

Mirror Flower Water Moon

SPRING 2020



鏡花水月



DHARMA REALM
BUDDHIST UNIVERSITY

Dear readers,

We're happy to present to you this Spring 2020 edition of *Mirror Flower Water Moon* (鏡花水月) during our collective quarantine and dispersal. In times when we are separated from others, there is an opportunity to turn within and look at ourselves. The creative process of writing and art can be an excellent tool in doing just that. Though many of your submissions arrived before the quarantine, we hope they may offer some guidance as we reflect back on what we've already learned and support us through these changes.

Paging through your submissions on "Vulnerability," we noticed that the works shared are often the ones about which we *feel* most emotionally vulnerable. Whether it's original poetry, visual art, heartfelt translations, or essays on the practice of writing and honesty, the simple flavors of our hidden interiors lay themselves open in a format that's difficult to approach. After all, we never know who might encounter them, or what they might think in response. But here, amongst fellows, the space to cherish the unfolding nature of each of us has the opportunity to blossom.

We are happy to present to you a unique and challenging issue, one filled with creative and heart-centered pieces, that we hope will inspire you in the months to come.

Your editing team

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Rabbit Hole

Warren Chew

Writing is thinking—a common sentiment that reframes the writing process. It implies an ability that underlies convention and precedes grammatical usage: the ability to think clearly. Organizing thoughts into coherent arguments is essential to writing, specifically academic writing. The academic essay begins with a question to explore or a thesis to prove and ends with a conclusion reached through argumentation and evidence. In that regard, academic writing is a rational and objective means of communication. It is the art of logically proceeding from point to point, culminating in an articulate message for the reader.

Does not objectivity trump subjectivity? And yet academic writing remains secluded in its corner of the world—academia—and has not superseded other forms of writing. We still have poetry and literature, comics and fairy tales. Creative writing speaks to the other side of rationality—that thoroughly wondrous and raw *irrationality* conjuring up strange, meaningful ideas into existence. Strands of thought weave into seamless narratives and entire worlds to explore; authors *express* their message rather than argue for it. Academic writing, on the other hand, is more analytical than creative; it must have a subject to scrutinize and argue upon. Does academic writing necessarily create anything, then?

Even the creative writer, however, is inspired by *prior* creations, none of which are

necessarily his own. He must analyze—to some extent—before creating, and enter the same logical headspace of an academic writer. Thus the line between analysis and creation is blurred: neither precedes the other if we trace their origins far back enough. So the academic and the creative come full circle, continually supporting each other in the chronology of writing.

As for myself, I'm lost in this expanse of writing from poetry to philosophy—it all speaks to me. But in my attempts to respond and come full circle, I have only done so through

I'm starting to lose conviction as a teacher and criticality as a learner—the gap is widening between my roles—something is emerging that I can't articulate.

the academic essay. Analysis, critique, and deconstruction are modes of thinking I can slip into—but not easily slip out of—while I write. They're more than that, however; they're modes of *being* for me, and academic writing channels what I already am. So I argue and look for flaws, I rationalize and defend my position. I write as if I know better than my audience, but that is hardly the case in reality. Academic writing, nevertheless, presupposes that role: the writer teaches while the reader learns.

As an academic writer, I assume a position of authority by instinct; holding on to my convictions lends itself to argumentation, and that naturally develops into the academic essay. As a reader, I assume the role of a learner with an eye for flaws and arguments, instinctively critiquing in preparation for writing. But I'm starting to lose conviction as a teacher and criticality as a learner—the gap is widening between my roles—something is emerging that I can't articulate. I often stare at the screen for hours until my fingers type by necessity, creating a fictitious worldview I can attach to and argue for. In those moments, I know that I'm lying—both to myself and to the reader. I'm playing the role of the teacher because I know no other, while I'm stringing together falsehoods behind an elaborate veil of academia. Academic

writing no longer fulfills me at that point; it fails as a means to speak my truth. But I cling to it—painfully—and the familiar nooks of rationality welcome me with open arms, as irrationality screams for me to escape.

Perhaps it's the creative will urging me to unveil who I am, rather than argue for it. The last time I wrote a story, however, was years ago. I hide my poems and reign in my imagination; I withhold my opinions until I have evidence to support them. Withdrawing into rationality is useful—but lonely. My walls of argumentation are crumbling, my evidence dissolving, I'm falling faster and farther into a rabbit hole of my own making.

The underlying question emerges at last: *How can I possibly overcome academic writing by writing academically about it?*

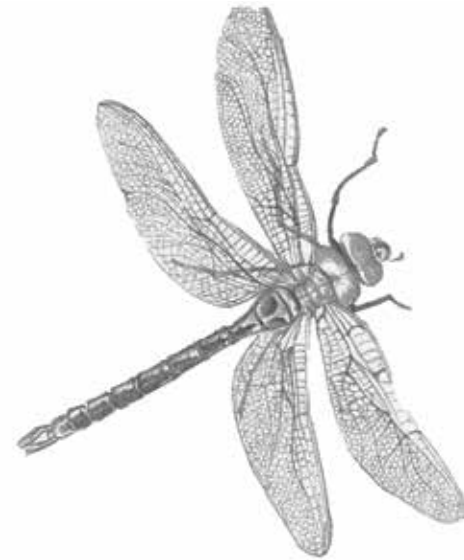


Dust Storm

The door opened
She walked in slowly

Startled

A dust storm of memories
Stirred
Swirling from the depth of the past
Swirling
Swirling
Dust motes
Of hurt and anger
Swirling
Opaquing the present



Artwork: Gavin Ding

The Wall

Your inconsistencies
Your hypocrisies
And judgmentalisms

My disdain
My expectations
And judgmentalisms

Festering
In the darkness

The silence between us stretches on like an endless night
As the wall that separates us grows higher and higher each day

Saturday afternoon

Walking with a cloak of fear
I see the furtive glances
I hear the whispers of blame

In the distance
A trumpet roars

Quieting
Silencing
The worries
Gnawing my heart

These three poems were written by Anonymous

*“Being vulnerable for one is unconditional love for all beings,
and for another is learning to embrace all beings with tolerance.”*



Photography: Kathleen Irby

Chan Master Qiyuan and Her Poems

Xiaojuan Shu

Poet and Linji Chan Master Qiyuan Xinggang (1597–1654) was one of the few female cultivators in history whose teachings were preserved in writing. She was the abbess of Crouching Lion Chan Monastery for eight years, so she was also called Chan Master Crouching Lion Qiyuan—briefly, Master Qiyuan. Last semester, I translated some of her poems and used translation as a hermeneutic tool to retrieve some of the meaning behind her intent.

WHY POETRY?

What do poetry and cultivation have in common? Both submit to a constrained form or style, generally speaking, with poetry written in metrical feet and cultivation practiced with precepts. Both go deeper with less, with poetry reaching profundity with fewer words and cultivation fostering inner wealth with fewer needs. Both aim for more freedom, in poetry with creativity and imagination and in cultivation for liberation. In a sense, one needs to be in a form in order to reform and transform. Both poetry and cultivation provide a structure that constrains one on the outside, the superficial level, but liberates on the inside, the deeper level. Poetry and cultivation are meant to transcend the ordinary, if done well.

Chan Buddhism came from India and evolved in China. In the mid-Tang Dynasty (618–907), Chan began to attract more intellectuals and the integration of poetry into Chan became a trend. There seems to be a close connection between poetry and Chan, whether cultivators use Chan to dive deeper into poetry, or use poetry to understand Chan. Poetry embellishes Chan; Chan deepens poetry. When Chan is woven into poetry, poetry illuminates the unspeakable Chan. Master Qiyuan was both a Chan master and a poet. Did her poetic way of thinking help her cultivate? Or did her Chan cultivation help her write better poems?

For me, translating Master Qiyuan's poems while reading her life story was putting hermeneutics into action with the hope of connecting with a true cultivator across time and space. In this essay, I will share three of Master Qiyuan's poems that I have translated. The translations are not, and probably will never be, the final versions, for they change as my understanding continues to evolve over time.

MASTER QIYUAN'S POEMS

Meditation played a significant role in Master Qiyuan's cultivation. For over a decade, she vigorously investigated Chan with the meditation topic: *What's your original face before your parents gave birth to you?* The high state that she experienced in the poem "The Meditation Cushion" didn't just fall out of the sky. It was due to her decade-long unwavering vigor and perseverance.

蒲團

蒲團一片絕遮攔
覆天翻地在處安
聖號凡名都坐斷
大千收在一毫端

After her breakthrough with the meditation topic under the guidance of Linji Chan Master Shiche Tongcheng, she went back to her own solitary place to continue her meditation in the following nine years. The poem below may have been written during that period.

The Meditation Cushion

A single piece of circular mat has no cover or fence,
[yet even if] heaven and earth were overturned, here is peace.
Both sage titles and worldly fame lose their grip in the sitting,
and the infinite worlds are reduced to the tip of a hair.

孟夏關中閒詠

諸老門庭家業盛
自知疏拙隱為安
玄機棒喝都休歇
萬法虛融莫問禪

百結鶉衣倒掛肩
饑來喫飯倦時眠
蒲團穩坐渾忘世
一任窗前日月遷

高臥雲嶒寄幻軀
白雲翠竹兩依依
眼前幻境隨遷變
深掩柴扉樂有餘

茅舍風高孰敢親
棒風喝月走煙雲
儼然寶鉢虛空托
淡飯黃齏自現成

After eight years of leading the sangha at Crouching Lion Chan Monastery, Master Qiyuan retired humbly to her solitary practice. The following poem was written after she retired.

掩關

挈挈波波多少年
杜門息影隱林泉
乾坤踢破腳收轉
獨坐寒窗皎月圓

終日如愚頓息機
箇中無是亦無非
堂堂坐斷聖凡路
亙古彌今一本如

All day long I appear foolish, as the calculating mind has ceased.
Among all these, there is no right or wrong.
Sitting straight and tall, I cut off both sagehood and worldly Path.
From ancient times to present day, it has always been so.

Closing The Door

After many years of leading and running about with responsibilities,
I close the door and rest in a forest hermitage.
After kicking open heaven and earth, I pulled back my foot and turned around.
Outside the cold window where I sat alone, a bright moon hangs full.

What captures my attention in this poem is the moon. "Outside the cold window where I sat alone, a bright moon hangs full." The moon feels still and full here, with the present moment amplified. In "A Poem Written at Leisure in the First Month of Summer Retreat," the moon is different. "Sitting firmly on a meditation mat, I completely forget the world, as the sun and moon shift as they please by the window." Though the poet sits still in both poems, the moon moves and changes in one, and is still and full in another. Does this signify anything? I don't know. But I'd like to interpret her life as coming full circle here, returning to the source before birth.

