As a 20-something graduate student, my initial perceptions on the concept of aging were based on the very little experience I had interacting with those over the age of 65 and the portrayal of age and aging through the media. I saw aging as a process of disengagement – that as we age we withdraw from the world, deal with loss and loneliness, and are often perceived as unhappy or generally “depressed.” However, this belief or notion I had about the aging individual was soon transformed through my contact with the concepts presented in gerotranscendence theory, a developmental theory of positive aging proposed by Lars Tornstam in 1989. The central area of this theory, which motivated my own change in perspective, is the suggestion that, as individuals age, their desires, interests, hopes and dreams may all shift with their own changing understanding of their connection with others and with the cosmos. Although learning about the concept of gerotranscendence began my interest in what aging may truly entail, it was not until I began collecting data for my master’s thesis that I began to have a much greater appreciation for what older individuals experience. The study I was expanding upon looked at the differences in perceptions of this concept of gerotranscendence between certified nursing assistants and older adults living in assisted living facilities. When my mentor, Dr. Jeffrey Buchanan, first discussed

this project and its underlying concepts, I was immediately drawn to it because it challenged my own preconceptions of what an older adult might experience. I wondered if perhaps those working with these individuals daily may also be perceiving the behaviours and thoughts of older adults in a way that did not fully appreciate the process of change. Gerotranscendence proposes that residents' perceptions of their own role in the world, and the meaning and nature of their relationships with others might be different than we have assumed.

“The development towards gerotranscendence can involve some overlooked developmental changes that are related to increased life satisfaction, as self-described by individuals. The gerotranscendent individual typically experiences a redefinition of the Self and of relationships to others and a new understanding of fundamental existential questions:

- The individual becomes less self-occupied and at the same time more selective in the choice of social and other activities.
- There is an increased feeling of affinity with past generations and a decreased interest in superfluous social interaction.
- The individual might also experience a decrease in interest in material things and a greater need for solitary “meditation.” Positive solitude becomes more important.
- There is also often a feeling of cosmic communion with the spirit of the universe, and a redefinition of time, space, life and death.” ~ Lars Tornstam, *Gerotranscendence: A Developmental Theory of Positive Aging*

Gerotranscendence proposes that residents' perceptions of their own role in the world, and the meaning and nature of their relationships with others might be different than we have assumed.

While collecting data, I was fortunate to be able to talk to many incredibly kind individuals who were not only more than happy to answer the questions I had for them, but were also able to expand upon each question, providing me with clear examples of how their lives had changed over time. One concept of gerotranscendence theory that



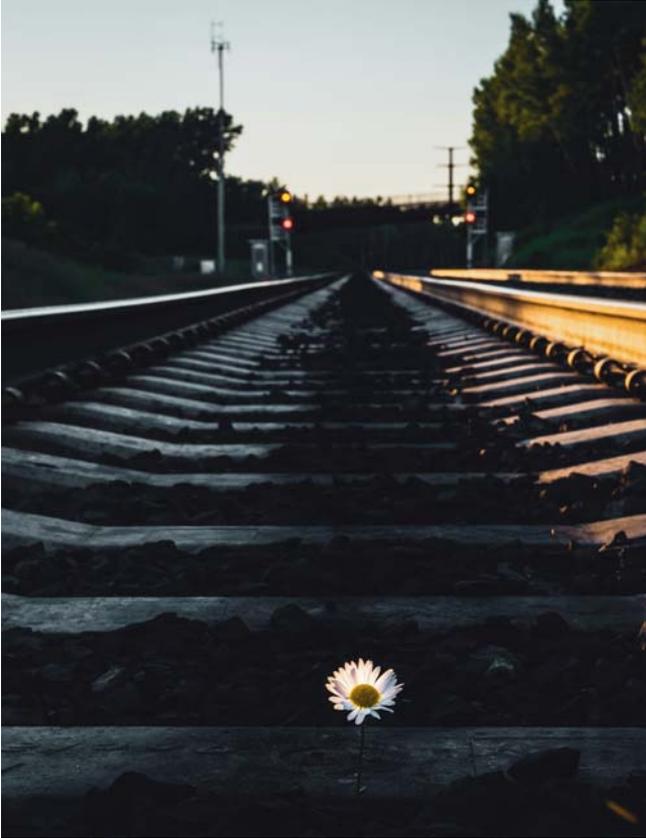
Peaceful rainfall

many of the individuals I spoke with related to was how seemingly simple activities, such as sitting alone, watching birds outside their window or watching the rain or snow fall outside, brought them great joy.

Additionally, many of the individuals I spoke with described how being alone in their rooms, reading a book, watching TV or completing a crossword puzzle was what they enjoyed and valued the most. Activities like playing cards in the common areas or participating in planned group activities were less than interesting to them. Prior to being able to have a conversation with these individuals, I would have most likely thought that these solitary activities might be evidence

of loneliness or sadness, and that at the least these individuals were not fully enjoying their lives and at worst were exhibiting symptoms of depression. As I quickly discovered, this was not the case. While almost all of the elders I spoke with were social and had people around them to spend time with, many seemed to enjoy and appreciate their alone time greatly.

One conversation I had during my time in these assisted living facilities has stuck with me. This individual was nearing 100 years of age, and was one of the happiest people I have met. As she described it to me, she spent much of her time in her room, and over the years had discovered a new love for reading. Near the chair she sat on was a plethora of books, all of which she explained she had read numerous times. In addition to talking with me about her love for reading, she talked about death, and how she was not afraid of dying. She spoke about this



Welcoming change every day

topic with such ease and acceptance that she almost glowed thinking about it. Again, to someone who may be unaware of how death can become in a sense normalized as individuals age, this topic can seem morbid and uncomfortable. However, seeing this woman's face, it was clear that she was not afraid in the least, and that she was able to discuss death with a sense of humour and complete acceptance of it as a natural part of life.

After seeing the expressions on the faces of older adults and hearing them explain to me that over time their social circles had gotten smaller, I could understand why they now

cherished their close friends and family more than ever, and could not be bothered by extraneous relationships which did not have much meaning to them. I noticed how happy they looked while they spoke about their close friends and family members, and I delighted in hearing them discuss how giving away items that they valued, such as books and old chess boards, to others, especially to grandchildren, gave them such joy. I listened to how, as they got older, the concept of death was more comforting and accepted rather than feared. Their words truly solidified for me why learning the differences in how certified nursing assistants view seniors' behaviours and thoughts and the perspectives of the residents themselves is very important. Conducting research on gerotranscendence theory is not just an academic exercise, but rather it is an exploration of the ways that we view major life events, and how our sense of meaning in life changes as we age. I believe to better understand gerotranscendence theory is important for all of us.



Finding what matters most

The results of my study suggest that certified nursing assistants are more likely to view some behaviours of older adults as more unusual/abnormal and potentially of concern than they would if they had better understanding of gerotranscendence theory. It would be beneficial for facilities to train their staff on how to identify positive solitary experiences their residents wish to engage in, and to provide resources for those

individuals who may want to engage in activities to expand their reading, or who may find pleasure in watching animals outside, doing crossword puzzles/word searches, or who may want to congregate with a few of their close friends. Moreover, it seems beneficial for these individuals working with older adults to be open to talking with their residents about topics that may at first seem uncomfortable. In order to promote these conversations, caregivers could be given a series of prompts based on different components of gerotranscendence theory. These prompts could include starters such as, "I understand that some people as they grow older find great joy in solitude. Is this something that you have experienced?" Caregivers could then modify this prompt based on what types of gerotranscendence behaviours they observe. Doing so may open caregivers up to a side of aging they had not previously appreciated, a side that at first may seem daunting, but may enlighten them in ways they had not known. There is great joy available to the elderly when they discover that someone else understands and wants to hear them personally provide stories and anecdotes of how they feel they have changed. Someone else cares about what they enjoy doing, and what their hopes and desires are for the rest of their lives. I think it is important for nursing students to understand that choosing solitary



Transcending expectations

activities is not necessarily the same thing as disengaging from life, or an expression of depressive symptoms. This understanding can open the pathway to providing truly personal and resident-centred care.

Amanda Perera recently graduated with her Master's of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology from Minnesota State University, Mankato, Minnesota. Currently she is a doctoral candidate in a school psychology program at Illinois State

University and has goals of opening up an independent practice in the future. Although the direction of her research has since shifted, her interest remains in aging, the aging process and how to provide the best supportive programming for individuals as they grow older, so that they can live their best lives. She became interested in aging upon entering the Clinical Psychology program at Minnesota State University, Mankato, as there seemed to be so much that was unknown about the aging adult. This interest was only furthered as she volunteered at an assisted living facility, got to know many wonderful residents, and began to visit various assisted living facilities to collect data for her thesis. She intends to continue learning about aging and finding different ways to volunteer with older adults.

AGING IS NOT A DISEASE BUT A HARVEST TO REAP



Jacques G. LeBlanc, MD, FRCSC

The “Golden Years” are being redefined. People in the second half of life are now the fastest growing segment of the population – and they are no longer content to simply accept the “losses” of age. Mental acuity and vitality are becoming a lifelong pursuit. Contrary to the long-held belief that our brain power inevitably declines as we age, there are actually positive changes taking place in our mindset, and evidence is building up that the mind continues to grow and flourish well into the second half of life. Simply, the brain has the capacity to remodel itself through certain activated genes as we age, allowing our personalities to grow and change. The brain can recruit areas of itself underused in earlier years, to compensate for the effects of aging in other parts of the brain. It is in the latter stages of life, ages 60-80, that the brain’s information processing centre achieves its greatest density and reach. Definitely, aging is not all negative; denying or trivializing the positive potential of aging prevents people from realizing the full spectrum of their talents, intelligence and emotions.

It is with interest and no little amount of concern that I recently read in the special *Time* edition, *The Science of Living Longer* (October, 2019), that the latest anti-aging scientists are “upending the way we think about getting older. No longer is aging being treated as a dreadful inevitability, but instead as a puzzle that can be solved –

as a disease with a cure.” Articles in the magazine go on to discuss the marvels of new science and technology that can pluck our aging cells like grey hairs, and reverse not just the effects of aging, but aging itself. The concept of no longer treating aging as “dreadful” is commendable; however, the idea that aging is a disease to be cured medicalizes a process that, much like childbirth, is natural to our human experience/existence.

With aging there are many age-related diseases affecting almost all organ systems in the human body. Diseases may be looked at as cases of organ system failure, acutely or chronically, but aging is not a failure of an organ system, rather it is a process that increases the intensity of organ failures with age. Does this make aging itself a disease? A new generation of doctors and researchers in gerontology come with the belief that aging is a disease. In June 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) released the 11th edition of its *International Classification of Diseases*. It contained an important addition: Code MG2A: R54, *Old age*. Officially this means aging is now recognized as a disease, and this initiative will make it possible to increase funding for the development of new efficient drugs against aging.

New treatments, including lifestyle changes, have been developed that are helping people to live longer today than ever before. These efforts are aimed at the disease-related problems experienced by people and not the process of aging itself. Treating the underlying processes of age-related diseases, and repairing the damage, is the basis for the medical approach known as rejuvenation biotechnology, a multidisciplinary field that aims to prevent and treat age-related diseases by targeting the aging processes directly. Targeting basic processes of biological aging and inventing new interventions to delay the onset or progression of aging is currently well funded by private research companies. Rejuvenation biotechnology presents a whole new field for income

The idea that aging is a disease to be cured medicalizes a process that, much like childbirth, is natural to our human experience/existence.

There's a growing body of research about "positive aging," "successful aging," "mindful sustainable aging." If we have a deeper understanding of ourselves during what is called the second half of our life, we can be free to use all our wisdom and explore family, personal, social and community roles.

potential that aims directly at the fear people have of becoming old and suffering. The fight against aging is already a global market worth billions. Vitamins, supplements, alternative therapies, cosmetics, etc., are all part of the commodity we call "the fight against aging."

Many people are resistant to the idea of extending their years because they have a strong fear of becoming frail, sick and of no value. I wonder, would these fears lessen if extending-life technology allows one to attain some renewed youth? Perhaps our later years could be free of disease and offer a greater quality of life. Of course, no one is offering immortality, yet. Despite these youth extending developments, conversations around aging still view aging as a problem to be solved. The solutions are all an effort to avoid the 'international crisis' that global aging presents. Today, Japan is the only country in the world where those aged 60 and over represent 30 per cent or more of the population. However, by 2050, 62 countries – including China – will reach that milestone. The conversation needs to shift from how to avoid an aging crisis to how to take advantage of the opportunities we have in aging, so that we as individuals, organizations and nations can thrive. A key part of the current retirement model that most of us have grown up with is freedom from work. Today, a key part of extended middle age is the freedom to work. More and more, people want to keep working past traditional retirement age because they want to continue to contribute to society and find meaning in their own lives – and work does that for them. Finding meaning in one's life is a significant aspect of aging. By extending youth, do we enhance the opportunities for personal growth in aging or simply delay the fear people have of becoming old and of little value?

Ironically, aging in our early years is known as growth and development, essential steps for becoming an adult. Now that considerable literature supports the ongoing

importance of growth and development well into our 90s, it begs the question: at what point in the lifespan does aging then become a disease? Carl Jung's words about the stages of life are: "For the aging person, it is a duty and a necessity to devote serious attention to himself. As we age, our power of creativity can help us 'explore and bring life' to our unused potential, remain connected to and engaged in our communities, and live with a sense of purpose and meaning that validates our existence." There's a growing body of research about 'positive aging,' 'successful aging,' 'mindful sustainable aging.' If we have a deeper understanding of ourselves during what is called the second half of our life, we can be free to use all our wisdom and explore family, personal, social and community roles. We can also get in touch with parts of ourselves that we ignored or put aside for a variety of reasons.

Wisdom, resilience and a well-rounded, mature perspective on life are often credited as the hard-earned rewards of aging, and growing old itself is an accomplishment not everyone is able to achieve. Looking and feeling good past the age of fifty requires a fine-tuned combination of aging gracefully and defying the very laws of nature.