CONCLUSION

Through poems, Master Qiyuan, a highly regarded female Chan master, shared her illuminating insight with modern day readers and cultivators across space and time. Through translating her poems, I found great inspiration in both poetry and in Chan. Master Qiyuan became one of the beacons for many who came after her, especially for women cultivators who were discriminated against both in society and on the spiritual path. For that, I am forever grateful.

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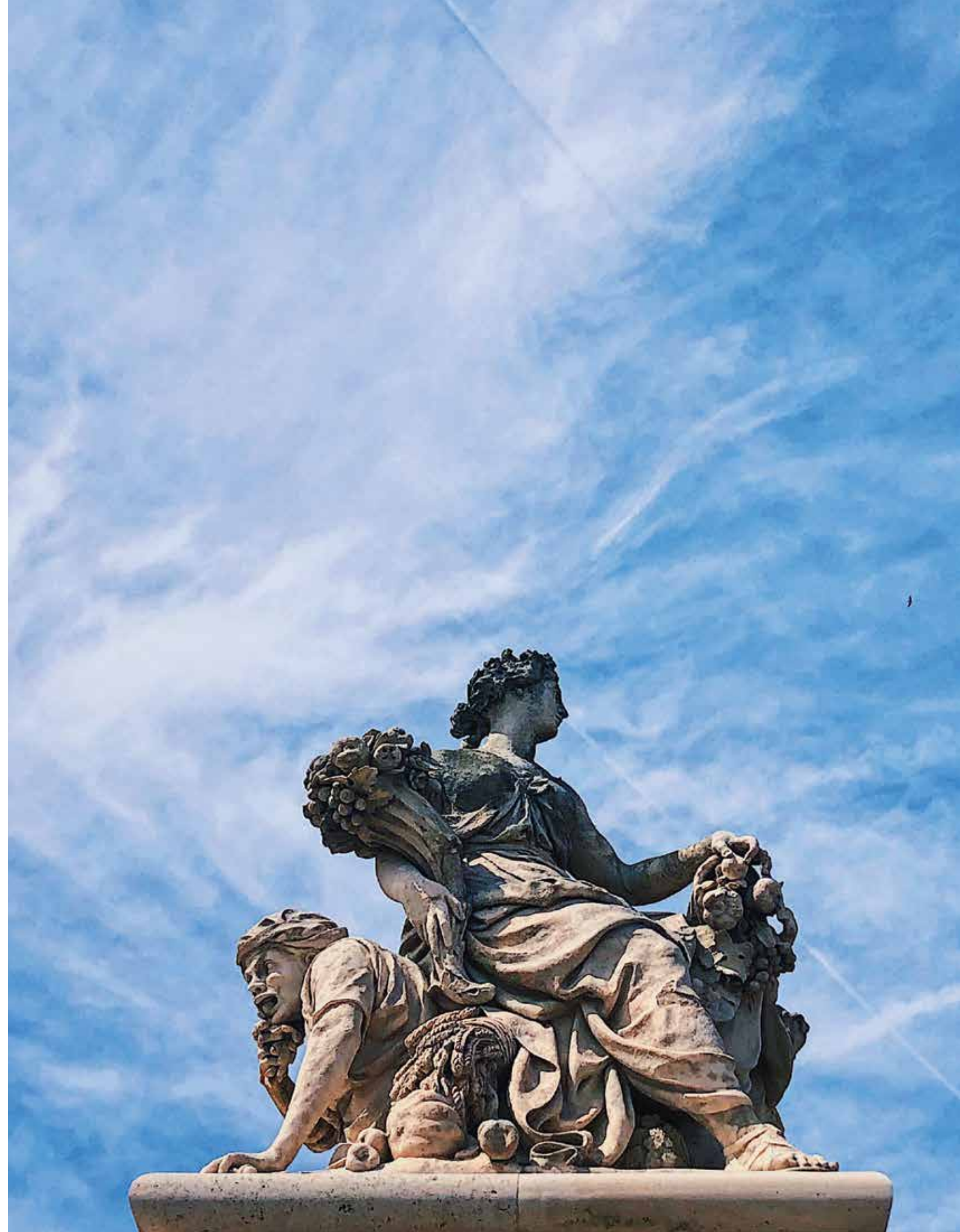
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Going Home

Born on the East Coast
Grew up in the West
Asian descent—
American raised

Trained in science
Applied to studying religions
“Normal” suburban life—
Led to the monastery

Competitive and confused
Hungry for wisdom
Attached to my opinions—
Determined to get free

Narrow and self-serving
Mission to benefit all
A mix of dichotomies
Where can I find myself?

Still searching
Always learning
Aspiring to dedicate my life to
A worthy cause

—*Jin Chuan, 2011*

Photography: Stan Shoptaugh

Rise & Fall

Lauren Bausch

I am exploring being more vulnerable with myself. That does not mean that I do not value putting myself in new and unfamiliar situations with others in order to see where I need to grow. Relationships with family, friends, partners, and others—whether long or brief—trigger certain conditions to arise that I learn from, when I am paying attention. Recently, however, inspired by DRBU’s new Abhidharma class, I have been turning inward and watching what arises in my mind.

My first meditation teacher in India taught me to observe my mind. Only I wasn’t any good at the observation part.

I took up everything that crossed my mind as happening to “me” and had no space to observe. After many, many years of various meditation practices that helped calm and steady the mind, I recently returned to the practice of watching what arises. Simply put, I watch the rise and fall of thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. In addition

I am learning how to catch negative judgments about myself when they arise and, with awareness, to soften around harsh thoughts and watch them drop away.

to cultivating *samatha* and *sati*, two shifts were necessary to be able to do this. First, I began to do preparatory exercises. Physically that meant practicing yoga with Eden (who trained in India) and the Six Healing Sounds that Ken Cannata has been teaching at DRBU.¹ Becoming more aware of my body and breaking up stuck

energy helps to sit comfortably in meditation. Mentally that meant—and I learned this from Bhikkhu Anālayo—beginning each sit by setting an intention, taking stock of what hindrances are present in the mind, and arousing joy. Second, for me, one of the biggest obstacles to this kind of *vipassanā* practice is the constant and debilitating judgment that arises. Knowing that I am my worst critic, I am learning how to catch negative judgments about myself when they arise and, with awareness, to soften around harsh thoughts and watch them drop away. Taking the mind as the meditation object also helps to accept what pops up as natural, without trying to block the mental stream or wanting it to be otherwise. In addition, Doug Powers suggested having a sense of humor about what arises. It’s a flow of karma after all, so there’s no reason to take it so seriously!

¹ I recently learned a practice in yoga that uses *bija* or seed-mantras to activate the chakras that reminds me of the six healing sounds.

Watching my mind means that I am learning a lot about the underlying patterns that define the way I see things. Sometimes what comes up gives rise to sadness and tears fall, but when I succeed in watching the rise and fall, I can see those thoughts and memories with a detached perspective and that helps me learn where I am getting stuck. When I catch the rise, my mind does not take up what it knows to be just passing through, based on causes and conditions, and so the fall happens soon after. I can see the content passing through as impermanent. I can count on conditions going away if I don't take them up. Seeing the rise and fall also makes it easier not to identify with what arises as something that is mine or part of me; it is not my true self, just a stream of energies set into motion from what was done and thought in the past. Relying on such conditions as the basis for understanding, pleasure, or identity is unsatisfactory because they are unstable and, inevitably, change.

Relying on such conditions as the basis for understanding, pleasure, or identity is unsatisfactory because they are unstable and, inevitably, change.

Given that any person that I relate to is also confronting unstable and changing conditions, I am trying to accept the dynamic play that is staged between two sets of random conditions at any given moment in a relationship. Things can come up totally unexpectedly, and, while conditions that catch me by surprise can be ruinous for a relationship, they are gold in terms of what I need to work on. Moreover, unanticipated things especially seem to arise when I am in situations that are unfamiliar. With the tendency when I feel vulnerable to shut down, to close myself off from or even become angry at what appears to be perilous, my current practice is an attempt to balance creating an environment in which I feel safe, so I can be curious, while at the same time greeting the unfamiliar with open arms. Reflecting on the Abhidharma readings about the flow of *cittas* and corresponding mental factors, I realize that an object sought appears as a symptom of other underlying conditions that drive the mind toward that object. The propensity to give credence to my view of the object belies a constellation of lurking mental factors. The more subtlety I can observe in the rise and fall, the more I know what is really going on.

I am getting to know myself and making an effort to stay open and vulnerable. Though it is not easy to trust myself because of prior conditioning—some of which hammers the idea that I am not good enough or need something outside of me to save me—through practice, I am discovering a space in myself that is safe, judgment-free, aware, and unattached. From here I notice the babble about myself and fears that do not serve me. I am also learning to rely on my own *śaraṇam*, the refuge, boundless and radically free, harbored behind the mind that grasps at conditions. In my vulnerability, I am training to choose that *śaraṇam* over any content. Observing the rise and fall of *dharma*s supports this transition.



In memory of Paul Cezanne



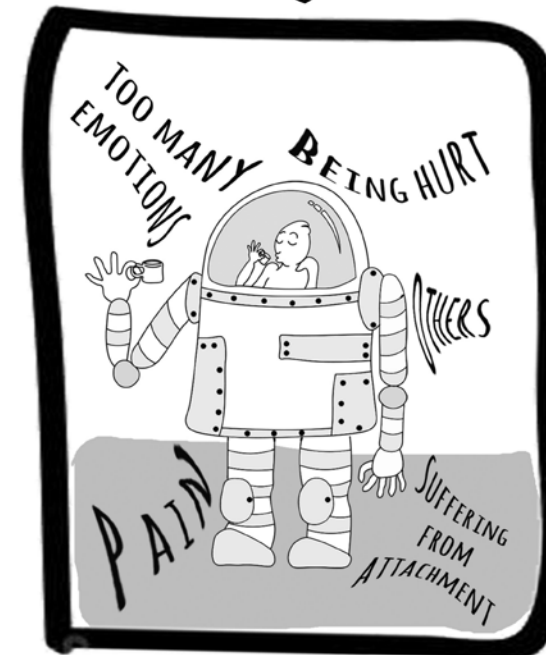
Life

We are but
the burning dream of
the Buddha

— Omar Masera Astier

Without vulnerability

How I thought it was



How it really was

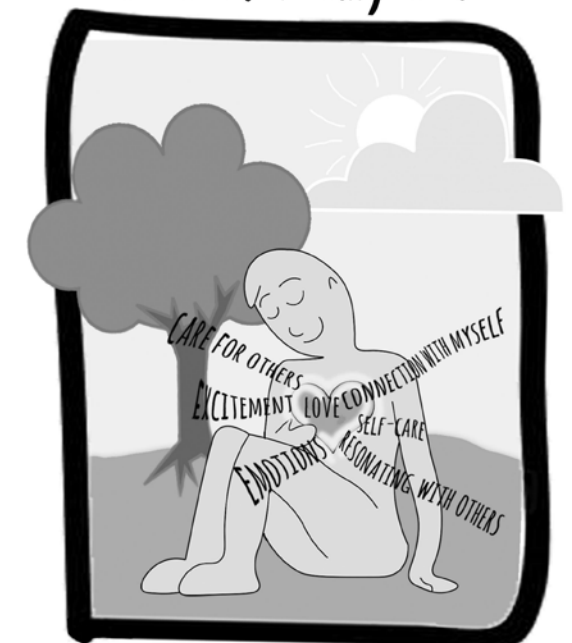


VS
Vulnerability

How I thought it was



How it really was



*Somehow, what we call "vulnerability"
made me feel so much more free and real

Shame and Vulnerability

Koren Eloul

Although I have certainly felt deep shame in my life, and now have some years of experience in experiencing and facilitating programs that promote healing and growth through confronting and exposing shame, I cannot begin to call myself an expert. As such, I am choosing to share my thoughts and experiences as an invitation to create dialogue and to begin a potential conversation about how toxic shame impacts us as educators and as students.

I feel that it is important for me to define my understanding of “shame” by explaining what shame *isn't*. Shame isn't what you feel when you trip, blush, and look around to make sure no one saw—that's *embarrassment*. Shame isn't what you feel when you take a second helping in the lunch line knowing that there may not be enough for the lady at the end of the line—that's *guilt*. *Shame*, for our purpose here, is the way that the actions you have (or have not) taken and the experiences you have (or have not) received have informed your sense of who you are in a negative way—one that connects deeply to your sense of identity. Shame is the feeling that makes you want to curl in on yourself and hide—the desire to become invisible, even to yourself, for looking too closely at the source of that shame is too painful to bear, and the thought of others seeing it is nearly unthinkable. It calls into question the very story of oneself as a decent, capable person. Because the stakes feel so high and its accompanying feelings are so powerful, people often live with their shame in the background rather than bring it out into the light for most, if not all, of their lives. We may catch glimpses of it operating in our minds, affecting our choices, emotions, and behaviors from the background; but, we often turn away just as quickly in disgust and fear, allowing it to persist unchallenged.

I am speaking about this from direct experience. When I was in my early twenties, I harmed someone economically. I knew in my heart what I did was wrong, yet at the time, couldn't overcome the selfishness and fear I had

about facing potential consequences. I chose to cause harm rather than doing the thing I knew in my heart was right. I carried that shame for years, developing a story that reversed the blame, making myself out to be the victim. I could not stand to tell others the truth and show them, and myself, that the person of integrity I saw myself to be failed to live up to his values when those values were put to the test. I finally received the opportunity to speak the whole truth seven years later, at a training to bring Restorative Justice to people in prison. I was shocked at how overwhelming the experience was, calling forth long dormant, but never healed feelings of inadequacy, regret, sadness,

Shame is the feeling that makes you want to curl in on yourself and hide—the desire to become invisible, even to yourself, for looking too closely at the source of that shame is too painful to bear, and the thought of others seeing it is nearly unthinkable.

and of course, shame. I was just as shocked at how free I felt after—how a great hidden-but-palpable weight had suddenly vanished and how empowered I felt. That experience led to many since, until I felt that my storehouse was finally emptied to the extent in which I can now try to help others in the same way: by witnessing them speak their unspoken truths non-judgmentally and with compassion. In the Guiding Rage Into Power (GRIP) Program, a violence prevention program offered to incarcerated men and women, it is said that, “Hurt people, hurt people. Healed people, heal people.” To me, shame is a marker of deep hurt, and has the potential to be incredibly limiting.

As human beings, we all carry a measure of shame in our personal lives, childhood experiences, and in the ways we see ourselves as

failing our students or in our duties. This shame is deeply connected to our triggers and reactivity—the ways we sometimes lose it and show up unconstructively to protect our identities from being challenged, either stifling our feelings or lashing out. Many of the students I've worked with recently are incarcerated men and women who often come from backgrounds of considerable trauma and discrimination, and face the increased dehumanization and criminalization of the identity of “inmate.” They have been especially susceptible to this same toxic shame. Toxic shame inhibits, holding us back from bringing our full, authentic selves to bear; it stymies our efforts to push past the masks and armor so many of us have grown into, preventing the authentic connection, belonging, and chance to be seen and appreciated in our imperfections, which we so deeply crave for as human beings.

My purpose in writing this isn't to present a deep analysis or a silver bullet that eliminates shame, but to simply bring up its existence as a barrier as a topic of further conversation. My deepest hope is that it serves as a prompt to look more deeply and honestly into our own places of shame and that we continue to seek healing and growth. The work that we do on ourselves directly impacts our ability to show up for ourselves and others in our lives. Knowing this, we can grant additional patience and compassion for ourselves and each other's internal struggles

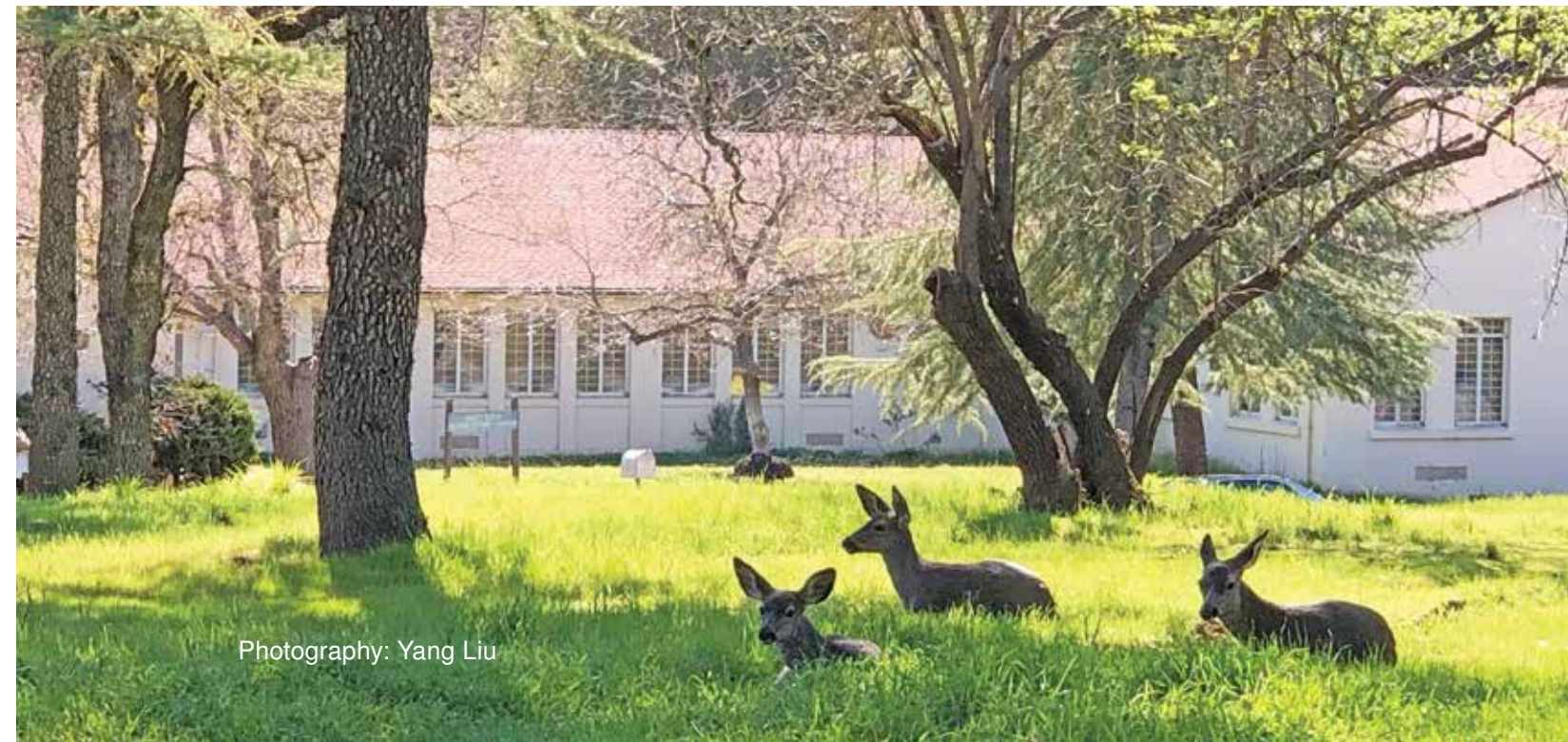
(of which, in the case of the latter, we are usually granted only the most superficial access).

In the hopes that it may bring some encouragement for others, I have decided to include below the Harm Impact Statement I prepared during my own healing of the shame I held after hurting someone. This is the original version, which I wrote in 2015. After being prompted by Abdullah, one of the incarcerated men I had the tremendous honor of working with through GRIP, I began trying to find the person I harmed, Yan, desiring to take full accountability and make any amends if possible. As of yet, I have been unable to find him through any traditional means, and struggle with the reality that I may have missed my window. I vow, however, to continue trying.

Harm Impact Statement - September 24, 2015
Describe the day of the harm, and the events that led up to it. Try to go into as much detail as possible.

Sarah, my girlfriend at the time, and I had been living in a backpackers guest house on the east coast of Australia while working and earning money for the next leg of our planned trip. The guest house was run by a man named Yan who had decided to open it after traveling with his son some years ago. Although I thought Yan was mostly fair, part of me also held disdain for him regarding his poor hygiene, weight, and what I perceived to be laziness and an over-sedentary

continued on page 20



Photography: Yang Liu

Third Annual Student Symposium

"I applaud all of the students who will be presenting here today because it takes a lot of courage to share your writing in front of an audience. Thank you for being brave and vulnerable."

—Dr. Susan Rounds, President of DRBU



lifestyle. A few months before, Yan had rented us a car to go on vacation with that broke down forty minutes out, effectively ruining our trip. I believe he felt guilty: he offered to loan us his personal car, free of charge, to drive to Byron Bay with, where we had never been, and rented us a room at a hostel for a couple of nights. He told us that the car had great insurance, but sometimes “shook” when driven at higher speeds.

We left the morning of and were excited to be on our way. This was to be our little vacation in Australia after working hard and saving for four months. We would soon head out for Singapore. I had driven only a handful of times in Australia, but felt reasonably confident driving on the other side of the road than I was used to. Sarah didn't have a license and had never learned to drive a car, so the responsibility fell on me. I remember not wanting to show any lack of confidence in my driving ability, even though I still had some issues with spatial sense on the right side of the car. I remember the car did shake at times while driving. While intimidating, I knew that by slowing down I could make the shaking stop. About half-way to Byron Bay, I was driving in the passing lane (on the right in Australia), and looking at Sarah happily, trying to make eye contact with her and hold her gaze. Suddenly, I felt our car start to go off the road and tilt at an angle because there was no real shoulder, just a grassy embankment to the side of the highway with a thin guard rail a little farther out. I panicked and tried to correct, pulling hard to the left on the steering wheel. We swung back onto the road, but it was an over-correction and we barreled into the left lane. The car that was there swerved left and I corrected again, narrowly missing them, throwing us off the road again to the right and into the guard rail. We scraped the guardrail for maybe thirty or forty feet, then rolled. I remember hearing Sarah scream as we went over, and vaguely remember the sensation of being tossed upside-down, then jolted back up as the car landed on its tires again.