In research at the University of Toronto, Lynn Hasher, PhD, found that an aging brain resembles the creative brain in that it is more uninhibited, more distracted, less inclined to please or meet expectations, but more open to creative, engaging and novel opportunities. Many aging people may still feel limited and constrained, but the possibilities are there to explore.

Considerable work on the concept of aging comes from Lars Tornstam, PhD, a Swedish gerontologist who wrote the book *Gerotranscendence: A Developmental Theory of Positive Aging*. Dr. Tornstam explains the origin of the word: gero for the gerontology medical field and transcendence as crossing barriers in personal, time,

There is also a body of evidence that, by measurements of physical health, mental health and social functioning people involved in re-inventing themselves and in creative activities are healthier.

relationship, or life aspects. Gerotranscendence is very much the theory of “a harvest to reap.” The individual experiences a self-inquiry and re-definition of his or her own life as a natural progression and expression of maturity and wisdom, including the potential to mature into a new outlook and understanding of life. There is also a body of evidence that, by measurements of physical health, mental health and social functioning people involved in re-inventing themselves and in creative activities are healthier.

Is aging natural or pathological? While the dictionary definition describes aging as both natural and pathological, the argument may be largely semantic. What rejuvenation biotechnology and other new anti-aging treatments seek to achieve is nothing more than preventing age-related diseases that are considered a natural process. Perhaps the more important focus should be the need to honour and respect the aging process and what it offers to one’s ability to express one’s mature identity. Perhaps a re-invented self through creative expression, in whatever form one might choose, can and will bring personal transformation. This metamorphosis can bring a sense of well-being that enriches the quality of life and encourages a sense of true wellness. This stage is a harvest to be reaped, not feared.

FEELING HOW ART ENRICHES OUR MEMORIES



Petar and Lore

Petar Ognjenovic and Lore Wiggers

October 1990: I am a student of philosophy at The University of Toronto, and a member of the poetry group “Phoenix.” Our group is invited to the home of Leslie Kinton, a fine pianist, to read and discuss

Doctor Faustus, by Thomas Mann. The book is a masterpiece about a musician of genius. We come to the point in the book when a music teacher of the hero of the novel explains why Beethoven’s Sonata in C Minor ends in the second movement. This is, of course, very unusual. Eric asks Leslie to help us understand. Leslie takes the score and sits at his piano. He plays the last chords of the Sonata and points out how the entire music ends here. There is nothing more to say.

In November of that same year, I meet Lore. She shows me her paintings and plays guitar for me. I show her my poetry and philosophical writings. We like each other a lot. She teaches German at the Toronto Goethe Institute. I am working as a machine operator for a big company, Norseman Plastics, and studying philosophy at the university. On a Sunday afternoon in October 1991, almost a year later, I am sitting at my desk in my living room composing a paper. The phone rings. It is Lore, “I’d

She is painting, obviously unaware of anything else. The painting is large, 4' x 3'. She is working on finishing touches as she looks at me and hugs me, still holding the brush in her right hand.

like you to come to me so that we spend some time together before we go to work tomorrow.”

“Of course, darling. I’ll be there in a half an hour or so.” We are sitting on the sofa in Lore’s living room enjoying the view of High Park in October.

““I wanted you to come here and stay with me,” she said.

“And marry me?” I responded.

“And marry you,” she agreed.

A later afternoon in 1991: I am in my living room on Bloor Street West looking at the clouds over Lake Ontario. I am leaving, never to return to this view, where I have lived alone and written many papers on Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hume. Now Lore and I live together in her lovely house near High Park with Bahgira, our young German shepherd. This day, Lore receives news that her 89-year-old aunt Meta, living in the USA, has passed, and that Lore is her sole heir. A couple of weeks later, after coming home from work, I am sitting at the piano, practising Prelude in E Minor, BWV 941 by J. S. Bach. The doorbell sounds. It is Lore. She has returned from the US. At the dinner table, she looks at me, then she gently closes her eyes. She opens them again, “Darling, our working days are over, we are free.”

December 1991: Grenadier Pond is frozen and covered with snow. Bahgira and I are walking along the pond, and then uphill to the restaurant. I buy a coffee to go, and we go home. Lore is in her studio upstairs. She is quiet. She is not greeting us as usual. I walk up the stairs. The door is ajar. I push it gently. She is painting, obviously unaware of anything else. The painting is large, 4' x 3'. She is working on finishing touches as she looks at me and hugs me, still holding the brush in her right hand. “I never was this inspired before.” I look at the painting. I sum up my delight by calling it *Cocoon*. It is entirely abstract, full of magic and beauty. The variations of colours led by only hinted forms, gently but irresistibly creating an ecstasy.



Cocoon has a proud place in our home

Summer 1998: We are enjoying the Toronto Islands on a beautiful sunny day. We are sitting in the shade of a poplar tree at the end of the beach at the far side of the island. Lore is reading to me a novel by Hermann Hesse, *Narziss and Goldmund*.

“Darling, I have a dream,” she says.

I am looking at a white spot at the horizon. It is a sailboat of course, I think. “Yes?” I said.

“My dream is the Okanagan Valley in BC,” she says, and closes her eyes.

An August afternoon, 1999, at our home on Grenadier Ravine Drive in Toronto. A limousine arrives at our doorsteps. Our friend David wants to see us before we leave for Kelowna. We are taken to Rosedale, to his place. A family party is going on. We are introduced to David’s parents and relatives. David knows that I play piano a bit. “Petar, sit at the piano and play something for us.” Aware of my limitations, I think of a kind excuse, but I meet his eyes and see a hardly perceptible nod of his head. I am realizing that I can’t let him down. I sit at the priceless piano and play.



Lore's paintings enrich our space

September 1999: 154 Timberline Road, Kelowna. We are in our new home. Lore's paintings shine on the walls of our living room, TV room, master bedroom.

Her piano is in the living room, and mine is in my study. We are sitting at the small table on our deck overlooking the lake and the hills over Westbank, sipping Okanagan Chardonnay. "I have arranged a professional recording of our 'Old City Serbian Songs'," says Lore.

"Who is going to be your accompanist?" I ask.

"You, of course," she says.

"Well, I must practise day and night!" I say.

We are at the Brian Weebe recording studio, East Kelowna. Lore is in a soundproof booth, facing the microphone; I am at the piano wearing the headphones, seeing her through the glass. Brian is at the control board. I look outside. The wind is carrying the leaves. "I swear, I won't let her down," I whisper.

August 2003: Fire is approaching. Our home on Timberline Road is on alert. The telephone rings. You must leave now, we're told. We leave in two cars loaded



CD cover

with paintings. Yesterday, piano movers moved our two pianos to safety. My Alaska malamute Laska is with me. Her sister Tamara is with Lore. It is late. We drive along Westbank shore. I look across the lake to watch Kelowna burning. I imagine our beautiful villa enveloped by flames, nobody there to save it; and the fire inside – our precious books, precious furniture, precious carpets disappearing in violent flames. I am crying.

Five days later we are informed our home is still there. They take us

in a special bus to see it again:

“Stepping into the miracle of the standing nest
on the hill of the charred spruces,
shaking off the ashes from petals of pale roses,
washing them with tears of the returned hope.”
– Petar Ponic, “Inspired by a Courage”

July 2019: A late afternoon at the Marmalade Cat Café in Kelowna. It is the afternoon of solo guitar music and poetry reading organized by art activist Lynda Norman and her friends. I am invited to read one of my poems. There are about 20 people in the room, many of them fine musicians and poets. Lore is with me. An outstanding guitar player from Vancouver opens the afternoon. The response is warm, honest. Next, Linda calls me. “Thank you, Linda, for the opportunity. Thank you, Lore, for your support.” I read my poem “Crossing A Forgotten Street,” and receive a nice and sincere response. I feel I spoke to them. I meet Lore’s eyes. They are smiling.

It is 11 p.m. later that day and I am home. I send an email to my friend David, who had us to his home before we left Toronto. He is constantly travelling around the



A Landscape at Timberline

Petar and Lore are retired teachers of humanities and German literature. At present, Petar is writing poetry and sharing it with people of Kelowna at poetry readings. He also leads a poetry group, The Poetry Circle, at the Kelowna Library on Ellis Street. Lore is painting at home and exhibits her work at the Kelowna Art Gallery, and at the Lake Country Art Walk, an annual exhibition.

world on business. He receives my email while he is resting at the infinity pool on the top of the B2 hotel in Zurich. He answers, “I like your third verse.” I feel our connection and I smile.

“Charging into the avenue of multi-colour illusions fluttering on the banners of calls of the opulence and abundance at the other shore where

nobody is lonely, and where death is just a word.” – Petar Ponic, “Crossing a Forgotten Street”

December 2018, Kelowna Art Gallery: a gala opening of the Members Exhibition of paintings and sculptures. Lore is presenting her painting, *A Landscape at Timberline*.

It depicts a sublime beauty of slopes and trees untouched by humans, an expressionistic painting. Her work is so beautiful, it is noticed by everybody. Lore and I are sipping our Cabernet Sauvignon at the small round table not far from her painting. We hear some exciting greetings coming from the lobby. They are greeting our friend Anna Jacyszyn, an outstanding Kelowna jazz singer and an actress. Anna, carrying a bouquet of chrysanthemums, walks to Lore and me. She hugs us and gives the flowers to Lore, while admiring her painting. I bring Anna a glass of Sauvignon. We toast. Suddenly, the photographer and the TV man are taking pictures of Anna and us and Lore’s painting. Several people approach to see the painting. Some talk to Lore.

We are driving home. The painting will stay in the gallery for several weeks, leaving us to savour the memory this piece of Lore’s art brings.

THIS OLD TREE



Maria Robson

“How strong, vital, enduring! ... Then the qualities, almost emotional, palpably artistic, heroic, of a tree; so innocent and harmless, yet so savage it IS, yet says nothing.” – Walt Whitman

It is late September, and I walk through the well-tended grounds of Douglas Hospital, a neurological facility at McGill University. I am going to meet an old friend, my favourite tree. It speaks to me in wordless ways that seem to have come from a long way. It has stood a long time waiting just to whisper to me through its rustling branches.

My old friend stands near the side exit, near the vegetable patches, facing west. Do we all have old tree friends like mine? Since moving twelve years ago to Verdun, a borough of the city of Montreal, Quebec, situated along the St. Lawrence River, this oak and I have greeted each other, rain or shine, sleet, snow, scorching heat – all seasons and moods. This day I knew, as I rounded the Hall Building, that I would catch a glimpse of its gnarled, arthritic, knotted knuckles – not unlike mine. Much termites, wormwooded, burrowed by squirrels and mice, nested in by birds, this oak had welcomed all. Balding too: it seems to have lost its leaves for good, the way I’ve started to lose my hair. I feel it is always glad to see me, and, as I sit under it for shade or lean against it for a furtive cigarette, I am glad it never nags. Our visits always seem to leave me lighter, less burdened, attuned to another, kinder place. This visit, I was eager to see how it might look, golden in early fall, and how together we might exchange words of encouragement with which to face the coming winds and frost of winter.



What remains of the old tree

Rounding the Hall Building and nearing the old tree's location, I stopped dead in my tracks and was overcome with choked tears. It was gone! They'd chopped my tree down.

I surmised the removal was recent, maybe yesterday. Freshly sawed, splintered, foot-long logs lay strewn about its base, ready to be further chopped into firewood, I presumed. Smelling its life-giving resin, I moved closer and fingered the bark, which crumbled to the touch. Yes, there was no denying. It had needed more than pruning; its life was spent. I walked ceremonially around it, twice in each direction, slowly resigning to the loss and exchanging goodbyes.

I discovered my oak had two gifts for me. The first was a piece of bark, strangely twisted into what I took as a rather lop-sided infinity sign, a weirdly looped mask that I held up to my eyes, like a Venetian carnival mask. The other was a still-green, metre-long branch that I would



The gifts: Bark mask and branch

take away to remember my old friend. Perhaps I might ask Jack, the gardener, if grafting could work. I missed my tree's solace already.

Lost in this maudlin mood, I had failed to notice an attendant walking nearby with an elderly woman. She shuffled to the base of the tree, now a gigantic stool, and sat down. The attendant sat quietly beside her. A little embarrassed, I picked up the branch and mask and turned to go.

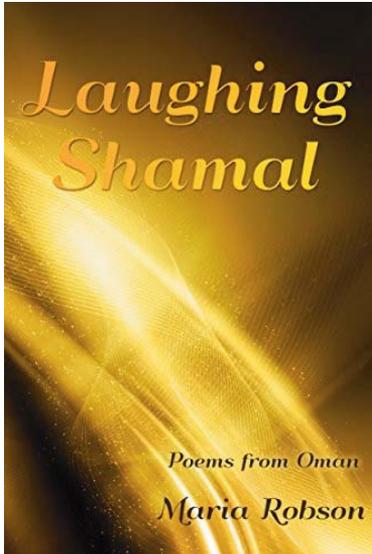
"The roots," I heard. "Look, the roots." She motioned me to sit down beside her. "The roots, deep deep." She kept tapping her right hand on the base of the tree. "Deep, deep, no die, no die." Tears brimming, I couldn't speak. She saw what had escaped my notice. The roots still gripped deep into the earth; this old tree was not uprooted. In my heart, it confirmed: "I am not an omen of death. I hum softly with new life. Can you hear me? My source is too deep-rooted to be extinguished. Life does not

Right top: New life already sprouting from the old stump
Right bottom: Still beautiful – a part of the trunk, termites and all...



disintegrate; life transforms. This confused old woman hears things that others miss – those geese overhead flying south, that mangy dog chasing a stick, the clouds gathering, that jogger catching his breath. It takes a subtle ear. Listen, listen closely.”

I thanked my old friend for this, my third gift. I realized it was telling me to live a little more deeply, to fear loss less, to listen more carefully to the song of life. “Come back soon,” my old tree said. “They’ve turned me into a stool for you to sit closer. I still have much to tell you.”



Laughing Shamal (cover)

Maria Robson reflects:

I've had a thing about trees since winning a tree-writing composition contest in Grade 2. The prize was a foot-high fir, which sprouted into the most beautiful Christmas tree I've ever seen... okay – allowing for time lapse and exaggeration.