At that point, we were perpendicular to the highway, and though my foot wasn't on the gas, the car started moving up the embankment into the highway where a large truck was headed right for us. I slammed my feet on the brake and stopped part way into the highway. The truck,

thankfully, stopped before hitting us. I don't remember moving the car off of the highway, but we must have. Sarah asked me what had happened, and I knew in my heart of hearts that I had let the car drift right and hadn't been paying enough attention to the road, but I was scared to admit fault. I was scared of the legal consequences and felt sick to my stomach about having to tell Yan and accept blame. I remembered what Yan had said about the car shaking, and told her that the car had suddenly pulled right and there must have been a problem with the car, asking her, “Didn't you feel it?” She seemed

I knew in my heart of hearts that I had let the car drift right and hadn't been paying enough attention to the road, but I was scared to admit fault.

unsure, and told me she couldn't remember, but that if that is what I said happened then she believed it. I repeated it emphatically so that our story would be on the same page. Then Sarah and I got out in a daze—we were both very shaken, but, despite only wearing shorts, T-shirts, and flip-flops, only had very minor bruises and scrapes.

The people we had almost hit pulled over to check on us. I remember the driver, a young guy like me, told me that we had almost hit them and I apologized profusely. They waited with us until the police came. The officer who first arrived asked me to get in the damaged car, then sat in the passenger seat and questioned me about what happened. I remember him chiding me for being in the passing lane when I wasn't passing anyone, but I told him I had not realized that was against the traffic rules in Australia (which was true). I then proceeded to tell him that we had been driving when the car started shaking violently, then suddenly pulled hard right, which I tried to correct for, but simply was unable to regain control, after which we crashed. I then complained that the person who had lent us the car had warned us about the shaking, but that I had no idea this could happen. I can't remember if he questioned Sarah or the

witnesses. In the end, he wrote in his report that the accident was the result of mechanical failure and did not cite us. I was relieved, but also still terrified about telling Yan, and downhearted. I called him to let him know what happened, but continued to say the car shook, then pulled hard right. I remember also calling the hostel to cancel our reservation, and that they gave us back our deposit in sympathy for the accident.

Sarah and I rode back with the tow-truck to the guest house. I don't remember clearly, but I think we were silent, both dwelling in our shock and worry. When we got back, we went to tell Yan what happened. I remember there was a man named Chris there, who had been a good friend and voice of reason in a house that often seemed a little crazy. Yan was pretty quiet, which was disconcerting—I remember feeling like he was appraising us. I remember Chris saying that the members of the house, including Yan, were all grateful that we hadn't been hurt, and that that was the most important thing. I was truly grateful he had said that. Yan then said that his insurance actually had a \$2,500 deductible before kicking in. Both Sarah and I were shocked, and also felt fear, which turned into anger and defensiveness. We said we would figure something out with Yan, but after we left, Sarah said she didn't want to pay any money. I was really torn: we had worked hard for the little money we had, and \$2,500 would just about sink our trip, but in my heart of hearts I also felt guilty for the accident because I was responsible

and Yan had lent us the car in good faith. I could barely admit that to myself though, and couldn't to Sarah at all, so I simply said we should give him a little for the trouble, and fought with her when she disagreed. In anger, she finally agreed to give \$200 and I gave \$300. I also sold my surfboard and guitar to Chris and a girl at the guest house, and asked them to give the cash to Yan, bringing our contribution up to about \$750. We then told Yan that it would take us some time to come up with the rest of the money, but that we already had travel plans to leave for Brisbane, and that we would be in touch about the rest of the money. I remember reassuring him by saying that “No one is trying to screw you out of the money.” I don't remember his reaction. We left the next day and arrived in Brisbane, and were taken in by my godmother's friend, who, though we had never met, treated us like her own children and took care of us as we recovered from very difficult emotions of the accident and fallout. I felt like I practically melted in relief, and the tightness in my chest and stomach released for the first time in two days.

We left Australia a couple of days later. A few months into our trip, Yan emailed us about the money. I spoke with Sarah, and she said that we should reply that we wouldn't pay any more money until we had seen the insurance report of the accident. If it declared that the accident was a result of mechanical failure, we would be absolved of any further financial responsibility. To this day, I do not know if such a report exists,



but that is how I replied. I remember feeling a sense of fear and guilt, and worried often as I checked my email during the trip that a reply from Yan would be there. A few months later, an email from Yan's granddaughter arrived saying that he needed the \$2,000 dollars, and was without a vehicle and couldn't get around in his condition. She added that they would be seeking legal advice if we didn't pay them the money. I was afraid, and asked my mom what to do. She bristled in protective-mother mode, and told me to tell them that their lawyer could talk to our lawyer if they wanted to, and reassured me that she had been in touch with our lawyer-friend, who said that Yan wouldn't have a chance given the police report and the international nature of the situation. I replied to Yan's granddaughter that we weren't adverse to paying Yan more, but that if the accident was indeed based on mechanical failure, that he, by lending us a car he knew was faulty, could actually be at legal risk, and that they could speak to our lawyer. I never heard from them again.

How did the harm affect others? Include your victim, their family, family members, your community, friends.
My harm left Yan unable to drive around, and because of his physical health, left him essentially house-ridden. I imagine it also left him hurt and angry, with his trust shattered, and perhaps affected the way he dealt with the other people in the guest house. The loss of the car likely damaged his income, and possibly damaged his business. His granddaughter probably had her trust shaken as well, and I imagine was angry and defensive to her grandfather, in addition to feeling helpless about being unable to help him. I don't know for sure, but it may have fallen to Yan's son to help him, which would have been a financial burden. It is possible that the incident affected their perception of Americans and Canadians. The community we were living in was small, and I imagine there was residual anger and dismay. I think the accident, Sarah's first, was traumatic, and that the fallout regarding the money was scary and frustrating. Though she went along with the narrative I provided, because

she seemed unsure at first, I have always wondered if she really didn't believe it, and had lost some faith in me as competent and honorable. I think my mom worried about me and felt stress doing her best to provide me with reassurance.

What happened to you as a result of the harm? Emotionally? Physically? Spiritually?

I felt considerable anxiety for a year or so after I had received no communication from Yan or his family. Fear of a lawsuit, fear of retribution, even fear of a hurtful email. That anxiety manifested in tenseness in my body, often arising when I checked my email. I also felt considerable guilt and shame, but tried to bury those feelings by not engaging with the memories of the harm and by telling the story to people from the narrative I had concocted, making myself out to be the fortunate survivor of a disgusting man who had nearly gotten me killed with his unmaintained car. I dehumanized Yan in the story, using descriptions of his appearance to elicit disgust and support. Every time I told the story, however, there was always a tiny pang of guilt at the end—my conscience reminding me that it really knew the truth. It was especially painful to my sense of self as an honorable person who paid his debts, a value my father had instilled in me deeply. Also, my family is significantly better off than Yan's, and the use of my family's resources to silence him and his granddaughter, and the broader injustice that that represented, was a painful hypocrisy painted against the equal and fair world I claimed to be invested in building.

Why do you think this happened to you?

I have worked with anxiety most of my life, especially about disappointing others. Social lying had become a defense mechanism to counter social anxiety, and by the time of the harm, had become my shameful and hated habit. I would lie for social convenience and, at times, to get things that I wanted. I remember that my parents lauded honesty, but in certain circumstances, were willing to accept dishonesty. In my first year of university, both my sister and I had all of our exams at the very beginning of the period, and then one final exam on the last day, with nearly two weeks in between—time when we could have been home. My mom accepted that we would lie about our "grandmother passing" and backed up our claim, so that we could take the exam at home

and have more time together during the vacation. I know that she wasn't comfortable with it, but her willingness to use that tool to counter what we called, in our justification, an "unfair and ridiculous situation" reinforced the understanding in me that lying was sometimes necessary and appropriate. Also, growing up in a litigious society, I was very afraid of the consequences of being sued, and didn't want to put myself in a position where I could easily become a defendant in a lawsuit. I was also afraid that I was going to lose the money I had worked for and the trip I had been so looking forward to. Finally, I didn't want to accept blame. As a man and a boyfriend,

I also felt considerable guilt and shame, but tried to bury those feelings by not engaging with the memories of the harm and by telling the story to people from the narrative I had concocted

I didn't want Sarah to lose faith in my competence and ability to protect her, and I didn't want to accept blame because it meant admitting that I was wrong, had made a mistake, and was responsible for ruining Yan's car, which he had lent us in good faith. My sense of self didn't want to have to carry those burdens, so lying came almost automatically.

What could bring you healing?

I have used forgiveness meditations to try to come to terms with my choice, and compassion meditations for Yan, his granddaughter, Sarah, and myself. I often said to myself that one day, when I had money to spare, I would get in touch with Yan and pay him back, but even when I did have more money, I was scared to get in touch and resistant to giving up the money. I think at this point the only other step, besides writing this harm impact statement (which is the first time I have openly admitted to anyone outside of myself that the accident was my fault, and that I had been lying in the telling of my alternative narrative for many years), would be to try to get in touch with Yan and repay him. I'll admit though, that I am scared to admit fault—scared to put myself in a situation that could have legal consequences.



Photography: Sophia Liu



Of Frost, Of Autumn's Breeze
Photography: Rachel Blythe

Note to Self

Midnight Embers

He shoved me
Into the snow drift.

I fell,
My breath knocked out of me
As I lay
Splayed on my back.

The wind
Picks up
And seals me inside
My ice tomb
Before my chapped lips can utter
“Wait—”

Blanketed in darkness
The cold infiltrates
Straight to the marrow.

I think
“Not again.”
For this place is familiar,
A recurring nightmare,
Of being thrown away,
My sentience stolen.

To him
I am just another
Thing
To Tune out from,
As if my existence
Evaporated—
No trace to be found.

A shard of salted ice
Bites into my cheek
As I lay in the void.

My inner voice whispers,
“Did you hear that?
The thunderous *crack* that came from my heart?”

My lashes scrape against
The ceiling as
I surrender,
Aching again,
In this hollow pain.

A month has passed and
Something plunges through the snow,
Breaking through the darkness.
Mustering my strength,
I grasp it,
And am heaved out.

Each breath
Singes my lungs.

I am surrounded in
Piercing white
Divided only by a stream
Of deep red.

Following the flow to its source
I find
That it is my hand,
Cut deep from grasping onto
The blade of a sword.

I look up and see him.
My mouth croaks,
“Why?”

“Didn’t you know?
This was for your own good.”

Body creaking
I limp away.

I cover myself with blankets
Thawing myself out by the fire.
Looking at my hands
That I have bandaged like this twice before,
I realize
One word:
Enough.

Pulling my blankets tighter,
I quietly cry
Tears of liberation.





Seasons Fair

Four women come to the gate,
Each bringing their seasons fair.
One brings the winter,
the other, the spring's air.
One brings the summer fruit,
the other, the falling trees.
Each one has their time and place,
each one comes and leaves.

紅顏粉黛下凡間
化身人中四月天
捎來冬寒與春嵐
吹送夏瓜並秋霜
一一來去無迷時
歲歲朝朝祝長安

— Claire Robb

Photography: Bhikshuni Jin Xiang

In lieu of what I tried to write

Justin Howe

This isn't the poem I wanted to write. I've been working on that for the better part of a year. I wanted to include it here but wasn't able. I didn't have the time to finish. The poem included below is something I dashed off for a friend. It's as fluffy as its subject matter—which is nothing to count against it. Ernie Waugh told me recently that the magic of Shakespeare's *Tempest* is just its insubstantiality. Reflecting on that, I caught sight of something larger and more profound, limned in the queer light of the *Tempest* but running through many of Shakespeare's plays. A topic for another time, perhaps (and sharing the drawer with my further remarks on artifice in *Hamlet*...)

In lieu of what I tried to write, I thought to write about trying to write. I understand that one of our editors has done the same. Then let this stand as twin testament that writing is, or can be, a vulnerability.

What do I do when I write? I try to follow the lines. Lines present themselves to me like odors to a bloodhound. You have seen them, now and then, lift their heads and look around. Now and then I lift my head; mostly I keep my nose to the earth, wrapped in the racket of my snuffling. Nietzsche calls the nose the philosopher's organ. I'm no philosopher, but maybe I'm the same.

Should I say that it's like birdwatching? I've never been birdwatching. Whatever I might say about that is entirely my imagination. I'm waiting for even the briefest glimpse of what lives here. That it comes and goes is what makes it acute. I think of this as the ecological model: a sentence comes and goes, dragging with it like a snail its entire lifetime. The keenest among us might understand from the observation of its

posture and glance a full five minutes before it came, a full five minutes after it's gone. The rest, as they say, is silence.

Then writing is the embodiment of an ecosystem: all manner and size of the creatures of language—syllables, words, phrases, stanzas—all jostling, breathing, dying. What they have to do with one another is a matter of interpretation and teeth. We landscape painters are a sentimental lot. We want things in their better light. Not often do we haunt the gloom.

But let me return to the lines. Language I learned from Deleuze. I try to follow the lines. But I was following the lines all along. Digression is one of the lines. One of my favorite lines.

Then writing is the embodiment of an ecosystem: all manner and size of the creatures of language—syllables, words, phrases, stanzas—all jostling, breathing, dying.

As easy as you like, we occupy another point of view. Digression is one of the primary contemporary lines. "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold." Most of the classical thinkers tried to make the lines converge. Deleuze celebrates their divergence and discontinuity, because there is no going back from our investigation of things: things do not make sense. We make sense of them.

Psychology wants to make the lines converge in a personality. But people aren't like that, as far as I can see. For Deleuze, Spinoza is the great thinker of *affectus*: those movements by which is woven that manifold surface we call

reality. A person is only a thing in the arcane sense of that word: *thing*, an assemblage, a coming together of parts; a public and governing assembly of free men in early Germanic tribes. That is, a convocation of mutually determining lives.

I mention people because a lot of our writing is about them. We're the ones who do it, after all. And a lot of it is psychological. I haven't nurtured much interest in that. My own failing. But there's plenty of this kind of psychological work, conducted in depth and masterfully, leaving me free to pursue some other course.

Maybe this is just an excuse for my sloppiness

**The poem is intransigent.
It will not be rushed.
I tire long before it does,
and have to surrender
the effort.**

of craft. I found more labor in the lines: the tidal waves and surges of migration that populate the surface of real-

ity. Reality is topological, drawn by these movements that compose it, so that a hill is many things: the average annual rainfall and wind eroding it, and their prevalent directions; the plants and animals living on and inside of it, compacting or interrupting its earth; its geological ancestry; its soil composition, implicating, on the one hand, in which plants and animals thrive and, on the other, in the gradient of its slope; the way it looks in the sunlight or lending its shade to a picnic by the river. Following any one of these lines—how much change, how fast, what kind?—can lead straight to the heart and out again, on yet another adventure. For some of the lines composing the hill also compose the valley, and are themselves composed by others still. And the hill and the valley are a line in a landscape, and the landscape lives in a painting on a wall. The museumgoers are passing by, never even looking up. Their little screens absorb them, and the audio tour is droning in their ears.

It usually begins for me with an image, which is almost always both visual and lingual at once. What are you about?, I ask. I want to know what it's doing there in my heart. I rarely see it coming. It steals in from behind. Not how come you're here and why won't you leave but

a tender question: What are you up to? What are you about? Then writing takes the form of a listening, with the eyes and the ears: I watch it unfold and follow its sound. It often comes on with a rush of impressions; I take these down as quickly as I can, to get the general outline of events. Then the interview begins. Or I am its amanuensis. Carefully and gradually, I refine my understanding: this is done through drafting and asking, drafting and asking. Every time I try a word, the whole shudders. Is that right?, I want to know. No, no. Don't you see how it's trembling there? Try and shore it up some other way. We're fashioning together some strange articulation, a song our throats weren't built to sing. This is how we travel. Every time I make a discovery, everything transforms; one line, trespassing another, enters another regime.

These images (I work almost entirely in images) are not made in the writing, but neither do they preexist it. There is an intimation in me but not of me; I do not wish to express it but to body it. Unless to express means to let a bird hatch out your mouth. It doesn't belong there to begin with. Its stuff is sound. The sound is like a choreography for the tongue. Put the bird back in your mouth and ask it to sing for you. Then your own body is subject to certain contortions. These contortions are the lines, as they find witness in your tissue. They are necklaces of tension and release; strung along them like priceless pearls are indefinable events involving the entire world. You can often sense these events as changes in direction or speed. The poem brakes suddenly, accelerates or takes a turn too fast. Or it changes color or texture or tone.

I only know I'm done when it's done. I can't work any faster than it will. I can hurry it to some extent by frantic drafting (notebook pages stammering the same lines time and again, searching for an avenue of egress.) But the poem is intransigent. It will not be rushed. I tire long before it does, and have to surrender the effort. I began the poem in question almost a year ago. I found myself in the jaws of a problem I did not have the strength to meet. I put it down for many months. A month or so ago, we happened upon some progress: another couple lines resolved themselves and came stampeding off the page,

knees and ankles leaking light. Then we got stuck in the mud again. Some intrepid probing here and there occasioned the short-lived thrill of triumph; but the day has not been won. Together, we ruminate the cud of the poem's central image, which turns upon itself there, somewhat to the side of the poem's own trajectory. Its narrator is ignorant of himself, as am I. He misses the point, but not by a mile. The most crucial lies closest at hand. And once this image has crystallized, the rest of the poem remains. Where will it take me in the end? For I tend to work in sequence, as a reader might read.

I wrote that I regret I haven't finished, then struck it out. What is there to regret? This poem and I are old chums. When I see it on my doorstep taking big, long strides toward the sidewalk and down the way, I'll wave goodbye. Goodbye!, I'll cry, the sun in my eyes. Wasn't that a funny visit? Won't you write sometime? Old poems are like photos on the wall. Every now and then an earthquake comes and dumps them all over the floor; I sweep up the pieces and throw them away. Then the walls are blank again.

I wrote this poem to while the time.

for a friend

Because they're such good friends of mine, the clouds come over and pour down rain. They wouldn't if they weren't. Then all the grass

would die, and all the flowers wither. Instead, they let the sun shine down and hardly ever stay too long. They're excellent

houseguests that way, barely making any noise coming in or going out. When I'm grey, they match my mood. When

I'm feeling playful, they make every kind of wonderful shape—then wave goodbye and blow away.

Up pops the moon.





Openness

Quinn Anderson

One of the greatest challenges of my spiritual journey is isolation. I've spent a lot of my life pushing people away, hoping to hide from the threat of disapproval and rejection. These days, I'm trying to face this belief that I have to either be hurt in my relationships or avoid them. That either I have to be "perfect," or isolated. Throughout my life, I've by and large chosen isolation. Thus, this quarantine is a comfort zone. Weeks spent holing myself up, avoiding human contact... It's certainly a familiar way of life. Yet, as the days go along, I keep imagining how I can relate to community, to my involvement in DRBU, to my relationships with others. The message I've received is simple: "Open your heart."

Before I arrived back home, I was all too aware of my heart center: it felt dark and compressed, burning with pain, with anxiety, anger, and hatred. A byproduct of severe self-hatred and self-criticism that

It suddenly occurred to me: I ought to be doing this work so that I can be well, not so that I can embody a mere image for others, to receive the recognition I always feel I lack.

pervaded my daily existence. It was physically, emotionally, and psychically uncomfortable. I struggled against facing the causes head on and instead just leaned into them—into further anger and depression and self-injury. Something started to shift a bit since arriving at my parents'

home in Washington state: with so little distraction to pull me out of this funk, I realized I needed to start working on my loving-kindness, for real, so I can really look at myself and my conditions without all the hatred. No more talking about it every once in a while or shrugging it off as probably-impossible or not-*really*-necessary.

I was sitting in meditation last week, examining myself, when I saw my self-criticism for what it is: a destructive impulse of self-rejection. The need to "fix" what's wrong—a fault-finding, turned inwards. It appears to arise from a need to be approved of, cared for, loved, and received with affection—from a need to be seen as good. The underlying belief says, if I can correct myself, then no one will reject me; if I can punish myself, no one will blame me for my faults. Seeing that, it suddenly occurred to me: I ought to be doing this work so that I can be well, not so that I can embody a mere image for others, to receive the recognition I always feel I lack. And right there, I silently recited the

Reflections on Universal Wellbeing and felt true loving-kindness dispel the discomfort in my chest. A wish for my own wellness, the sensation breathtakingly soothing.

Since then, I've continued to struggle to bring that loving-kindness to life. I've worked up and down, in and out of caustic and healing states, given the arising of conditions, the choices I've made in response, the ever-changing landscape of my becoming in the world. But as I work through these ups and down, this process of cultivating openness and loving-kindness is forcing me to acknowledge some pretty serious obstructions, and I'm realizing how much effort I've spent running over the last several months. And if I'm really trying to run, it requires a whole lot of dishonesty—about myself, about my life, about my thoughts, feelings, and actions.