As an English teacher, I've had the good fortune to travel, live and work in many parts of the world. Now back in my hometown of Montreal, I'm enjoying unpacking my souvenirs, journals and travel scribblings. I recently published Laughing Shamal, an e-book about my time in Oman.

Upon reflection, I think my writer side is drawn to the landscape, flora and fauna of my surroundings as much as to the people and architecture. The former express another, more subtle, silent but essential element of the place and of what I'm experiencing. In fact, I am not the first to remark on the effects of landscape on people, events and culture. Simon Schama's in-depth study, Landscape and Memory, bears mentioning.

Another strong influence of late is the work, talks and writings, of the amazing Tree-Walker-Lady, Diana Beresford Kroeger, who just happens to live nearby in the Ottawa-Gatineau area. As an Irish-Canadian and former biochemist, she has the talent of blending the factual with the more literary/mythical aspects of forests in such a simple way that's got me positively hooked even further on pursuing my tree thing!

"This Old Tree" is my way of giving it a little voice.

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A VOLUNTEER IN RETIREMENT



Mary Lou Johnson

In my early twenties I worked as an air hostess for United Airlines, flying between Los Angeles and Honolulu. This was at the height of the Vietnam War, and many of our passengers were going to Hawaii to meet soldiers who were on R&R (Rest and Relaxation). On one flight, a middle-aged man grasped my hand and, with tears in his eyes, asked if I would visit his son, who had lost both legs and an arm in Vietnam and was in a military hospital. Reluctantly I did so, and found the visit so rewarding that I continued to visit wounded soldiers and encouraged and organized other air hostesses to do likewise at veteran hospitals both in Honolulu and California. This was the beginning of my volunteering career.

Later, I had the experience of working with groups of nurses who were interested in holistic health to form both a provincial and national organization to explore these healing modalities and try to integrate some of them into the hospitals. I met with other medical staff from across Canada, the USA and eventually internationally, in India. Serving as the organization's president for the first seven years, I saw it grow from a small group of nurses in Vancouver to a worldwide phenomenon of doctors, nurses and dentists who were bent on revolutionizing our health care systems.

In India there is a word for this, called *seva*. *Seva* is a Sanskrit word meaning selfless service, and is perhaps

Orphanage in India



considered the most important part of any spiritual practice. Of the paths to spiritual liberation in Hinduism, Karma Yoga is the path of unselfish action. Karma Yoga, states the *Bhagavad Gita*, purifies the mind and teaches that a spiritual seeker should act according to dharma, without being attached to the fruits or personal consequences.

Over the years I have been a part of many different spiritual groups and churches. Each one provided ample opportunities to volunteer my services. I definitely found that the more one gives the more one receives back.

When I found myself single and in an empty nest after my children were launched, I decided to take a three-month leave of absence from my work to volunteer with a charity that helped to make intraocular lenses available to those blinded by cataracts in Nepal and India. The adventure and satisfaction that this work gave to me is beyond description. I was able to accompany an American ophthalmologist and a team of Nepalese ophthalmic assistants to a field hospital in the Himalayas, and help to restore sight in over 100 people blinded by cataracts, many of whom had never been able to see their grandchildren. The thrill of being there when the bandage comes off after the surgery and to see the look on their faces made it all worthwhile.

Youth Helping Hands

I found great satisfaction in sharing my experience and training, but realize that, when volunteering in third world countries, or anywhere, it is important to take a creative approach in determining how best to serve the needs of those one is assisting.



During nine trips to India, I had the opportunity to spend time in an orphanage run by a Canadian couple, and to help raise money for improvements in their infirmary and to the playground, and clothing supplies. At another time I combined with a local group of young people, called Youth Helping Hands, who wanted to help orphans integrate into the community when they reach maturity. Together we put on a wonderful Christmas for a small orphanage. Indian orphanages usually include what they call old age orphans, elderly people who have no family to care for them.

I had an opportunity to volunteer with an indigenous tribe in Mexico's Lacandon Jungle, on the border of Guatemala, helping them to improve the jewellery that they made from local seeds and sold in the markets, as well as working with local medics in the treatment of various skin diseases.

In all these instances I found great satisfaction in sharing my experience and training, but realize that, when volunteering in third world countries, or anywhere, it is important to take a creative approach in determining how best to serve the needs of those one is assisting. It is important to function simply as an adjunct to the situation and not rob someone of an opportunity for paid employment. Choosing an ethical charity and finding the right fit for your skills and interests is of the utmost

Volunteers are important to our community functioning and our economy, and to create overall harmonious and caring societies.

importance. I suggest there are numerous opportunities, so choose something that you feel passionate about, and will both enjoy and learn from. Sometimes this invites imagination.

In recent years I have taught courses for seniors in Kelowna at the Society for Learning in Retirement. I choose a variety of subjects that I find inspiring and give me the opportunity to be creative and pass on what I know, as well as furthering my knowledge through researching the subject. I have met so many wonderful people and learned so much about teaching, collaborating and mentoring.

Identified as a Type Two on the Enneagram, it is not surprising that I have always been attracted to service professions. I was barely aware that I was not being paid for what I was doing while helping others. In truth, when I was working I was always surprised to receive a paycheque for the work I had done. So I obviously enjoy helping others, and sometimes have to hold myself back in order to avoid disempowering others and becoming codependent. It is important that we recognize our motives and take care of ourselves and our family first before extending our services to others, and to be aware that if we are helping others in order to reap recognition and praise it is just a way of feeding our egos.

Volunteers are important to our community functioning and our economy, and to create overall harmonious and caring societies. Canada is famous for our hospitality and welcoming of the stranger. Through my church I have had the opportunity to volunteer in the very fulfilling and satisfying task of sponsoring and welcoming refugees to Canada. Meeting them at the airport when they arrive is the most thrilling aspect of being on a refugee committee, but the ongoing support and deep friendships that evolve are so incredibly rewarding. Helping new arrivees establish homes, find jobs and integrate into our culture brings challenges and

Welcoming refugees



deep connections with both other committee members and the families we are sponsoring. In the past four years our group of sponsors has welcomed traumatized families from Colombia, Syria, Myanmar and Pakistan.

Last year I discovered a new way to reach out and participate in a culture of generosity to foreign visitors. I had heard the term “couchsurfing,” but assumed it was simply a part of youth culture. A young friend encouraged me to join the online couchsurfing community and helped me put together a profile. I was very surprised to find that I had an immediate response from young travellers who felt safe and comfortable staying in my spare bedroom. They have filled a gap in my grandmotherless life. There is a wonderful exchange of my life experience and hospitality with their willingness to help out.

During my travelling days I preferred to stay in hostels with backpackers rather than in tourist hotels. I found the people in hostels more interesting and affable. As I became older and unable to travel I missed the company of this breed of international travellers. Now, thanks to the couchsurfing website, these adventurous travellers are coming to visit me here in my retirement home. When I signed up for couchsurfing, I was immediately approached by Airbnb, encouraging me to

There is a wonderful exchange of my life experience and hospitality with their willingness to help out.

When the young people are in my home, I treat them as if they were my grandkids and they treat me as if I were their beloved grandmother. It's a new way of creating family.

charge money for accomodation in my home. I knew that it would just not be the same if I were to make it a commercial endeavour, and I prefer to volunteer free of charge my home and my hospitality to weary young travellers from all parts of the globe. To date I have hosted youth from Germany, France, the UK, China, India, Israel, Brazil, Mexico, Reunion Island, the USA, and Eastern Canada. These youth have without exception been delightful, respectful and helpful. I have made some deep, ongoing friendships.

Volunteering in the couchsurfing network works so well for me partly because my children and my siblings live in Australia, and I do not have any grandchildren. When the young people are in my home, I treat them as if they were my grandkids and they treat me as if I were their beloved grandmother. It's a new way of creating family.

After retirement, volunteering gave me an identity and enriched my life with some structure, purpose and meaning, as well as social opportunities and the mental health benefits that go along with any altruistic endeavour. Now, in my mid-70s, I have so many wonderful memories to recall and volunteering continues to be an essential part of my life. I am happy that I have continued to create opportunities to experience the bounty of *seva* as I have aged.

Mary Lou Johnson spent more than 40 years as a Registered Nurse, and was the founder and Past President of the Canadian Holistic Nurses Association. She has travelled widely and done volunteer work in several countries. She resides in Kelowna, B.C., and is teaching a course called "Aging, Sage-ing and Engaging" at the Society for Learning in Retirement.

BROKEN OPEN



Diane Pinsart

As I was about to enter the year that I would be turning 60, I knew that I wanted to travel. My church, at which I am a regular attendee, had announced that their annual trip was going to be to Italy. “Oh my, can I do this?” I wondered, and quickly answered myself. “What the heck. I’m going to do it.” I signed up, put down my deposit and began to prepare. Over the next eight months my anticipation built, but when the day finally arrived so did Hurricane Sandy. The night before we were to leave all flights to New York were cancelled. There were 46 of us trying to make connections from all around the USA. After much diverse travel and plenty of imagination, 43 of us made it to the airport. We were the only international flight that departed that evening. It was a miracle – I was going to Italy!

Before I left, my friend told me the top of your mouth will be sunburned, and she was right. I was in awe of everything I saw, from Venice to Florence, Sorrento, Pompei and the Amalfi coast, and then the climax in Rome. It was an amazing trip and one I will never forget.

After arriving back home, a couple of months passed and I was taking a shower. Suddenly, I just started crying for no reason. I was not sad, but the tears just came. I compare this moment to the feeling of being broken open. That is how I felt. I needed to express myself – all of me. My first thought was, I want to write poetry. I discovered Mary Oliver, and from one of her books I found a poem that I liked.

I asked the music director of my church if I could recite this poem during a service. Never had I done this before, but I just knew this is something I want to explore. Two months later I recited the poem at church, shocking

In the Studio



myself and everyone in the congregation. I had such accolades from everyone, it was an amazing feeling. Next I started to do some writing of my own, and later recited one of my originals at a service. For several years, from time to time I would do more recitings. I was delighted by what all that opening up brought into my life. Then one summer's day morning, having my coffee before getting ready for work, I received a text from my friend. She wrote that it was her job to be my Dumbo's Feather. Do you remember the movie *Dumbo*? It is about an elephant that wants to fly, and he was given a magic feather. My friend asked, "Do you want to fly?"

I had a small panic attack at that moment. Me fly? "Do you think I can fly?" I had to take several deep breaths. No one had ever asked me that, or really encouraged me in that way before. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a



Golden Feather

feather standing straight up out of the ground. Now, I had seen this feather the day before and hadn't thought much of it, other than noting that it was standing straight up. This morning that feather had a new meaning to me. I went over and took a picture of it with my phone and sent it to my friend, asking, "Could this be my Dumbo's feather?" Then I went back to my day. I got ready for work but, before leaving, I thought it would be cool to go look at the feather again, so I went outside to gaze at it once more. It was gone, nowhere to be found. I could not believe this. Was this a sign? You see, in the movie, Dumbo

really didn't need the magic feather; he just had to believe in himself. I needed to think about this.

Several years later, I was introduced to digital art and started taking some classes online. I decided that I wanted to have a Facebook page, but I didn't want it to just be my name. I wanted to create a business name. I called that same friend and explained to her my intent. I asked for help in coming up with a name: "If you were to just let something roll off your tongue right now, what would it be?"

She replied, "A Feather In the Wind," and that is how I began my business. Now that I am in a transition period in my life, called retirement or, for me, semi-retirement, I try to create a piece of art every day and post to an online class that I am enrolled in, My Photo Artistic Life.

Working with my photographs is a part of my day that brings me much joy. To sit down and work with my own photographs and choosing elements or backgrounds allows me to express myself through creativity. I have

Statue in the Clouds



recently been published several times in our digital publication, *Living the Photo Artistic Life Magazine* (<https://issuu.com/thephotoartisticlife/docs/issue55-final?fr=sZjViZTI1ODEw>). My photo, "Statue in the Clouds," is on page 18 of the September issue.

It is my desire to continue to learn and grow creatively and spiritually through this phase of my life. To allow myself to be broken open has brought great rewards.

POETRY AND TRANSCEN- DANCE



Susan McCaslin

My early love of books and reading merged with a fascination for the possibility of entering transcendent dimensions. The book that inspired me most deeply was Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. I wanted to follow rabbits down rabbit holes, step beyond drawn curtains, disappear behind the walls of books into libraries that gave way to fantastical other worlds. My father's suggestion that I should attend more to the beauty of the flowers around me didn't at all diminish my longing to enter these liminal places, these imaginal realms. I became a creature of longing for both the glorious marigolds in our garden and the talking roses in *Wonderland*.

I later realized that life can get problematic when we set our focus on other worlds, higher states of consciousness, heavenly dimensions. By so doing we may allow our deep longings for imaginal (as opposed to merely imaginary in the sense of unreal or made up) places to diminish our awe for and commitment to this world.

Rationalists and materialist thinkers such as Marx and Freud have been rightly skeptical of otherworldly religious systems that promote notions of transcendence that encourage the desire to escape this world. Jung was much more open to ancient esoteric religions and spirituality than Freud, drawing on the insights of psychology to validate what he called the numinous, that which inspires awe, wonder, and openness to the infinite. He, like William Blake and earlier mystics, argued that



Teniel's illustration of the talking roses in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

visionary dream experiences, perceptions of spirit within matter and vice versa, issue from subtle or intermediary realms where what we perceive as spirit and matter participate in a cosmic dance.

Some philosophical materialists wedded to linear thinking assume that investing in imaginal worlds can pull our attention away from the here and now, from our bodies, the beauty of our individual incarnations, each other, and issues of social injustice. And it's true that extreme attention

to the otherworldly can lead to psychic imbalance and a failure to remain in harmony with Planet Earth.

Yet, in my own journey, I've found that setting the material world against invisible realms constitutes a false dualism. We are creatures of multiple, interconnected dimensions, dream states – beings who dance between and within both time and eternity. The early-twentieth-century paleontologist and Jesuit priest Teilhard de Chardin developed a cosmic theology unlike theories of the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment materialists. He argued a dynamic correlation between matter and spirit. Teilhard's union of science and mystical theology led him to define transcendence as entering a creative evolutionary process, constantly moving through all things, including Planet Earth and us.

Since early times humans have asked, "What is really real? What is Ultimate Being?" Are there worlds that are "real" within and beyond what we know through our five senses? These are what philosophers call ontological questions. Very young children swim in ontological waters, wondering where things came from, how we got here, and where our spirits or souls go after we die. Shamanic peoples, psychics, philosophers and mystics

have wondered, Do we have the equivalent of embodied forms in the divine unity? Is matter a lower form of life than spirit or is spirit all encompassing? Are spirit and matter really of the same essence? How is it that scientific reasoning seems to have been split off from morality and imagination? How do we get them back together? Poets and artists of all kinds too have long pondered the question, “Where do the poems (and other art forms) come from?” Where does the inspiration come from?

When I was a child, I heard the biblical story of how when Abraham met God on the mount, Abraham wanted to know God’s name, and God answered, “I AM. Say I AM sent you.” No images, no words – just pure nameless Being. I AM, the ultimate dance and dancer in Judaism, is essentially unnameable. “Ultimate Being,” or what various religions have called God, the Goddess, Yahweh, Allah, Holy One, Beloved, Friend, *Ousia* (Greek: essential being), is simply “isness” beyond gender divisions, concepts, words, names and images.

Yet, if we are embedded in a culturally constructed reality where matter and spirit are sharply divided — matter bad, spirit good — we can be tempted to want to escape to this unified world of spirit. I’ve been aware of the *Left Behind* series of novels (which later were produced as films), where the “Bible-believing” Christians are “raptured” to heaven “in the twinkling of an eye,” leaving the unsaved behind. A song from the seventies, popular in Christian circles, by evangelical pop performer Larry Norman, “I wish we’d all been ready,” expresses regret that those who do not accept Jesus as Lord will be “left behind.” One of my friends was so traumatized by this form of apocalyptic preaching that she would enter her home as a teen trembling, because she feared her family had been “translated” and she totally abandoned. Literalistic, dualistic theology (the notion that one is either saved or damned) can lead to self-denigration, self-enclosure and severe trauma, and result in the othering of



Celeste Snowber Dancing (photo credit: Chris Randle).

the others who are deemed unsaved.

More recently, I've tried to be more present to the public domain by encouraging poets to bring attention to habitat loss and destruction in my local neighbourhood. I realized how the practice and presence of poetry and the other creative arts can open us individually and communally to more holistic and meaningful ways of being-in-the-world. I've experienced how writing and sharing poetry have the power to expand our aesthetic and moral imaginations through empathy and compassion rather than "othering" and destruction. When we are fully engaged in moving towards unified being, the public and private domains

are no longer perceived as separate.

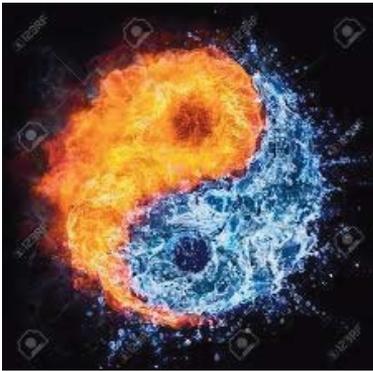
My desire to become a poet from the time I first read William Blake's short lyrics from *Songs of Innocence* at the age of six has led to my experience of creativity as a dance. Poetry dances and sings, praises and laments, as the qualities of the nine Muses of ancient Greece (including Terpsichore, Muse of Dance) make clear.

Poetry dances us into and beyond the small self into a vaster Self. In Hinduism these complementary aspects of being, Atman (individual soul) and Brahman (cosmic soul), are essentially one. The twentieth-century contemplative monk Thomas Merton argues that contemplation and action are a holy (holistic) process, a form of play, a cosmic dance. He writes, "Yet the fact remains that we are invited to forget ourselves on purpose, cast our awful solemnity to the winds and join in the general dance."

Celeste Snowber, PhD, is a dancer, poet and educator, and a professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon

Fraser University. Celeste has written extensively on embodiment and continues to create site-specific performances in the natural world.

As an emerging poet in my early twenties, I began to experience how outer and inner realities converse and converge in the many forms of art, whether visual, spoken, sung, danced or written. The ladder of being becomes a living spiral that gently (and through life's difficulties) lifts the artist (and we are all potential creative artists) from mere self-expression to art-making, which transcends or goes beyond the ego – the diminished, self-enclosed, self-centred self.



Yin-Yang transcendence

The Heart Sutra of Mahayana Buddhism ends with these compelling words: “Go, go, go beyond.” For me this “going beyond” implies transcending dualism. In Buddhism, this growth leads to an embracing of *sunyata*, often translated as “emptiness.” However, the fertile “emptiness” of the divine is not a void, but a place from which all things emerge, a place of release from the noise of the ego into a state where we experience our interconnectedness with the whole. In poem-making, *sunyata* can be found in the spaces, the pauses, the silences between lines that ground the images and words in an inclusive transcendental.

When exploring some of the Eastern streams of perennial wisdom, I discovered the Taoist teacher Lao Tzu who, according to legend, spoke of the Tao – the flow, the larger wholeness, a dynamic, ever-changing Way that (paradoxically) cannot be described or spoken. Yet Lao Tzu's sayings are short meditative poems that suggest what the Tao is as through metaphor. The word metaphor means “to carry [or ferry] across.” Poetry relies on images, metaphor, paradox, musicality to carry us across to this unspeakable unity. We can't name or fix this all-inclusive transcendence, but we can allow it to enter us, move in and through us. When we begin to enact the flow of the Tao, the Way, Creative Spirit in our lives,

Susan McCaslin is a BC poet who has published fifteen volumes of poetry, including *Into the Open: Poems New and Selected* (Inanna, 2017). She has recently published a multi-genre book of creative non-fiction in collaboration with J.S Porter, *Superabundantly Alive: Thomas Merton's Dance with the Feminine* (Wood Lake, 2018). Susan resides in Fort Langley, British Columbia where she initiated the Han Shan Poetry Project as part of a successful campaign to protect an endangered rainforest along the Fraser River. Susan can be found dancing with trees, her dog Rosie, and the poems that flow in when and where they will. www.susanmccaslin.ca

Sophia (Holy Wisdom) reveals herself as love, both personal and transpersonal (cosmic). We are both the emptiness (Sanskrit: sunyata) and the fullness (Greek: pleroma); we are both somebodies and nobodies. The divine is the Self hidden within us yet also in other people and life forms. It goes beyond us but includes us.

Thanks to a number of amazing teachers who appeared at crucial stages in my life, I have come to yearn more and more for Being-in-the-one-world, the one universe that is both here and beyond, self and beyond self. *Transcendance* involves being part of a vast energy field that moves through us as we move into its yin/ yang dance.

Participating in direct experience of the numinous and entering a state of “radical amazement” (Rabbi Abraham Heschel) is always possible. Yet, what matters even more than cooperating with the process of our own creative transformation is how we participate in the dance of the planet and the one world of which we are all vital parts. We are here not only to develop our own consciousness and creativity, but to help free the creative powers of others who have been abused, damaged, diminished by the evils of our greed-driven, power-driven social and political systems. When the boundaries between us and Gaia, the advantaged and the disadvantaged begin to fall, the joy of creative freedom increases and the “kingdom (kinship) of heaven” is revealed without, within and beyond our wildest imaginings, saying, “Behold, I make all things new.”

PIECES OF ME

Jane Eamon



“They say if it don’t kill you
It can only make you strong
And with this broken vessel
They’ll be beauty in the flaws”
– Jane Eamon, *Broken Things*

I wrote these words trying to make sense of my life.

On Christmas Day 2014, my husband had a stroke. On February 26, 2015, my father passed away suddenly of cancer. On May 28, 2017, my husband was diagnosed with stage 4 metastatic prostate cancer. On January 18, 2018 I released my eighth studio album, *Pieces of Me*.

No one gives you instructions on how to navigate life’s challenges. There’s no manual saying if your husband has a stroke, do this. If your parent dies, turn to page 5. Dealing with cancer, please read chapter 12. Would it have helped? Maybe. But more often it felt like I’d been thrown into the deep end not knowing how to swim.

So I wrote. It’s how I process things. I write about them. I write until I feel better. Sometimes there’s music, sometimes it’s just words. This time I wrote an album, *Pieces of Me*. I knew I wanted to talk about what I was feeling, but I wanted to be real. I wanted to find the truth buried in my feelings and maybe understand them a little better.

When we got the cancer diagnosis, it was my husband’s 62nd birthday. I was on my way to a retreat in Kimberley. I didn’t want to go, I wanted to stay home. But I also wanted to get away. But... I spent the weekend in my hotel room writing.

“I’m gonna strip away every single layer
Till I’m left with skin and bone



Back again

Jane Eamon is a lauded songwriter and musician. She has received several accolades: five Okanagan Music Awards, countless nominations, Socan Songwriter of the Year, lead writer for the 2005 Centennial Song for the City of Kelowna, two finalist spots in the Mountain Stage NewSong Contest, numerous honourable mentions and runner-up awards in many international songwriting contests, and the only Canadian spot as a finalist in the Kerrville Newfolk Competition of 2011. *Pieces of Me* was written after a needed hiatus from a busy career into a time of self-exploration. The album marks Jane's return. Visit www.janeeamon.net to hear this album.

Wait until the next thing grabs my jugular”

– Jane Eamon, *Bottom of the Barrel*

I was at the bottom. But it was where I felt hope.

I spent the next few months choosing my words, crying on paper with my words. They were personal. It was hard work. Getting this stuff out stripped everything from me until I could look at what things were, not how they felt.

Writing about love in all the ways we say it. Writing about songwriting and how hard it seemed to be. Writing about my dad and how much I missed my time with him. Writing about myself and how I built this character, who I am with wood, stone and glass. It was cathartic. It felt so good.

Could I do it again? I'm not sure. All the ingredients were right – Andrew Smith at Lake Studios, the players, the choice of songs, the time. It was all right. These songs were what I had gone through, and felt of a piece. They were connected. In all their flaws and all their beauty, I found some peace and more than a little grace. This is what I hoped for.

“In all the cracked and broken places

I will cover you with gold

So the scars that you have

Will shine bright and bold

And the hurt you feel

Will be a story to be told”

– Jane Eamon, *Broken Things*

One of my songs says, “The problem with truth, when I finally find it, the tears start to come and I can't see the page.” Yup, that's about it too. My album, *Pieces of Me*, speaks to the very soul of me, the heartbreak, the anguish, the love and the grief.

REMEMBER FORWARD



Penn Kemp,
photo by Molly Miksa

Penn Kemp

“A good life is like a weaving. Energy is created in the tension. The struggle, the pull and tug are everything”

Joan Erikson

Creativity is a dance between self and others. At its most glorious, it is transcendence, beyond the personal self, beyond age and aging. The necessary tension of creativity is also excitement: the pull between the solitude essential for an art like poetry to be created, and the community needed for its performance, its acknowledgement, its acceptance. Like dance, creativity requires caring, sometimes subtle communication and collaboration.

In “Remembering Forward,” I look back nearly fifty years on several generations of women poets. In the early seventies, as I was coming of age as a poet, the trail-blazing poets I was reading were not dead Englishmen. They were contemporary women, writing about present concerns that I didn’t realize it was possible to articulate, let alone discuss publicly. I wanted to get to know these poets’ works better, and if possible to get to know them as well. The wonder was that I was not alone, however solitary the work seemed. Can Lit was not yet a thing, but Canadian women were writing.

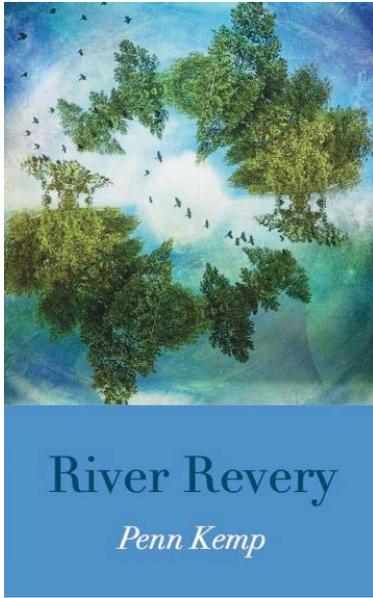
For me, poetry is the way to “*transcendence*,” the way to move to a place beyond the ordinary boundaries of mere existence. In the seventies, aeons before Facebook and Gmail, I had the opportunity to meet a group of women poets who lived scattered across the country. For the next several decades, we wrote letters, we wrote postcards, in what we called “*correspondance*”. That dance

of intimate communication from distant parts was a life-line for this young poet: I was struggling to make sense of a life committed to poetry above all. To connect with other such seekers through the mail was a salve and a boon. In writing one another, we shared all the details of our lives and our art more closely than if we had been neighbours having coffee. The printed word allowed our souls to speak their truths of the moment, without resorting to social necessities. In our words, we could rise above the humdrum and dance the spiral dance of life. We could try out new forms; we could offer one another newly-birthered poems; we could dare, knowing we would be supported by peers. Such mutual support, be it warnings and/or advice, comforted me in the often lonely pursuit of the poem. None of us was alone.

In 1973, after the publication of my first book, *Bearing Down* (Coach House, 1972), I edited *IS 14*, the first anthology of women's writing in Canada, also published by Coach House. *IS 14* contained writing by such luminaries as Daphne Marlatt and Carole Itter É and a cartoon by Margaret Atwood. In *IS 14*, I wanted to highlight and honour the women writers I admired. *IS 14* did *not* contain writing by beloved American poet Denise Levertov, who wrote me an admonition against exclusively publishing women. She did not believe in such separation, which she interpreted as segregation. Feminism has many faces, and even more interpretations.

How to meet these poets in person, I wondered. Why not start a reading series and invite them to come? I hosted readings at A Space, one of the first artist-run galleries, in Toronto. This reading series, an early one in Canada, ran for years from 1974 onwards. Here I met women writers I respected who were already widely published. By their words and their presence, my ears were opened to more possibilities in language. I heard powerful poets like Daphne Marlatt, P.K. Page and Phyllis Webb for the first time. We became friends and have

I was struggling to make sense of a life committed to poetry above all. To connect with other such seekers through the mail was a salve and a boon.