This dishonesty is not something new to me. Much of my life has been filled with a ram-bunctious and unabashed dishonesty. Perhaps this is not so abnormal, but I ended up in many precarious situations because it. Before entering DRBU, my life had stalled out due to the choices I'd made to be dishonest with myself and others. Every one of my social spheres was affected by a falseness, a hiddenness, to my being. Part of my spiritual awakening came through this realization, and through the process of at least partially dealing with those problems. But now, I'm discovering more layers: Excuses, narratives, hidden agendas. As I spend so much time in isolation, unable to avoid these problems, I see more and more places where I'm given to falseness.

Sometimes, it appears random. Often, I find myself making up stories, right there on the spot. Just creating identities from scratch. But other times, it has a more direct appearance: the reasons why I did or did not do something, what my actual intentions behind a thought, a bodily action, a word, are. And I've noticed a common

theme: there's a capitulation to an image of goodness, rather than an adherence to the integrity of goodness itself. An unwillingness to acknowledge how driven by desire, how insecure, how self-centered my habits can be. A fear of loss - of community, of life, of home. That if all is truly known, that which is deemed evil will secure my social banishment. Thus, little sincerity and genuine spirit guides my actions. There's often dishonesty about those very actions and their outcomes and the ways I deny to myself the true impact of a given decision. Whether or not it truly harms me or another, what I truly receive in return. All of this is the kindling feeding the fire in my chest. I can actually follow these trails of psychosomatic pain, and find at their roots the ways I'm running from my past, putting up a front, trying to get ahead, trying to survive, trying to be loved, to be seen, to be awarded for some story I've subconsciously concocted. I can see how one thought can ignite this pain, while another can extinguish it, depending on its truthfulness. And I've come to see how those lies told for so many years still chase me down and obstruct my practice.

Even as I write and edit this, I wonder, where I am not being honest here? What words, what phrases, sentences, assertions, ideas, are simply self-protective narrativizing? I know I must call into question each supposition I make about myself or the world. Each and every assertion could have one of many, sometimes several, motivations behind it. And being habitually mindless about this, habitually driven by grasping states, it's not in my mind to be aware of these problems—and worse, the motivations are by nature producing a self-protective identification. I fear, as the deadline draws near, that I will have spoken less truth than fiction. How many times will I need to reread it to tease apart truth? Even now, after a half dozen revisions, I feel my heart burning, and I don't know immediately what I'm ignoring. The only thing I feel

I can assume is that this essay is muddled with myriad agendas.

But no matter the difficulty, the work is beyond necessary: it's the life-saving surgical procedure needed to keep my spirit alive and breathing. What I'm discovering further is that the loving-kindness I want so desperately to feel can not abide if I am not honest with myself. If loving-kindness is a wish for wellbeing, then I can't be kind to myself if I'm not really willing to see what needs releasing, where I'm self-limiting—and I can't be kind to others if my repressive mentality gives rise to resentment and ill-will. The compassion I wish to embody will not manifest

if I do not suck it up and acknowledge the self-seeking behavior, the hidden agendas of cruelty, and the intentions that interrupt a truly altruistic space. The joy I want to feel will not come through if I cannot pierce the layers and see the jealousy and contentiousness as they occur. And equanimity? If at the core, the mind of desire and grasping, of self-clinging, runs rampant, there is no room to truly be level and equal in all things, to be without limitation in my mind. When I try to manifest any of these qualities without awareness, while turning a blind eye, it simply becomes a self-congratulatory dream, an illusion aimed at alleviating my anxiety about whether or not I'm a good person. It's merely a fantasy of myself, nothing more.

Honesty, though, requires a certain mentality: a relaxed awareness that's not there to judge, to approve or disapprove, but simply to acknowledge. Honesty is not self-criticism either, which seeks a different illusion: the one where I can enforce a strict social code on my person that leads to perfect social harmony and

the fulfillment of all social desires. Thus, when I do succeed in slowing down and seeing clearly, without puffing myself up or putting myself down, just acknowledging and opening up without fear, my heart relaxes and loving-kindness begins to manifest.

My days are currently filled with a process of up and down, round and round. It

Thus, when I do succeed in slowing down and seeing clearly, without puffing myself up or putting myself down, just acknowledging and opening up without fear, my heart relaxes and loving-kindness begins to manifest.

helps to turn in and say: Okay, what do you need to acknowledge that you're trying to ignore? Just slow myself down and be present with my deep underlying tendencies. At this point, I really only do it the minutest sliver of the time that I could. The rest of the time, I'm so given to a myriad of hypercharged

narratives, I can barely sit still, let alone deal with whatever is arising, without collapsing into depression, anxiety, or both—or without intentionally giving rise to self- and other-destructive activities. Of course, a lot of this is just the same problem: the self-protective narratives rearing their heads again. That's when I turn outward the most—seeking this or that comfort, this or that catharsis. But each time I do that, I feel those poisonous clouds lay waste to my garden. And the times I resist, the times I patiently turn back to practice, allowing it to slowly seep in through the layers, I feel more gentle and free.

I thank the Berkeley Buddhist Monastery for hosting so much Dharma practice during these times. It is a place of true community wellness. I also thank the unexpected delivery of social isolation to force me to really dig deep and practice. I thank all of you at DRBU, all of my spiritual mentors and companions, for your loving-kindness, your compassion, and your patience with me over the months. With *mettā*.



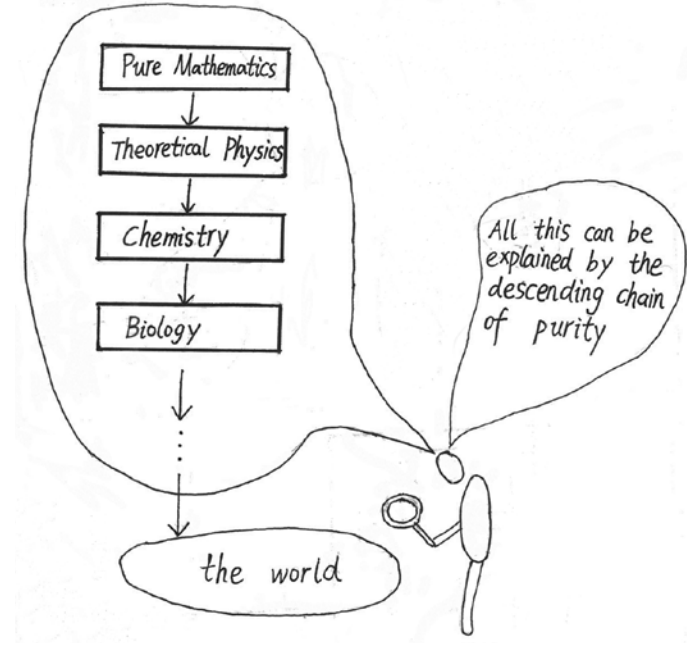
There were two separate worlds in my mind

The ideal, rational world of the mind where everything is perfect

$\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n^2} = \frac{\pi^2}{6}$
 $e^{ix} + i = 0$
 $\frac{d}{dt} \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{x}_j} = \frac{\partial L}{\partial x_j}$
 $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{-x^2} dx = \sqrt{\pi}$
 $(A \Rightarrow B) \Rightarrow (\neg B \Rightarrow \neg A)$

And the real world prone to error and change that doesn't make sense

I thought as long as I have the ideal world, then I am above the troubled world.



But as I practiced more, I realized ...

That math-only world seems kinda narrow

I seem to have a body that feels cold...

there seem to be real people suffering

For me, vulnerability began when I began to pay attention to: what does it mean to be HUMAN?

Artwork: Jianqiu Wu

Crossing-Guard

I had a fall and broke my kneecap a few weeks ago,
But thought I'd still try joining the retreat
In honor of Guan Yin, for at least one morning.
Sue drove me to the hall.
I popped my injured leg up on a chair
Out of the path of the assembly
As they circled round and sang the chant,
"Na Mo Guan Shi Yin Pu Sa"—
Homage to the Bodhisattva Guan Shi Yin!

The morning session ceased half an hour early.
I set out walking towards the Admin building
To call my ride. A walk of some five minutes—
A walk I've made at least ten thousand times—
But not with one leg dragging in a brace,
Not hobbling while I leaned upon a cane.
I was weary far too soon. Fearing most of all another fall,
I wished that somebody would stop to help,
Bring me a chair to rest on, or fetch me in their car.
People kept breezing by, not seeing me.
Perhaps their minds were focused on the chant
Though as for my mind, its complaining
Had quickly pushed the chant aside and silenced it.

I didn't see her until she stood beside me—
One of the tame peahens that run free
About the temple grounds. Usually
The peahens run in groups, keeping their shy distance,
Not like their males, who display their gaudy fans
To challenge human trespassers who would presume
To venture onto their proprietary sidewalks.
But this peahen, the one beside me, was alone.

I stopped to look at her, and she looked back,
Intelligence was in her eye, and some deep amusement.
It seemed appropriate to say good morning.
Feeling heartened—and idly puzzling—
Whether I had seen before that bright red-orange band
Around the neck of any other peahen—
I found I could resume my slow halting walk.
Keeping my slow pace, she walked beside me.
A boy, as he stepped briskly past us, reached into a bag.
And tossed some breadcrumbs down the path.
The peahen ran to peck them up, and then returned
To walk again companionably next to me.

We reached the street and entered it,
With her beside me as my crossing-guard.
On the other side, for decades now
Beneath a Russian olive tree, a bench has been subsiding.
Grateful, I subsided slowly onto it.
She stood a few feet away now, on the sidewalk
And seeing, as it seemed, that I was safe for now,
She began her morning grooming, as birds do,
Twisting her neck and burying her head beneath her wing,
Fluffing out her breast, ruffling her feathers black and white.
Ten minutes passed this way
In a comfortable silence of friends.
Then two young human friends drove up,
And as we talked,
The peahen straightened from her grooming,
Looked at us, walked farther away, stopped,
Then watched us with one eye,
Waiting. Soon Alex, my ride, drove up too.
I started in laboriously sliding backwards
Onto the seat of his car,
Intent on keeping straight my injured leg,
And we were halfway home before I realized
That I hadn't said goodbye or seen her go.