Cover, *River Revery* (front)

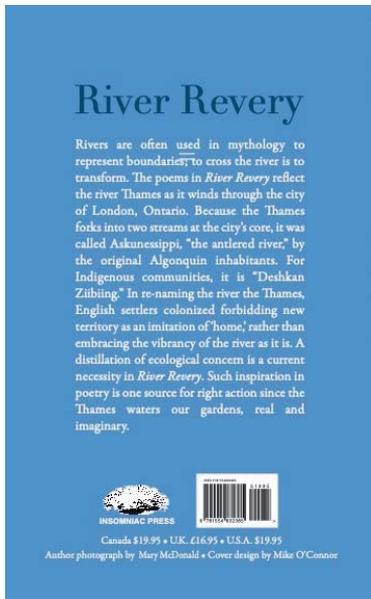
stayed in touch for the decades since, visiting back and forth. Older writers influenced my work by opening my eyes and ears to new writing. Mentoring between generations is such a gift.

An important mode for connecting feminists was, and still is, publishing. Endorsements were one way established poets supported younger generations. In 1984, Libby Oughton (Gynergy Books/Ragweed Press) published my book, *Binding Twine*, with endorsements from Joy Kogawa and Phyllis Webb. Margaret Lawrence and Alice Munro wrote kind letters of support and blurbs. A favourite blurb was P.K. Page's for my collection of poems, *Trance Form*: "Read it with three eyes. Though two will do." Now it's my turn to write endorsements, and I do.

As well, I do what I can to celebrate new, astonishingly gifted, diverse poets who are now publishing. I remind myself, Creativity is a dance between self and others. As poet laureate and writer-in-residence, I have worked with talented young feminists like multimedia story-teller Mary McDonald, who came to my 2010 residency in writing at Western University. *River Revery* is a multimedia collaboration between Mary McDonald and myself, commingling my environmental poetry on the Thames River with Mary's photo art, music, multimedia animation and transmedia storytelling; see www.riverrevery.ca.

At the 1992 League of Canadian Poets AGM, 10 poets were celebrated as foremothers of Canadian poetry. I was honoured to be among such stellar poets as Lillian Allen, P.K. Page and Miriam Waddington. Several of those writers are no longer with us, but Lillian and I certainly are: we performed together, sounding in National Poetry Month 2019, at Day of the Poets, in Orangeville, ON. Young women tell us that they are inspired by hearing poets, who could be their (grand)mothers, emote so vocally – and vociferously.

Intergenerational feminism is celebrated through



River Revery (back)

the League of Canadian Poets Living Archives. Because publications are vital connective tissue between generations, I've participated in many anthologies in the series that includes *Sisters in Spirit* and *Illegitimate Positions*. For Toronto's Writers' Summit (Harbourfront, 2016), I edited two more anthologies: *Performing Women* and *Women and Multimedia* that featured innovative young poets like Moe Clark and Charlie Petch, and older, vibrantly performing writers like Di Brandt, Susan McMaster and Sheri-D Wilson. Such poets continue to explore new media, no matter their age. My own most recent collaboration is *P.S.*, a collection of poems written by Sharon Thesen and myself throughout 2018. *P.S.* will be published by Kalamalka Press in the spring of 2020.

The ongoing, invigorating energy of curiosity and innovation sends shivers up and down the spine of generations of poets: a two-way current of generous encouragement that continues to prompt exciting new, diverse work. Inspiration travels both ways, and I'm grateful to have witnessed such transformation through the decades. Can Lit lives in the poetry scenes across the nation. A cluster, a clutter, a collection of new poems sparks joy.

As well, I could describe the importance of collaboration in another of my chosen fields, the theatre. For me, a play is a collective endeavour, with a more overtly political theme than poetry. But it is equally transcendent. For example, my first play, *The Epic of Toad and Heron*, was written to save Toronto Island homes from the bulldozer in 1977. Working with director extraordinaire Anne Anglin, we produced my plays on abortion, on my father's death, and sound operas based on my poetry, like *Trance Dance Form* and *Animus*. I've written and produced eight such sound operas, performed at Aeolian Hall, Western University, colleges and galleries across Canada. A DVD of one such performance is called *Luminous Entrance: A Sound Opera for Climate Change Action*.



In Conversation”

But I am finding such multi-faceted collective efforts more tiring as I age.

However, the necessity to promote climate change action still inspires me. Most recently, I participated in a reading, “In Conversation,” with the visionary Diana Beresford-Kroeger at Wordsfest.ca, Museum London. She was launching her new book *To*

Speak for the Trees; I was launching *River Revery* (Insomniac Press). Our energy for such causes is palpable.

At seventy-five, I’ve found to my surprise that though physical energy is more limited, soul growth is more deeply rooted, literally, in my garden. With age, the connection with “gerotransendance” continues more fully as I return to the poem and its possibility for articulating mystery. The dance continues with other dimensions, other realms of knowing as partners. The dance continues in the interplay between the unknown *É* and the right words in the right order that is the poem.

Penn Kemp, poet, performer and playwright, has been lauded as a trailblazer, “a poetic El Niño” and a “one-woman literary industry.” A keen participant in Canada’s cultural life, she was London’s inaugural Poet Laureate. www.pennkemp.weebly.com.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS & ART MAKING

A TRAINING FOR CREATIVE WELLNESS COACHES

Janet Stalenhoef, MPS, Art Therapist



My experience as a creative arts therapist has given me a strong belief that when people engage in the creative process there is an observable shift in a person's emotional and psychophysiological state that aids wellness. Recently, I presented a workshop to volunteers interested in learning about the requirements and opportunities involved in becoming a Creative Wellness Coach at the Kelowna General Hospital. The mindful practice of art-making offers a unique contribution to people dealing with hospital treatment and stay. There are other ways of entering into focused creative activity, of course, but as an art therapist my intention in this workshop was to facilitate a specific multi-modality expressive arts approach and experiential process, to show how art-making can be beneficial to patients in a hospital setting.

In this process, I emphasized to participants that initially we gather to create and explore the creative process and art making materials through a low skill, high sensitivity approach. We attempt to send the internal art critic away and allow for the free exploration and sensual connection to the materials themselves. It is hoped that this experience leads to an altered emotional state where one can relax, get a break and find the opportunity for personal expression around the challenges that I facilitate.

The creative arts invitation I gave the group was one using oil and chalk pastel, watercolour, glue, scissors,

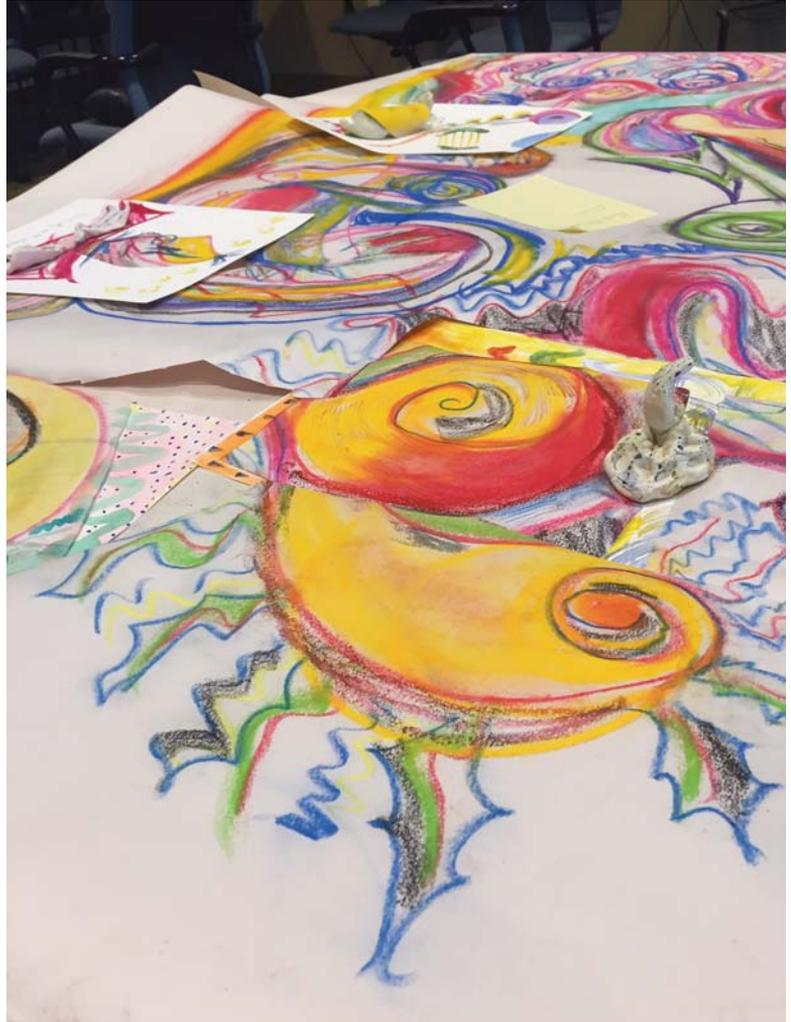


The beginning of the two-hour workshop

molding material, music, paper and pen. The group realized only after the workshop had ended that they had explored a great range of creative art-making modalities through an expressive arts process of intensive, focused play. This is not to suggest that the work that was done was not serious. Quite the contrary, as was expressed in the participants' feedback about the shared experience. The participants described how their observed art pieces and the process of creating them evoked serious personal insights and emotions that were both expected and also, to some, came as a surprise. The group discussed the process and their personal response to it while being held in a safe circle of confidentiality and containment.

We began gathered around a long table and with music as the prompt to change places, similar to that of musical chairs. We explored line, shape and colour to create a community piece of artistic expression and energy. The movement and the dance, taking place with the mark

The final culmination piece



Notice the dance of hands of individuals who have for the most part just met minutes prior to being invited to join the exploration of mark-making on paper.

makers in our hands and participants' laughter, coordinated a freestyle choreography of shifting places around the table.

Notice the dance of hands of individuals who have for the most part just met minutes prior to being invited to join the exploration of mark-making on paper. The paper is a utility brown paper. Using lower grade materials can help to take away some of the intimidation and preconceived contracts around who has the right to make art and what art is. This way we can open the conversation around what is the *process* in art creation versus another objective, that of working with art as the *product*. These objectives are related but separate. Most importantly, engaging the creative process can be described as a means of entry into a transitional mental

and emotional state, and a shift of affect.

The intention of the workshop was to introduce participants, who were also prospective volunteers to be creative coaches for the Creative Wellness program, to explore the expressive arts approach to creative wellness for themselves. This first-hand experience would, I hoped, translate into a deeper understanding, a felt sense of what it is like to drop down into a more relaxed state through engagement with art in a creative process. In addition, participants experienced how engagement in art-making with low expectations of creating a product can better facilitate this transition into a relaxed state, and soothe a highly activated nervous system.

As we ended our group creation, participants were invited to select a small portion, or vignette, from the whole and cut it out to take it away to their own work spaces. They took this morsel of the grand piece and worked independently to continue adding line, shape and colour to expand it. This can be challenging, and encouragement to watch one's hand as it allows the art materials to lead the action sometimes helps. These expanded works were then returned and integrated back into where they were cut from. Time was allowed for the art-making; the room settled into a soft melodic energy, which was palpable and evidenced in the postures of the participants. People seemed relaxed, and at the same time some emotional response was also witnessed. Although not necessarily sought after, emotions can and did surface while the group was engaged in mindful and focused creative processing. The volunteers gained insight from this experience and awareness that patients in the hospital can express a myriad of emotions as a result of their circumstances, and as a result of being in hospital care.

It was also my intention, while facilitating the workshop, that participants explore the notion that expanding the range of creative play through ongoing creative art practice also expands the potential for creative

This first-hand experience would, I hoped, translate into a deeper understanding, a felt sense of what it is like to drop down into a more relaxed state through engagement with art in a creative process.

The invitation to gather in creative activity is an ancient and essential practice. Expressing one's creative urges in community is a defining ability of being human and of being included in a community.

problem-solving overall. It will be the creative coach's role to think creatively and sensitively when inviting patients to join in, as even the invitation to play with materials will be intimidating for some. By experiencing some of these reactions themselves, potential coaches gain a sense that they will need to attune to others who may be unsure and even threatened by the very idea of engaging with art materials. Generally, although they seek connection, companionship and perhaps even distraction, art-making can be unfamiliar and stressful for many. The coach who also draws on her/his own artist self will need to use creative thinking and flexibility to hone their skills of spontaneity and creative problem-solving. As well, coaches will need to understand how to use art materials to aid the dialogue between coach and participant. These skills can be enhanced through continued education opportunities and support of the team offering the Creative Wellness program.

It must be stated that, due to the volunteer status of this program, it must stay within the realm of *art as activity*, and although engaging in art can be therapeutic, this program must ensure it does not cross the line into trying to provide *therapy*. The job description of a Creative Wellness coach needs to be strictly spelled out as that of offering companionship in art making. Stating this to volunteers will also support and identify their role, which should put to rest fears of not being good enough, or not artistic enough to enter into this work. The invitation to gather in creative activity is an ancient and essential practice. Expressing one's creative urges in community is a defining ability of being human and of being included in a community.

The team of Creative Wellness coaches will be focused on helping patients experience and explore creative art-making processes in the Kelowna General Hospital. The creative process/art-making invitation is designed to provide people with various art backgrounds and beliefs

This art technique, which presents as “no technique,” can take someone who believes they have no artistic talent to a world of line, colour, shape and story.

around art practices access to the joy and release of stress experienced when engaged in the act of creating. Through this easily accessible technique, participants are invited to make marks on paper and see where the process leads as it builds. Surprises create wonder. This art technique, which presents as “no technique,” can take someone who believes they have no artistic talent to a world of line, colour, shape and story. It can provide a springboard for communication, for verbal and non-verbal expression relevant to their present circumstances. With engaged, caring coaches, the creative process and art-making make a unique and highly valuable contribution alongside the many and varied health and wellness interventions necessary for people’s overall healing journey.