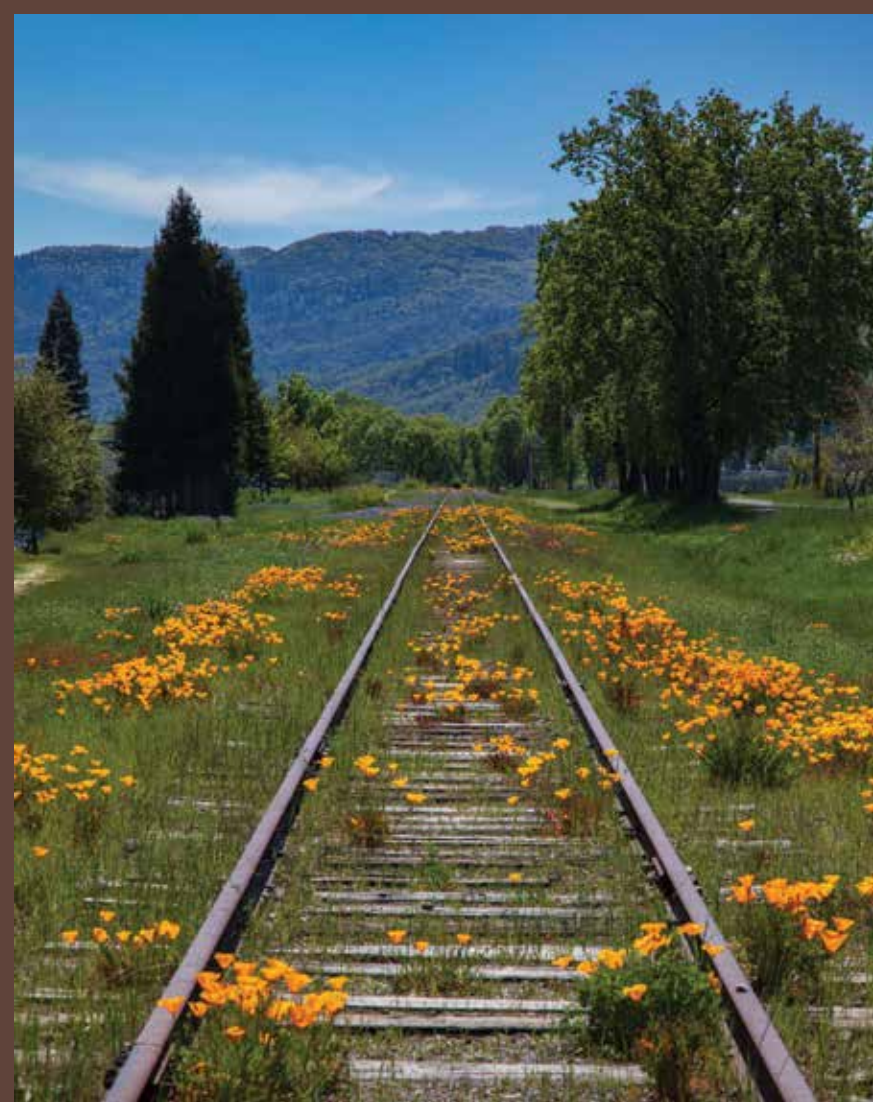
For a few days afterward, I blamed myself
That I had taken her so much for granted,
That only later had I thought to be astonished
At her simple gift of walking next to me.
I felt ashamed; I hadn't even thanked her.
But then I remembered the amusement I had noticed
Glinting in the depths of her keen eye, and I think
She knew I wouldn't wonder who she was, at least not then,
And she was far beyond a need for thanks.
Not only had she rescued me—
She'd planted in my heart a seed of quiet happiness
And my accepting it was thanks enough.

— David Rounds August 20, 2010

Sheltering in Place in the Ukiah Valley—Spring 2020



Photography: Stan Shoptaugh



Translating Poems from Master Han Shan and Master Shi Wu

Tomas Fletcher

Here are a few poems I translated. The first three are by the Tang Dynasty Chan Master Han Shan (寒山, Cold Mountain). The last two are by the twelfth century Chan Master Shi Wu (石屋, Stone House).

MASTER HAN SHAN'S POEMS:

我行經古墳，淚盡嗟存沒。
塚破壓黃腸，棺穿露白骨。
欹斜有甕餅，振撥無簪笏。
風至攬其中，灰塵亂。

My path led through an ancient cemetery,
The tears had left, the sighing all long gone.
Yellow guts spilled out from broken grave mounds,
Bleached white bones were poking out of coffins.
Some urns and vases stood there all askew,
No writing brush or bamboo tablet moved.¹
Just then, a rush of wind came stirring by,
Dust and ashes swirled throughout the air.

自樂平生道，煙蘿石洞間。
野情多放曠，長伴白雲閑。
有路不通世，無心孰可攀。
石床孤夜坐，圓月上寒山。

My joys are in the simple ways of life,
Through misty vines and mountain cavern depths.
The wilderness has so much room to roam,
With drifting snow white clouds — my old companions.
There is a path, but not one into town,
Only those without a mind can climb it.
I rest on boulders all alone at night,
And watch the full moon rise above Cold Mountain.

¹ A reference to writing utensils used by government officials

千雲萬水間，中有一閒士。
白日遊青山，夜歸巖下睡。
倏爾過春秋，寂然無塵累。
快哉何所依，靜若秋江水。

Amidst a thousand clouds, ten thousand streams,
There exists a single idle man.
Roaming verdant mountains under clear-lit skies,
Sleeping underneath the cliffs at night.
Watching springs and autumns passing by,
Free of any cares and earthly burdens.
Satisfied indeed without attachments,
Tranquil like a flowing stream in autumn.

MASTER SHI WU'S POEMS:

臥雲深處不朝天。只在重巖野水邊。
竹榻夢回窓有月。砂鍋粥熟竈無煙。
萬緣歇盡非除遣。一性圓明本自然。
湛若虛空常不動。任他滄海變桑田。

Resting deep within the clouds where dawnlight doesn't shine,
Among high cliffs and bordering a river running wild,
Dreaming on a bamboo cot, the moon comes up my window.
The porridge in my pot is ready when the stove smoke clears,
A million reasons vanish without being driven off.
The perfect radiance of our single nature freely shines,
As vast as empty space it is eternally unmoving,
The ocean blue is now changed into groves of berry trees.

破屋三兩椽。住在千峰上。
雲散天空清。放目聊四望。
世界空裏花。起滅皆虛妄。
日落山風寒。閉門燒火向。

My shabby hut is two by three beams wide,
Resting high above a thousand peaks.
Whenever clouds disperse, the sky is clear.
My eyes look out across the four horizons.
The world is but a flower in the sky —
Its formation and decay, a fantasy.
Mountain sunsets bring a chilling wind.
I close my door and look into the fire.

I Stand to be Alive for the First Time

Norbel Casas

What does it mean to be human?

no, I'm serious.

what does it mean to live a meaningful and fulfilling life?

I'm not looking for a textbook answer, yet that may be a starting point.

in any case, the best I can do is unravel this hidden, churning concoction that this lively yet vulnerable heart yearns to express for some odd, unknown reason beyond myself.

such attempts don't seek to give you a graspable security like the sudden accidental bumping to that elegant sight—the moon. . . .

that very moon!

that was always there on that cool-brisk autumn night,

its grandiose breath-taking beauty sweeping you off your feet.

yet such beauty remains only exquisite in its bitter impermanence and momentary pleasure in its presence.

Is this what it means to be human?!

to be vulnerable!

to be this extremely vulnerable!

why would anyone want to be human?!

like a fawn peacefully quenching his thirst in a crystal-clear water abode when—abruptly—a pack of wolves nearby give away their stealthy presence with loud pants and howls.

Is it not a pity, that one can not see such enemies so close at hand?

the mind's vices.

these destructive, negative emotions and thoughts.

what is their cause?

why do we slight vulnerability as an alleged weakness? At least some of us do . . .

Though I can't speak on everyone's behalf.

allow this to be said.

Childhood—innocent, a joyful being—like a litter of puppies that surmounts even the grumpiest fellow's frown away.

even so, an unprecedented occurrence overtook the mind and rippled oceanic waves, toppling the sailors' boats.

. . . Some time ago, I walked along with my inner child like two best friends would.

then, Adulthood neared abruptly.

the child picked up the most marvelous yet ill-omen flower

—*the Forget-me-not flower*—

the boy, intent on sharing his discovery and joy, was startled as soon as he turned back and noticed the unannounced stranger—Adulthood.

such a jolting reaction caused him to fall into the rapid river current of forgetfulness.

fearing for his safety, I reached out with a long, sturdy tree branch.

I couldn't pull him in, but his grasp on it prevented his drowning

I vowed to save him: "Don't die on me! Live on!

I'll definitely find you one day! I won't forget about you!"

until then, I remained with this other figure.

the continued journey was a tremulous one.

hardship and vulnerability lead to odd and severe repercussions, freezing my heart—yet hope was not lost—like an archaeologist discovering the Great Mammoth preserved beautifully frozen in time, untouched by the maws of death in the icy caverns of the Arctic.

It was only upon that warm and unexpected human exposure, did this vulnerable heart suddenly spring to life . . .

however, it's quintessential to debunk myths that prevent true living.

vulnerability allows us to connect with others

vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage.

thus, in order to be daringly great, we must acknowledge the greatest risk of feeling hurt: there is nothing more uncomfortable, dangerous, and hurtful than believing that I'm standing on the outside of my life, looking in, and wondering what it would be like if I had the courage to show up and let myself be seen.

Can you be human and not be vulnerable?

I don't think so.

Life is vulnerability.

It's high time we remove this armor that prevents living and vulnerability.





Artwork: Bhikshuni Heng Ching

*“I hide among the tall lotus flowers and smell their sweetness.
The lotus grows out of mud, but the flower is pure and beautiful.
This reminds me to work through difficult times, so I too can
bloom like a lotus.”*

From an upcoming book, *Wu Mo's Day*, from Instilling Goodness Books written by Bhikshuni Jin Rou and Terri Nicholson

回春醫療保健操動作、要領、作用與圖解

INSTRUCTIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS FOR PERFORMING THE
MOVEMENTS OF THE RETURNING TO SPRING EXERCISES
FOR CURING AND MAINTAINING HEALTH AND DESCRIPTIONS
OF THEIR FUNCTIONS

Translated by Bhikshuni Heng Chih et alia

These exercises are part of an ongoing series, exercises 1 to 10 were published in the Summer 2018 issue, exercises 11 to 20 were published in the Fall/Winter 2018 issue, and exercises 21 to 30 are in the Fall 2019 issue.

31. 轉膝、

ROTATING THE KNEES

32. 壓腿動作

兩腳并攏，曲膝，兩手分別按兩膝，由右、前、左轉32次，再反方向轉32次。
轉畢兩腿伸直，向後壓16次。
作用：活動膝、踝關節，伸筋。
防治：腿痛、關節炎、曲伸不利。

PRESSING ON THE KNEES

Motion: Place the two legs together and bend the knees. The hands are placed one on each knee. Rotate the knees from right to left 32 times. Then reverse the motion 32 times. Then straighten the legs, pressing back (on the knees) 16 times.

Function: Exercises the joints of the knees and ankles. Stretches the muscles.

Preventative Cure: Pain in the legs, inflammation of the joints. Helps with difficulty in bending and straightening.



33. 前踢腿



動作：. 兩手叉腰，右大腿抬平，腳尖向下前踢，兩腿交替進行32次。
作用：活動膝、踝關節，疏通足三陰、足三陽經絡。
防治：下肢痛麻、痙攣。

KICKING FORWARD

Motion: The two hands grasp the waist. Lift the right leg until the thigh is horizontal and then kick forward with the toe. Alternate each leg 32 times.

Function: Exercises the joints of the knees and ankles. Clears the three yang and three yin channels of the foot.

Preventative Cure: Helps with pain or numbness in the lower limbs. Helps with cramps and convulsions.

34. 原地跳



動作：兩臂前平伸，手心相對，原地跳，腳平落地。兩臂隨同跳，交替上下擺動64次。
作用：活動全身關節，疏通經絡，調整內臟功能，具有按摩五臟六腑的作用。

JUMPING IN PLACE

Motion: The two arms are extended with the palms of the hands facing each other. Then jump in place, alternately (or simultaneously) bringing the feet flat down to the ground. The two arms move up and down in rhythm with the running 64 times.

Function: Exercises all the joints in the body. Clears the Principle and Connecting Channels. Regulates the functions of the internal organs. Provides a very thorough massage of the viscera and the bowels.

35. 七敲



1.敲大陵穴32次。2.敲腕背陽池穴32次。3.敲合谷穴32次。4.敲後溪穴32次。
5.又虎口(八邪穴)32次。6.又四指根部八邪穴32次。7.敲內勞宮穴32次。
作用：疏通經絡、活血化癥。
防治：頭、齒、喉、臂、腕痛、半身不遂，和各種手疾、心痛、心煩、口臭、增強心肺功能。

STRIKING SEVEN POINTS (on the hands)

- (1) Strike the da ling (big mound) points at the base of the palms 32 times.
- (2) Strike the yang du (Yang pool) points on the backs of the wrists 32 times.
- (3) Strike the hegu (paired hollow) points at the hollow between the thumbs and the index fingers 32 times. [Use the first joint of the

opposite thumb to beat at the hegu points in the hollow at the base of the other thumb].

- (4) Strike the houxi (back creek) points on the outsides of the hands just below the base of the little fingers 32 times.
- (5) Fold the tiger's mouth--clasp the baxie, (eight points) by lacing the fingers and clasping the hands points 32 times.
- (6) Lacing the four fingers, pound at the roots of the baxie (eight points) points 32 times.
- (7) Strike the inner laogong (temple of toil) points on the palms (at the base of the ring fingers) 32 times.

Function: Clears the Principle and Connecting Channels. Stimulates blood circulation and heals bruises.

Preventative Cure: Head, teeth, throat, arms, and wrist pain. Stroke paralysis (half-body paralysis). Cures pains in the hands, heart pain, restlessness, and bad breath. Strengthens lungs and heart functions.

36. 八打

1.打陰陽交穴32次。2.打足三里，地機穴32次。3.打陰陽陵泉穴32次。4.打風市、血海穴32次。5.打箕門、陰門穴32次。6.打雙側居了穴32次。7.打雙側承扶穴32次。8.打雙側環跳穴32次。

作用：疏通經絡、活血化癥、加強腿力、促進循環。

防治：腿痛、下肢麻痺、偏癱、婦科病、陽

HITTING EIGHT POINTS (on the legs)

- (1) Hit the yin and yang jiao (yin/yang connection) points on the lower calves 32 times.
- (2) Hit the zusanli (three paths of the foot) points and diji (moving power of earth) points at the base of the knees 32 times.
- (3) Hit the yinyanglingquan (welling fountain of yin/yang) points at the sides below the knees 32 times.
- (4) Hit the xuehai (sea of blood) and fengshi (wind area) points on the lower thighs above the knees 32 times.
- (5) Hit the jimén (fanshaped door) and yinmén (yin door) points on the inner thighs 32 times.
- (6) Hit the juliao (place of reliance) points on both sides at the groin 32 times.
- (7) Hit the chengfu (support) points at the base of the buttocks 32 times.
- (8) Hit the huantiao (circular jump) points at the side of the buttocks 32 times.



Function: Clears the Principle and Connective Channels. Stimulates blood circulation. Heals bruises. Strengthens legs. Promotes circulation.

Preventative Cure: leg aches, numbness of the lower limbs, female illnesses, impotence, and stomach aches.



37. 蹲堆

動作：兩臂前平伸，手心向下，身下蹲，大腿約與地面平行，蹲起8次。
作用：活動髖、膝、踝關節，通經活絡，促進循環，增強腿力。
防治：關節炎、腰腿痛，酸軟無力。

SQUATTING DOWN

Motion: The two arms are extended out straight with the palms down. Squat down until the things are horizontal with the ground. Squat and rise eight times.



Function: Exercises the joints of the thighs, knees, and ankles. Clears and stimulates the Principle and Connecting Channels. Improves circulation and strengthens the legs.

Preventative Cure: Inflammation of the joints. Aches and pains, and weakness in the waist and legs.



38. 打膝

動作：彎腰垂臂，兩手交替拍打兩膝32次。
作用：同26節。

SLAPPING THE KNEES

Motion: Bend the knees and let the arms hang down. The two hands alternately slap the two knees 32 times.

Function: same as #26

39. 蹲足跟

動作：兩手指交叉抱後腦，收腹提肛，提起腳跟，重心移至前腳掌。再將重心移腳後跟落地8次。

作用：活動踝、腳關節，刺激涌泉穴。
防治：足跟骨刺和踝關節周圍疾病及痔瘡，增強腎功能。

LIFTING AND LOWERING THE HEELS

Motion: Clasp the two hands with fingers laced, behind the back of the neck. Draw in the stomach and pull up the rectum tightly. While lifting the heels, concentrate on the bottoms of the feet, and then as the heels are brought down hard, shift the concentration to the backs of the heels. Repeat the motion eight times.

Function: Exercises the joints of the ankle and foot. Stimulates and clears the yongquan (bubbling spring) points.

Preventative Cure: "Bone thorns" at the heels and in the ankle joints as well as illnesses and sores in that area. Increases the strength of kidneys' functioning.



40. 托腹

動作：兩手指交叉托住小腹。鬆腰、墜胯、曲伸膝關節，使身體上下顫動二百次。

作用：活動腰、胯、膝關節，疏通經絡，調理臟腑，促進血液循環，強健脾胃，化瘀散滯。

防治：胃腸疾病、便秘、減肥。

SUPPORTING THE STOMACH

Motion: With the two hands, fingers laced, supporting the abdomen, relax the waist, lower the thighs, bend the knees, and then shake the entire body from top to bottom 200 times.

Function: Exercises the joints of the waist, thighs, and knees. Clears the Principle and Connecting Channels. Regulates the viscera and bowels. Improves blood circulation. Strengthens the spleen and stomach. Heals bruises.

Preventative Cure: Illnesses of the stomach and intestines, constipation. Reduces fat.





Artwork: Jackie Farley

“Vulnerability has hit me hard of late. My seventh decade on this planet was meant to be a jubilant celebration with all kinds of goals set. Instead, it has been a series of unfortunate events. I completed this painting when I was recovering from a total hip replacement, confined to my home. The small figure on the lake is my husband sculling off into the distance.”

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Good and Wise Friends, we want to hear from you! This magazine is what you make of it. We cherish your work and want to see it in print. The theme of our upcoming Fall 2020 issue is RESILIENCE. Let it inspire you, but don't be beholden to it! Please send us your:

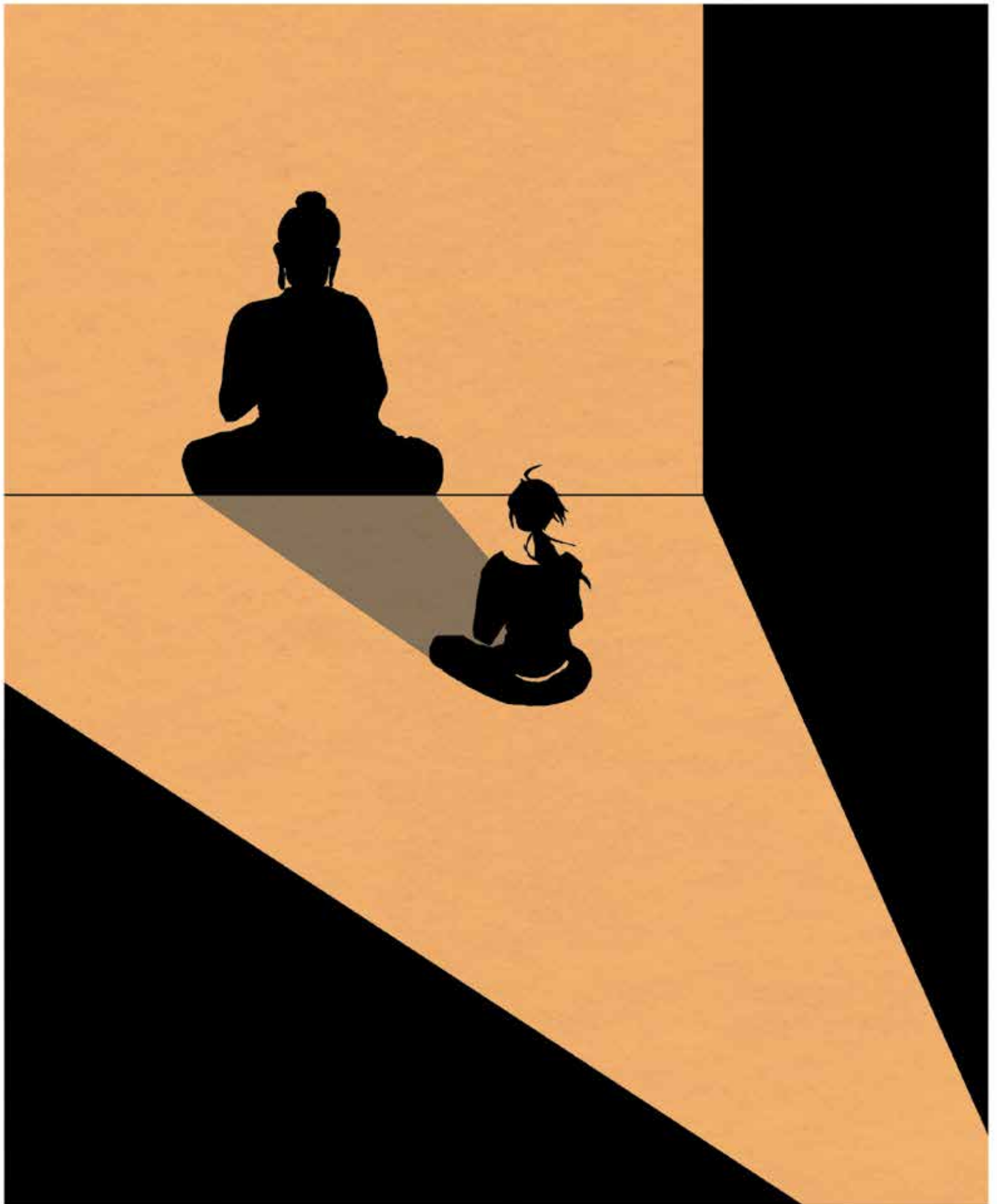
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