Janet Stalenhoef has a Master’s degree in Art Therapy and Counselling Psychotherapy, a B.Ed (Early Childhood), and a Liberal Arts certificate. She holds a belief that the creative process has health benefits and promotes wholeness in one’s being. Whether one engages in art making as a form of mindfulness, or for the purpose of journeying closer to our essential self, we enrich our lives by opening up the power of our imagination to discover our own inner insights, and resilience through enhancing self-awareness.

THOUGHTS ON CREATIVITY

BY A FINNISH CANADIAN

Raija Lavanti Gaskell



“A child is born. A new life is starting. We do not know yet what she is going to be. She has big eyes and soft rosy cheeks. She is a Miracle.

Although we never even think about it, this child has everything she needs packed into her little self: specific skills and characteristics combined in such a way that makes her original, like nobody else. She now needs just nurturing and love to develop.

There are three important aspects that will shape her readiness to use these inborn gifts: the experiences she goes through, her surroundings, and the understanding of her elders to let her development flourish.

I was this child with big eyes to see the beauty around me, to see even the smallest objects and create something new and worthwhile from everything I saw, moulding my thoughts and imagination into something peculiar and unique to me.”

I am Raija Lavanti Gaskell. I was born in Finland in 1931. From my perspective of 88 years, I have several thoughts about my life and reasons why I am the person I am, and why, even though experiencing some hardship during my lifetime, I have always found happiness.

My first 7 years were spent in Tampere where I lived with my family. I was the second child of three; we were all girls. Both my parents were artistic, both were good with pen and music. My mother would draw us princesses and my father played the banjo and sang us evening



Snow melting in June between Oslo and Bergen

songs. He'd also make up stories that took our imaginations to faraway and strange places. Mother was also a very good needlewoman. From a very early age, she too urged us to use our imagination. Among our toys she had a box of treasures: scraps of colourful fabric, pieces of wool, needles and scissors – yes, we were allowed to use scissors at a young age.

Our family had a summer place situated on an island where we could roam around, not getting lost in the forest and fields. Nature was our big creative playground. The different shapes of the rocks, the colourful changes of foliage, the blue lake were all part of our world. We loved the red wild strawberries and blueberries that were different shapes and colours, edible mushrooms too.

Unfortunately, this halcyon childhood would end abruptly. We moved to Helsinki, my mother died and the war started – all this just after my eighth birthday. There were a couple of extremely disturbing years: my creative world was gone; our free kind of life was displaced with all kinds of rules, but nobody could take my imagination away, and my creativity saved me.

When my father remarried, our old happy family life started to find a new order, and in no time we three girls had a new brother and then a sister to embrace. My new mother must have understood my urge to do things with my hands, but there was not a lot of understanding of the depth of artistic need in me. Still I found my ways. In school I had a famous artist as my art teacher, and she recognized my talent and supported my growth. I dreamed of being an artist one day. I found my colours and how to use them, and I was able to create pictures and paintings in my own way. I put myself in them, I was happy.

After high school graduation in 1951, it was time to plan my life ahead. I decided to apply to Helsingin

During John's and my extended trips to different countries in Europe, Tunisia, and Fiji, I eagerly soaked in the colours, scenery and smells to later use them in my monoprints and acrylic paintings when I returned home.

käsityönopettaja opisto, part of Helsinki University. This school was a highly regarded school in Finland, and I was very pleased to be accepted. The program consisted of four years of study and then a practicum teaching in a high school in Helsinki. We learned technical skills as well as to give consideration to one's own imagination and designing ideas. The second year was dedicated to loom weaving. That was heaven! I was there like a fish in the pond using my own creativity, designing skills and understanding of colour. In the last two years you had to show your technical proficiency, but most importantly to show your personality in your productions and learn how to teach, and in such a way that they would make students be interested in learning.

In 1955, I graduated as a Textile teacher, and my real life began. I taught in a big secondary school for girls, aged 11 to 19. I always told every one of them that we all have the skills to do things and that everything that we do should carry something of us in what we create. I was a teacher for about 17 years; during that time my own creativity was sleeping. Although I designed and made my own dresses, did some small jewellery projects and learned to do Batik, my yearning was to paint, design and do some art weaving. In 1963 I applied for an Asla-Fulbright graduate grant to go and study the school system in the USA. I was chosen to be one of the lucky ones from Finland. Because I was interested in the pottery, silver work and weaving the Indians make, I was happy to find myself in Tucson at the University of Arizona to do my research.

Holidaying with friends in Greece, my world turned upside down. On a little motor boat called Amor, going from Crete to Santorini, I met an Englishman who had emigrated to Canada. He was 10 years older with adult children. We fell in love, married, and I moved to Canada in 1974. Now was the time to pursue my dreams for my art because John was always completely supportive. We



Top: *Homage to Vasarelli*

lived in Kitchener, Ontario, and Wilfrid Laurier University was waiting for me. I graduated with my BA in fine arts in 1977. After graduation I first joined the Potters Workshop and fulfilled one of my dreams. I continued making pottery for several years. Next I created a Textile Art Class and taught part-time at WLU, introducing weaving as an art form, and teaching summer classes in acrylic painting until John retired.

With support from my husband and professors who had become friends and believed in me and my talent, I was able to build my own painting and weaving practices. During John's and my extended trips to different countries in Europe, Tunisia, and Fiji, I eagerly soaked in the colours, scenery and smells to later use them in my monoprints and acrylic paintings when I returned home.

Always my travels influenced my art making. Once in Norway, taking a train in the middle of the summer, John and I were both intrigued with the sight of people carrying skis and dressed in some skiing outfits. Soon we saw the nice green tree leaves were changing to white, and snow was covering the landscape as we went up the mountain. From this experience I have tree weavings in black and white, quite large, about 60 inches by 40 or so.

Some of my weavings were purchased by WLU for its permanent collections. Some of my works have found new homes in the USA, Australia, Germany and Finland, as well as Canada.



Top: Is this it?

Middle above: Sadness

Middle below: Awakening

Above: Judges' Prize, Waves,

2017 Japanese Calligraphy

Competition Canada

It was pleasing when I started to have my work exhibited, sometimes with other artists, but mostly I had one-woman shows around Ontario. It must have been in one of my shows that somebody saw my nice transparency weaving *Homage to Vasarelli* and another weaving called *Timepiece*.

I was contacted and asked to give these two works to an art exhibit that travelled all over Canada. To my surprise, the works had been juried and *Vasarelli* brought home Gold, and *Timepiece* Silver. Through the years I have had quite a few of my works appreciated with similar honours.

After my husband died, I found comfort in acrylic painting.

Now I am doing mostly Japanese calligraphy with Noriko Maeda, a famous Japanese artist. Strange, how soothing it is to do these black on white paintings after all the colour I used. These paintings seem to be simple and easy to do, but on the contrary, although you have a sample to follow, you are not supposed to copy it. Instead, you have to make a personal illusion of the sign so that a Japanese can read what it means, but also make it your own unique creation. Revealing my own spirit in my art has always been important to me. I believe you must "Follow your own intuition, but know designing needs high spirited skills."

My reflective story of the complex course my creativity has taken me is meant to show that, in the end, I arrived where that child that was me is meant to be – an artist using all the gifts I was bestowed with at birth. That is the pleasure of being me. A gift of aging is reflection and seeing the process. I am happy to have and still be able to use my imagination – to create and use my head and hands at this age. I even learn something new now and then.

Everybody has a longing to create something; you just have to have the courage to fulfill your desires.

EDUCATION AS AN ART

RECOGNIZING 100 YEARS OF WALDORF EDUCATION

Janet Goldammer



The much lauded book *The Gift*, written in 1983 by Lewis Hyde, is referred to as a modern classic. In it, Hyde champions the value of creativity and its importance in a culture increasingly governed by money and overrun with commodities. Imagination is unique to human beings.

To help us navigate along the spiritual road as human beings we have been given creative spirit and the ability to create art. I think using this ability is partly our mission as human beings – to trust the integrity of our creative spirit, whichever way it chooses to be expressed. Our creative energy doesn't have to mean making traditional art, but it does mean expressing one's authentic self in some capacity. Art is a clear expression of will. If we don't nurture our creativity, our imaginations, our spirits, our souls suffer.

It is apparent that we are living in this current age of intellect and technology, but we need to ask ourselves, How do I engage my heart? When you have a relationship with art you experience yourself in a deeper way; in authentic art, you engage your heart. It's not about whether you accurately replicate the world around you, or even if you're a good artist or not. It's about trust and keeping alive your sense of curiosity and wonder about what can happen. In its most literal sense, education means becoming developed from inside to outside.

Thus, education is the process of developing the inner abilities of individuals. The term "education" is also

connected with the Latin *E*, meaning “out,” and *duc re*, meaning to “lead out.”

The first Waldorf school was founded in 1919, 100 years ago, in Stuttgart, Germany, following the First World War. Curriculum was based on the concepts of Rudolf Steiner, and grew out of concern for the future of Germany’s youth. The aim of the school was to serve the developmental needs of children and adolescents, to enable them to become sensitive and whole persons who would not repeat the tragedy of a world war. The Waldorf method given us by Steiner requires great sensitivity and self-awareness on the part of the educator and the instructor’s willingness to grow along with the children, coupled with a faith in the capacity of humankind for transformation.

Steiner recognized the fact that, if society was to become more peaceful, it would need to help children to leave behind the old modes of thinking and develop capacities that would help them to forge a brighter future in the modern world. If these children were to transform society, they would need to be taught in a new way – a way that addressed their essential humanity and enhanced their concern for other people, as well as fostering a sense of responsibility for the earth. Steiner’s Waldorf School envisioned an education that would cultivate student’s artistic abilities, develop their practical skills and allow them to adapt to a rapidly changing world. Waldorf education is a philosophy based on a developmental approach that addresses the needs of the growing child and maturing adolescents. The concepts behind Waldorf philosophy reflect the evolution of consciousness in the development of our society at large.

My ex-husband, Deitrich, was born in communist East Germany to parents who were secretive adherents of anthroposophy, the philosophy behind Waldorf schooling. Deitrich escaped and came to Canada at the age of 19, and eventually pursued a career in West Coast

To wonder at beauty
Stand guard over truth
Look up to the noble,
Resolve on the good
This leadeth man truly
To purpose in living
To right in his doing
To peace in his feeling
To light in his thinking,
And teaches him trust
In the working of God
In all that there is
In the widths of the world
In the depth of the soul.
– Rudolf Steiner



Roger's photo of his property and a new nature-inspired sculpture show his sensitivity to natural beauty in his environment

Architectural Style or design. His freethinking creative stream runs back to his ancestors and has carried forward into the lives of our family. One highlight in his life was designing a gyrocopter, a type of rotorcraft that uses an unpowered rotor in autorotation to develop lift. His

invention was displayed in the Canadian pavilion, *Man The Producer*, at Expo 67 in Montreal.

I was originally a registered nurse, but after marrying I became enamoured with anthroposophy and eventually trained as a Waldorf teacher. I was a lead teacher of the Kelowna Waldorf school and, now in my seventies, I am still a strong proponent of the international Waldorf education movement. My life has been enriched by having been introduced to anthroposophy and the many people involved with its offshoots, including Waldorf education. Today, I continue to express my creativity in work with felt, watercolours, puppets and gardening. Now my delight is seeing the creativity of my three children and my grandchildren.

When our children were beginning their education, my husband and I, both Waldorf inspired, wanted our children to benefit from an education based on that philosophy. We were one of the founding families of the Vancouver Waldorf grade school, which our children attended.

Recently, Karen Close visited Roger, my son, at his workshop/studio on Kelowna's south slopes overlooking ripe vineyards and the beautiful Okanagan Lake. Knowing of her visit gave me the opportunity to reflect on the benefits of our decision to educate our children in the Waldorf system.

Roger, for most of his life, has had a passion for designing and building custom motorcycles. He has turned a hobby into a number of creative businesses and is known throughout the world as a premier bike builder. Along with numerous other bike shows, my son won the World Championships of Custom Bike Building in its



Top: "Goldmember," the bike that set a land speed record at the Bonneville salt flats and won the 2008 World Championships of Custom Bike Building, as well as the Artistry in Iron invitational bike show in Las Vegas.

Above: Goldmember before paint, how it looked as it was raced

inaugural year of 2004, in 2005 and again in 2008. When I asked him about these wins he said, "One can't help but be somewhat influenced by trends or what others are doing, but I would look at what was out there, or even what I had built in the past, and take note of what I liked and didn't like, learn from my wrong turns, and just build what I truly wanted to build ... yes, the competitions were motivation, but it really is the great feeling of seeing creation come to life from this vision in your head ... that was and is the big motivator."

Roger has also been involved in the manufacturing of wooden

disposable cutlery, the designing of walls for containing pollution around heavy industry, designing and creating flowing nature forms from various metals as well as many other creative outlets where he employs his genius for invention, design and artistic creation. His creativity seems to be only limited by the number of hours in the day. He has received numerous awards and accolades; his unique designs compete successfully at an international level.

Although Roger does not claim a direct link between his business today to his early education, it seems obvious that it played a role in his love of creative expression, his unbridled inventiveness, and his unique abilities for design and implementation. His education gave him a love of beauty, and his creations define beauty for him in his own terms. It is pleasing that he also gives credit to his parents and their encouragement and mentoring.

Waldorf education has spread throughout the world, forming one of the world's largest independent school



"Trouble," the winner of these competitions in 2005

To educate youth
Is to foster and tend
In matter – the spirit
In today – the tomorrow
In earthly life – the spirit's
existence.
– Rudolph Steiner

systems. This year marks the centennial of the opening of its first school. Rudolf Steiner was born in 1861 in Kraljevi, Austria; he died in 1925, just six years after the first Waldorf school opened its doors. This spiritualist, lecturer and founder of anthroposophy created first a movement based on his notion that a spiritual perception is independent of the senses; rather, he believed spirit is nurtured by knowledge produced by the higher self in man. Steiner had influence in so many different fields. Today many people are applying his theories of biodynamic agriculture and homeopathy. Although Roger's creativity has taken him down a unique path, central to his vision is a determination to find within himself innovative answers to what he observes needs fixing, and to do it with style.

In the curriculum of Waldorf schools, the focus for early childhood is on beauty and nature. Then, from kindergarten to Grade 8, the curriculum acknowledges the evolving, deepening consciousness of each child. This corresponds to the ancient understanding of how children become progressively more self-aware based on humanity's history.

Steiner's theories were a gift to furthering understanding of the world and of being human. However, he would not give advice until people were open to receive, until they had formulated questions and were willing to seek answers. Those who are curious are open. We need to be curious, ask the right questions, be grateful and be creative. That is the art in education.

THE PLEASURES OF A NEW SEASON



Warren Johnson

We have had our season of abundance, have feasted on a bountiful harvest, and all things considered, it was an extraordinary experience. But if we fail to see that the season is turning, and recklessly plant seeds only to see them killed by the cold blasts of the winter of industrial civilization, then spring will be the cruelest time, and afflicted by privation and strife rather than a time of new life and hope.

Autumn is a different season, and even though it may not appeal to the youthful exuberance of this nation, it has its own pleasures. It is a quieter time, one of reflection, to think about seasons past and those to come that will have their own significance and sources of hope. That will include the seasons that have long been valued in the East but were foreign to our expectations of unending growth and progress and an eternal spring.

The Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu (Laozi) offers a clear expression of this way of seeing life in his classic work, *The Tao-Te-Ching*:

When they have reached their bloom, each returns to its origins. Returning to their origin means rest, or fulfillment of destiny. This reversion is an eternal law. To know that law is wisdom.

To fear change is a very human thing.

Change threatens much of what is important to us, but in fact there are assurances, of a sort anyway. Things that are lost do not just disappear into a void; something takes their place. And it is not only the good things that

April is the cruelest month.
– T. S. Eliot, *The Wasteland*

When in April the sweet
showers fall
And pierce the drought
of March to the root,
And all the veins are bathed in
liquor of such power
As brings about the engendering
of the flowers ...
Then people long to go on
pilgrimages.
– Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

will be lost, but unpleasant things will go too.

If the disease and wealth of industrial society are reduced, so will its traffic, noise, pollution, and toxic wastes. Reduced mobility will mean a more constricted world, but we will know it more intimately in the smaller scaled world we live in, both its natural and cultural components. Less use of fossil fuels would mean more physical work but would leave us healthier and with cleaner air, and more in control of our basic needs, rather than being dependent on huge corporations and governments. It was the less affluent and mobile world of the past that led to the enjoyment of simple pleasures, the ones which today are no match for the garish ones advertised so insistently.

We have grown insensitive to the simpler pleasures of the senses, of being able to enjoy the beauty of a single flower, a piece of fruit harvested from a tree, the smell of fresh baked bread when hungry, or water when thirsty, the smell of a summer shower, or the sounds of children laughing. Such things were deemed to have little value in the age of excess, but what enjoyments does the consumer society have to offer that are as satisfying? These instinctive pleasures do more than simply feel good; they feel right – there is no question of whether they are the correct thing to do. None have to be learned, and they are available to everyone. But this was their problem in our society; they were not exclusive – no one could be excluded from enjoying them – and so our society accorded them no status, and they have been all but forgotten.

But these are the simple pleasures. What about the spectacular ones; the supreme experiences of life whatever the words used to describe them, such as joy, ecstasy, fulfillment, or simply happiness? This is of course an intensely personal matter as well as a complex one.

In the rush of our lives, we often fail to think about such things, but it is important to stop for a moment and consider what have been the best moments in our lives,

Fear is the cheapest room
in the house.
I would like to see you living
In better conditions.
– Hafiz, Persian poet

The spirit of this age, dominated as it is by individual success, only serves to work against the things that make us feel good.

the ones to be savoured time and time again.

Poets, the religious, and others who are willing to bare their souls on these matters usually speak of them as experiences of unity or oneness – with nature, with another person when in love, or the spiritual unity of all life in a religious experience. Even scientists, when making a great discovery, speak of the experience as everything falling into place, of unity or oneness. Perhaps this simply reflects the orientation of those who put their feelings onto paper, but still it is striking how rarely there are statements of individual achievement or winning over competitors. Is this because we are modest? It hardly seems likely in this age when anything can be said or claimed. The more likely explanation is that winning separates the winner from the others, breaks the unity that is the source of satisfactions and happiness. The spirit of this age, dominated as it is by individual success, only serves to work against the things that make us feel good, creating isolation and a bewildered kind of suffering instead of happiness.

One of the early studies dealing with happiness was done by Bernard Rimland and described in *Psychological Reports* (1982, Vol. 51). He first asked college students to list the people they knew best, then asked them to note whether they were happy or unhappy, and after this was done, to note whether each were selfish or not, with selfishness being defined as a stable tendency to devote their time to their own interests and, in so doing, to be too busy to help others. Only 78 selfish people were reported to be happy, compared to 827 unselfish people. Rimland comments:

The findings represent an interesting paradox: selfish people are, by definition, those whose activities are devoted to bringing themselves happiness. Yet, at least as judged by others, these selfish people are far less likely to be happy than those whose efforts are devoted to making others happy.

Even with all the wealth generated during the last decades, people in modern societies rarely see themselves as wealthy.

Why selflessness and feelings of oneness and unity should be so satisfying after centuries of conditioning in just the opposite direction is an interesting question.

We all know how good it feels to help other people, even those we never see again. It almost has the quality of an instinct about it, of feeling right. Could this be the result of the long ago era when hunters and gatherers had to share to survive? This obligation to share is universally reported in the earliest contacts with hunter-gatherers as well as in the remaining tribes that still exist.

Those groups of individuals that did not share, did not survive, thereby extinguishing the “selfish genes.”

We were left with the “sharing genes,” the ones we are frustrating in our individualistic and acquisitive way of life. These could very well provide us with the greatest pleasures of the new season, of helping others and being helped in return.

The New Wealth

Even with all the wealth generated during the last decades, people in modern societies rarely see themselves as wealthy. There is always someone else who has things we don't have, things that made them clearly rich but not us. To think so much about what we do not have rather than what we are blessed with can be blamed on the values of the consumer society, but even so, it is not flattering of us. Even after indulging ourselves, we still feel we need more to be happy.

Rather than endless yearning for what cannot be, we could realize that we have a great deal, and the key is to use well what we have.

Most of our wealth today is based on the oil and gas still left in the ground; it is what makes our machines useful. As these fuels are depleted, or global warming forces us to use ever less of them, much of what we have built for ourselves will lose value, and that is bound to hurt.

And yet, the time to build anew is now, while energy

is still available to build with, but this is difficult in such an ambiguous time.

It is hard to build around renewable resources, for example, when there is still oil in the ground and the industrial economy has power left in it. And the machines are alluring. Just as with television, computers, and cell phones, it's easy to sit back and let them work for us; they demand so little, physically, intellectually, and emotionally. Or at least so it seems, until we remember that we are dependent on the machines and have organized our lives around them, so they can work as efficiently as possible, regardless of the impact on people.

Hard realities are already cutting into the world we know, and because of this, there are bridges being built between the old ways and the new. To find a job, it will be increasingly necessary to make it oneself, to be self-employed. In order to build, it will be increasingly necessary to build on a smaller scale with simpler tools and materials, perhaps even by hand, but certainly in a way that is both less expensive and more permanent.

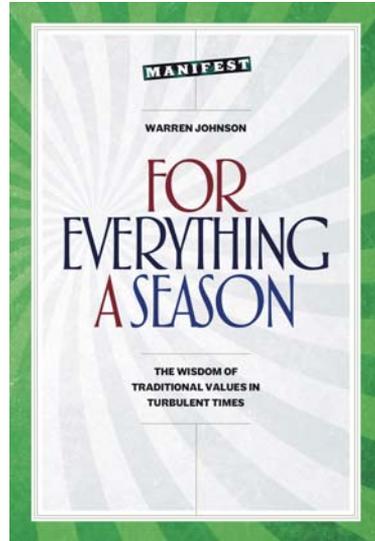
Our opportunity is to build with the help of friends, rather than through loan officers, contractors, labour unions, and bureaucrats. It means to work hard, yes, and to see things go slowly, but to be free of heavy debts and worries about how they will be paid. And it means to have the confidence of knowing that our work will have value, no matter what happens in the mainstream economy.

In doing this, we distance ourselves from the industrial economy and become less concerned with a national debt grown to unmanageable size, less concerned with government policies that can make or break one's job or business, or an economic collapse that could ruin one's hopes for the future.

But the most important reason to move toward sustainable ways is simply because it means a better life, less affluent, true, but richer in other ways, richer in the more important ways.

But the most important reason to move toward sustainable ways is simply because it means a better life, less affluent, true, but richer in other ways, richer in the more important ways.

Warren Johnson, PhD, is professor emeritus and former chairman of the Geography Department at San Diego State University. A geographer, educator, and bestselling author, he has a profound appreciation for the land, which led him to publish his 1978 bestselling book *Muddling Toward Frugality*. This book secured Johnson's place as among the first to advocate sustainability in the midst of a frenzied materialistic world. His life-long fascination with sustainability began with his PhD where he examined the influence of medieval thinking on the development of the British National Parks system. An honoured professor emeritus of cultural geography, natural resources and energy, he now applies his enthusiasm for the medieval Age of Faith to examine the biblical roots of sustainability. He is also the author of *The Future Is Not What It Used to Be*, and *For Everything a Season*, from which this excerpt is drawn. Johnson lives an ecologically and spiritually balanced life at his home in Northern California.



It means to avoid the poverty of spirit that comes from seeing wealth only in terms of what we can accumulate, but rather seeing wealth in the ongoing life of a family and the collective wealth of a community. It means gaining respect in proportion to what is done to enrich a community, rather than what is taken from it in private gain. It means establishing a way of life that encourages people's best instincts, rather than frustrates them. It means to work with nature rather than against it, to make the land that sustains a community fruitful and productive as well as beautiful. It means to have work be "as love made visible," love for those around us and for the land that sustains a way of life.

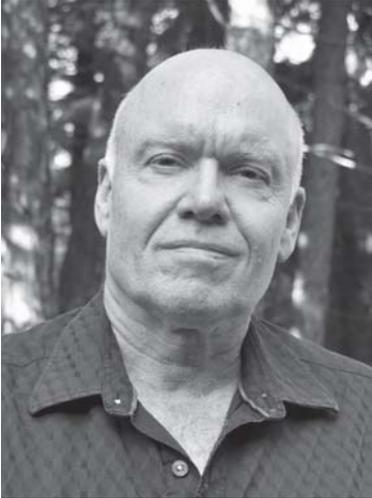
There is a time for everything, and wisdom is to know what is appropriate for our times, what to take forward and what to leave behind. A good part of this simply means to take things as they come, enjoying what the times have to offer us, many of which are universal to all human life.

The pleasures of traditional life rarely involved much consumption, but were simple things such as sitting with friends over a pot of tea or a bottle of wine, watching children at their games, enjoying family gatherings or holiday celebrations, taking a stroll and having a picnic in the park, or just sitting in the sun and daydreaming.

We have had our time of affluence, and now the individuals who are fortunate are those who will not miss it, those who realize that it is in thinking of something larger than ourselves that we enrich our own lives.

These are the people who, rather than fearing the future, can look forward to it with confidence and hope.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF HOPE



Douglas MacLeod

Walking to School *Daybreak, May 2035*

The sun rises early in May in the Okanagan. It climbs above the Monashees and illuminates the small community of Hope below. As it does so, Hope unfolds much like the flowers that surround it. Shutters and blinds open and solar panels turn themselves to the warming rays of the sun. People emerge, birds sing and the town comes to life.

Spring is the most hopeful of seasons and every spring bears the promise of life renewed. Why shouldn't our communities mirror the rich potential of the season? Hope is designed to reflect spring in all its glory the entire year round. The townsite is oriented towards the sun; it follows the natural contours of the site; and everywhere the native trees, plants and habitats have not only been preserved but even increased.

The door to one of the houses opens and Paul Kerr and his two children, Carole and Emma, emerge. Alix Lemay, Paul's partner, hugs each of them in turn then hurries back to her home office. She's an architect and she has a large project due later that day.

Paul and the children proceed at a more leisurely pace. They stroll along a path of recycled stone lined with Jack Pine, Asters and Sagebrush. Malcolm and Stephen are on their usual bench but the two elders suspend their ongoing, and seemingly endless, political debate to call the children by name and ask them about their latest adventures.

Machine for Storing
Chromosomes



Their school is a five minute walk from their home but today it takes them ten and that's okay because learning is flexible in Hope. This is just one of a number of learning buildings scattered throughout Hope. Each one is relatively small and serves between 100 and 200 students. The idea is that everyone gets to know everyone else.

In fact, the school they enter most closely resembles organized chaos. Children are running everywhere and even climbing the walls which are, in fact, designed for climbing. With a coffee shop built right into the lobby of the building, the school is designed to welcome everyone – parents, children and neighbours. Unlike Malcolm and Stephen, many of the community's elders like to have their morning coffee around the children and enjoy volunteering in the school itself. Play dates are arranged, news is shared and parenting tips are exchanged.

Paul, however, has work to do and the coffee shop is just a little too noisy. He's a cybersecurity expert and while he works all over the world, he rarely leaves Hope. The truth is, he lives here precisely because he can walk his children to school.

As he heads for the park, he reflects on his life ten years ago. He was working 12 hour days and most weekends. He was constantly arguing with Alix as both of them struggled to launch their careers. He was stressed

We can now build communities that generate more energy than they need; purify more water than they pollute; grow more food than they consume; recycle more waste than they create; and restore more of the natural environment than they occupy – and we don't need governments, developers or utility companies to do it for us and empty our pockets in the process.

out and anxious at home and at work. He was eating badly and sleeping worse. Then one day, stuck in traffic on his hour long commute, he listened to a radio interview with one of the founders of the cooperative community movement, Malcolm Robinson.

One phrase in particular resonated with Paul. Robinson quoted Chekov who said, “Have a look at yourselves and see how bad and dreary your lives are! The important thing is that people should realise that, for when they do, they will most certainly create another and better life for themselves.”

Then he added, “Our communities are overpriced, poisonous, overcrowded, unhealthy, wasteful energy pigs – not because they have to be but because it suits the vested interests that build, operate and control them.”

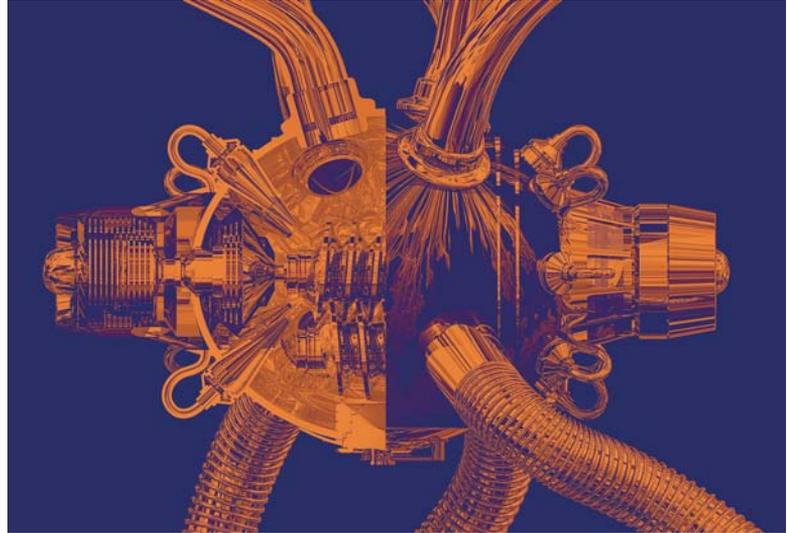
He continued, “We can now build communities that generate more energy than they need; purify more water than they pollute; grow more food than they consume; recycle more waste than they create; and restore more of the natural environment than they occupy – and we don't need governments, developers or utility companies to do it for us and empty our pockets in the process.”

Paul thought about this all the way home and then checked the movement's website. They were looking for young professionals like Paul and Alix. They applied the next day and became part of an experiment in living that is infused with hope for the future.

A New Kind of Park, A New Kind of Community

Paul sits down on a park bench and unfolds his tablet from his knapsack. He doesn't worry about connectivity or security. All of Hope is a giant wireless hotspot with biometric security. The network has already confirmed who he is and Hope is its own telecommunications utility. With customers being charged more and more for less and less, the only sensible response was for

City of Greed



communities to begin providing their own services – as many towns and rural areas did in the 1930’s when the large telephone companies didn’t want to provide service to unprofitable, outlying areas.

A mesh network is simple, inexpensive and effective to operate. Small, discrete antennas are scattered throughout Hope and they provide coverage for the entire neighbourhood. In this network, even devices such as Paul’s tablet and phone act as nodes in the network passing wireless signals to the next node.

In addition to the reduced cost, control was another critical issue. With the repeal of laws regarding Net Neutrality, large telecom companies were free to slow down the traffic of competing vendors. This never happens in Hope.

And that is the compelling and powerful message of the community cooperative movement. We can’t rely on our politicians and business leaders to solve our problems or treat us fairly. In fact, we do not need to. We have all of the means and methods at hand to solve our own problems by ourselves in a manner that doesn’t destroy either us or the planet.

The park that Paul is working in is part of that solution. Like his Wifi, it’s part of a ‘mesh’ network of wildlife corridors, wetlands, habitats and bioswales that demonstrate this new relationship. They’re all planted

We can’t rely on our politicians and business leaders to solve our problems or treat us fairly.

In fact, a mesh network may be the best metaphor for how Hope works. Everything acts as a valued, equal and interconnected node working in concert with every other node for the mutual benefit of all.

with trees, plants, shrubs and flowers that are indigenous to the area. He's sitting in the shade of an Oregon Oak while the bees buzz around the dandelions and buttercups. There's milkweed for the monarch butterflies and a variety of browse plants for the white tail deer. When it rains, the landscaped bioswales channel the runoff and help clean the water through a natural process of filtration.

In fact, a mesh network may be the best metaphor for how Hope works. Everything acts as a valued, equal and interconnected node working in concert with every other node for the mutual benefit of all. It can be parks or Wifi or even people and it works at the scale of houses, streets, neighbourhoods and, increasingly, other communities.

Paul is oblivious to all this as he works away. He and his colleagues block a new computer virus; thwart a cyberattack on their network; and close a loop hole in their security. The morning flies by and it's soon time for lunch.

He heads back to the school.

The Origins of Hope, *April 2020*

It was a school, or more specifically a day care playground, that provoked Robinson to co-found the cooperative community movement. Robinson was trained as an architect but he had made his fortune in developing software. It was 2020 and he was staying in a high class hotel in downtown Toronto. It was late April and all over the city the trees and flowers were in bloom but when he looked out his hotel room window to the alley below, he saw a fenced and paved courtyard, sandwiched between his hotel and an iconic office tower, where the trees were still barren since they received barely any sunlight at all.

To his horror, he watched as the courtyard was flooded with small children and he realized that this was the playground for the daycare centre housed in that tower. He shook his head and thought, "Here, in one of the richest parts of town, in one of the richest cities in

Collision of a Bureaucrat and a
Captain of Industry



Canada, in one of the wealthiest countries in the world – is this really the best we can do for our most precious resource?

Canada, in one of the wealthiest countries in the world – is this really the best we can do for our most precious resource? An exercise yard at a prison is larger and more appealing than this.”

That night he complained to his partner, Stephen Liu, about what he had seen. Liu, was sympathetic, but as an economist he had to point out, “You can’t change anything until you change our value system.”

“What do you mean?” Robinson wanted to know.

“We surrounded by abundance,” Liu explained, “especially in Canada, but we privilege a value system that is predicated on scarcity.”

“I don’t understand,” said the other man.

“Well look it – Canada has vast reserves of energy, land, forests, arable land, mineral resources and water and, in fact, by our constitution all those resources belong to the people of Canada.”

“So?”

“The trouble is that when those resources are parcelled out to corporations it’s not in their best interest to be generous. In fact, it makes more sense economically to control their distribution and dole them out piecemeal to create an artificial scarcity and increase their value - or

Technology has evolved to the point where we don't need megaprojects because we can generate energy, purify water, produce food and manage waste at the local level. We don't need centralized plants and offshore or distant refineries to do any of those things anymore.

rather increase what a consumer will pay for them.”

“But don't they invest heavily in the infrastructure necessary to make those resources valuable?”

“Yes, but in many cases they are heavily subsidized by our own tax dollars and, in effect, the wrong people are building the wrong infrastructure for the wrong reasons.”

“Huh?”

“Technology has evolved to the point where we don't need megaprojects because we can generate energy, purify water, produce food and manage waste at the local level. We don't need centralized plants and offshore or distant refineries to do any of those things anymore.”

“But doesn't getting the private sector involved cost less?”

“The truth is that Private Public Partnerships don't really cost less and often cost more. In fact, one recent study found that over 17 different projects, P3 ended up costing the taxpayers of British Columbia, \$3.7 billion more than the traditional approach.”

“The real problem is,” continued Stephen, “is that because we have consistently lowered taxes on business and high income earners over the last 20 years, we can no longer afford even the most basic infrastructure repairs.”

“So what do we do?”

“Look at Mondragon,” said Stephen. And so he did.

During the Second World War, he learned, a young priest, Father Arizmendi, was assigned to the town of Arrasate in the Basque area of Spain. In Spanish the town is called Mondragon. The region had been devastated by the Spanish Civil War and its economy was in ruins. What he did was help the people to help themselves.

In particular, he guided them in founding a technical school and a credit union. Graduates from the school formed a cooperative workshop financed by the credit union and began producing kerosene stoves. By 2020, the Mondragon Corporation (as they named it) had over 80,000 employees working in over 200 offices around the

Last year, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation had a net income of over \$1.5 billion. Let's see if they could spare a million or two.

world and sales of close to 12 billion euros.

“But we don’t have a school, a financial institution or a factory!” protested Robinson.

“Think outside the bank, Malcolm,” suggested Stephen, “Last year, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation had a net income of over \$1.5 billion. Let’s see if they could spare a million or two.”

“And factories and schools are different animals today. We can tap into Canada’s online universities, like Athabasca, for training, and maker spaces are now sufficiently advanced that they could be used to redefine manufacturing.”

“So what you’re saying is that backed by the CMHC we could manufacture houses in maker spaces to create communities where people could learn, innovate, work and prosper using online resources,” concluded Robinson.

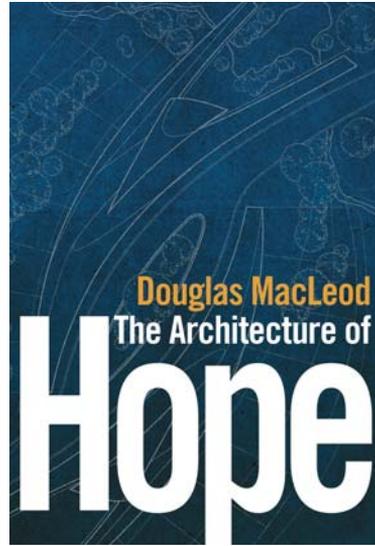
“Why not?”

But there was more than that to Mondragon. Father Arizmendi’s 10 governing principles are its most important asset and independent of any technology. Open Admission, Democratic Organization, Sovereignty of Labour, Capital as an Instrument, Self-Management, Pay Solidarity, Inter-Cooperation, Social Transformation, Universal Solidarity, and Education, are nothing less than a blueprint for hope.

Armed with these principles Robinson and Liu set to work. While they laid siege to the CMHC, they scoured the country for a suitable site to try out their idea – and they found one in the Okanagan.

In particular, one engineer they spoke with mentioned that due to a peculiarity of its geology, you only need to drill down about a kilometre in the Okanagan to tap into the kind of intense heat that can drive a steam turbine and generate electricity. This is called Deep Geothermal. A single bore hole could provide an inexhaustible supply of energy to meet all of the community’s needs. They decided to drill four.

Over the last 30 years, Dr. **Douglas MacLeod** has been creating visionary projects that have transformed the arts, architecture, and education. From pioneering work in virtual reality at the Banff Centre to eduSourceCanada – the country’s largest e-learning initiative to date – MacLeod has led the work that defines our future. A registered architect, he is currently the Chair of the Centre for Architecture at Athabasca University, an online program that has quickly grown to be one of the largest and most innovative in the world. Now in his latest work he weaves together architecture, technology, and economics into a compelling vision of how we can live together in the future. His book, *The Architecture of Hope*, from which this excerpt is drawn, will be published by Wood Lake in early 2020.



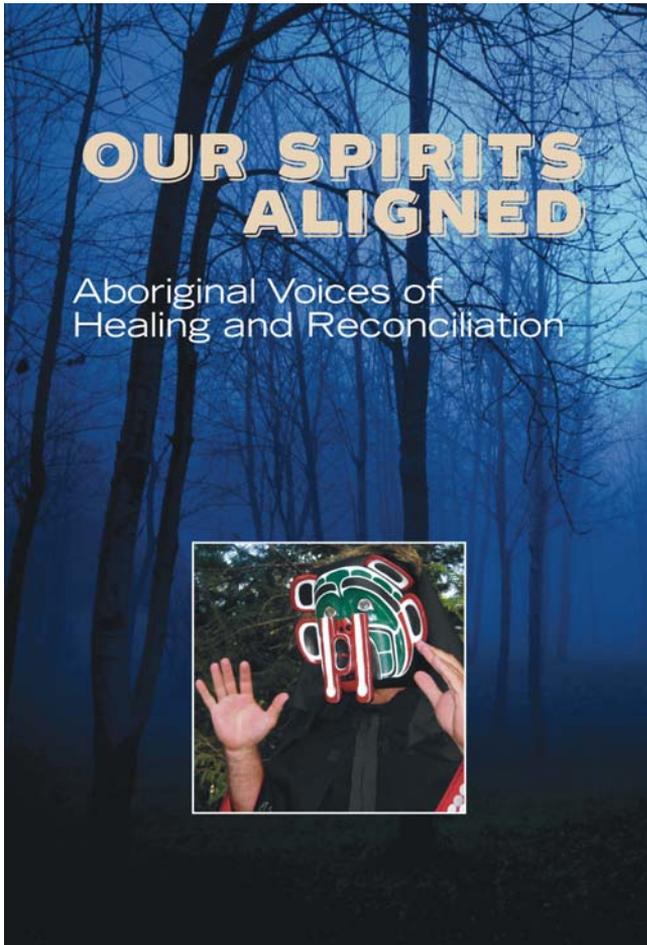
They sought out potential coop members via a targeted social media campaign. In very little time they found 500 families who each pledged \$200,000 for a home in the new community. In accordance with the principle of Open Admission they made sure the first members of the coop represented a diverse and inclusive group. They also worked with Habitat for Humanity to sponsor and fund an additional 10 families.

With \$100,000,000 in hand, they asked the CMHC to match it. What clinched the deal was the Deep Geothermal. Four boreholes would provide far more power than 500 families could use and the rest could be sold for a profit to the surrounding municipalities. And so they bought about a parcel of land about 1 kilometre wide and two kilometres long above the town of Winfield. Their business plan demonstrated that not only could they pay off their loan from the CMHC in short order but in a matter of just a few years they would be turning a handsome profit.

“That’s what I meant,” observed Stephen, “We are surrounded by abundance.”

Today Malcolm and Stephen have retired but they still carry on their debate, surrounded by abundance, from that park bench in Hope.

The Spirit of Reconciliation



100 pages
5x7 inches
\$12.95

that reconciliation is personal, and it includes family and aims towards community. To that end, in order to understand the fullness and richness of reconciliation, we hope each reader will find a role in reconciliation by placing all these stories together in a mixing bowl of sorts and coming up with a broader view that will heighten our country's cultural awareness, deepen Canadian sensitivity, sharpen Canadian agility and grow cultural safety in all our country's homes, villages and work spaces.

When we allow our hearts to resonate with stories, we feel a reverberation, the echoing spirit of all humanity, and the universe itself, beating within. We are called into harmony, and we feel our spirits aligned with all that is. As Wedlidi Speck states in his introduction to this important book:

Reconciliation is storied differently by different people... In the end, by sharing the stories in this book, we may just find the definition of reconciliation is embedded in each story shared... Readers will find

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