



GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS, WHO KNOWS?

OPENING TO THE TRUTH OF CONSTANT CHANGE

by Heather Sundberg

There is an archetypal story from ancient China that serves me well. It reminds me to stay equanimous and open to the mystery and helps me face the constant changes of life with non-reactivity and compassion.

A farmer acquires a horse to plow his fields. However, the horse soon runs away. A neighbor says, "That's bad news."

The farmer replies, "Good news, bad news, who knows?"

The horse comes back and brings another horse with him.

"Good news," you might say. But the farmer's response was the same: "Good news, bad news, who knows?"

The farmer gives the second horse to his son, who rides it and is thrown, breaking his leg. Neighbors console the farmer: "Sorry for your bad news." Yet still the farmer replies, "Good news, bad news, who knows?"

A week later, the emperor's army takes every able-bodied young man to fight in a war. The farmer's son is spared. The farmer's response?

"Good news, bad news, who knows?"

Although there are certain things that most would agree are "good news" or "bad news," when we look a little deeper we discover that much is open to interpretation. Which is very good news—because it means we have a choice about how to respond to our ever-changing world.

THREE WAYS TO PRACTICE WITH CHANGING CONDITIONS

1. *Grieving Change:* When something happens, and for us it's "bad news," this is a time to acknowledge the loss, to bring in compassion for ourselves and others. Noticing changes in the face of difficulty can be a wonderful refuge, as we remember to say, "This too shall pass." We

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This edition of Dharma Stream is devoted to the theme of "Impermanence."

Access the complete newsletter online at www.mtstream.org.

can also notice whether we have a habit to think of change in general as "difficult" or not.

2. *Celebrating Change:* When something happens, and for us it's "good news," this is a time to celebrate the beautiful sense of possibility and aliveness the messenger of change can provide without attachment to future outcomes.

3. *Practicing with the Flow of Change in Direct Experience:* Meditation practice invites us into the direct experience of change, moment by moment. Sometimes amazing, sometimes completely unnerving, this direct experience has the power to transform how we relate to reality, becoming ever more wise to experience. Enjoy being curious about how change manifests in your body and mind the next time you meditate! ❁

DAYLONGS AND RETREATS

September 2015 through February 2016

For the most up-to-date information, visit www.mtstream.org

SEPTEMBER 4–13

9-Night Residential Retreat
John Travis, Dennis Warren
Angela Center, Santa Rosa, CA
INFO: res-ret-reg@Sactoinsight.org

SEPTEMBER 19, SATURDAY 9:30AM–4:30PM

John Travis
Sacramento, CA (SBMG)
INFO: www.sbm.org

SEPTEMBER 26, SATURDAY 9:30AM–5:00PM

Marv Treiger
Nevada City Insight Center
INFO: vitskaia@mtstream.org

OCTOBER 7–14 (FULL)

John Travis and Joseph Goldstein
Jackson, WY
INFO: jjretreat@mtstream.org

OCTOBER 11, SUNDAY 10:00AM–4:30PM

Heather Sundberg
Develop Meditation Like the Earth
Placerville, CA
INFO: Mike at meburgess.lotus@gmail.com

OCTOBER 17, SATURDAY 10:00AM–5:00PM

Heather Sundberg
The Transformative Power of Awareness
Reno, NV
INFO: www.dharmazephyr.org

OCTOBER 18, SUNDAY 10:00AM–4:00PM

Heather Sundberg
Awareness Is a Refuge
Carson City, NV
INFO: www.dharmazephyr.org

OCTOBER 24, SATURDAY 10:00AM–5:00PM

Heather Sundberg
Develop Meditation Like the Earth
Sky Creek Dharma Center, Chico, CA
INFO: TBA (Save the date!)

OCTOBER 25, SUNDAY 10:00AM–5:00PM

Heather Sundberg
Wise Attitude of Mind: 3rd Foundation of Mindfulness
Nevada City Insight Center
INFO: TBA (Save the date!)

NOVEMBER 3–10 TUESDAY–TUESDAY (FULL)

John Travis & Heather Sundberg
Kailua Kona, Hawaii (Big Island)
INFO: Amanda at mtstream.hawaii.retreat@gmail.com

NOVEMBER 14, SATURDAY 9:30AM–4:30PM

Dennis Warren
Awakening From the Suffering of a Separate Self
Nevada City Insight Center
INFO: maryhelen@mtstream.org

NOVEMBER 21, SATURDAY 10:00AM–5:00PM

Heather Sundberg
Relaxation & Joy: Two Factors of Awakening
Sacramento, CA (SBMG)
INFO: www.sbm.org

DECEMBER 1–4 FOUR EVENINGS 7:00–8:30PM

John Travis
Annual Householder Retreat
Nevada City Insight Center
INFO: barbara@mtstream.org

DECEMBER 5, SATURDAY 9:30AM–4:30PM

John Travis
The 4th Foundation of Mindfulness
Nevada City Insight Center
INFO: barbara@mtstream.org

DECEMBER 12, SATURDAY 9:30AM–5:00PM

John Travis
Davis, CA
INFO: Amanda at davis.daylong@gmail.com

JANUARY 3, SUNDAY

John Travis
Celebrating Awareness in the New Year
Nevada City Insight Center
INFO: TBA (Save the date!)

JANUARY 8–17

9-Night Residential Retreat
John Travis
Nevada City, CA
INFO: jenna@mtstream.org



Dharma talks by John Travis and Heather Sundberg can be found at www.mtstream.org and www.dharmaseed.org.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE CENTER

Ongoing sessions at 710 Zion Street, Nevada City

MONDAY NIGHT SITTING GROUP

7:00pm to 8:30pm
Silent meditation and dharma talk.

OPEN TEMPLE FRIDAYS

10:00am to 2:00pm
Come sit, have tea, browse the library.

INSIGHT MEDITATION CLASSES

Fall 2015 and Winter 2016
6 weeks (see website for dates)

1ST WEDNESDAY VIDEO NIGHT

6:30pm to 8:00pm
Watch and discuss a movie together.

OTHER WEDNESDAYS

Kalyana Mitta Group
(Spiritual Friends)
6:30pm to 7:45pm
Interactive dharma meditation and exploration of Buddha's teachings.

FOR DETAILS, PLEASE VISIT WWW.MTSTREAM.ORG

New study group

ECO-SATTVA SANGHA

Nevada City Insight Center

Tuesdays, 6:30pm to 8:30pm
beginning September 15

8-week online course with in-person small group meetings facilitated by Otis Wollan.

The online portion includes talks by teachers, activists and experts in interactive Eco-Sattva Training.

INFO: Otis at otiswollan@gmail.com



ADD YOUR VOICE

The online *Dharma Stream* newsletter is published twice a year by a volunteer staff. Your contributions are warmly welcomed. For consideration, please submit articles, poems, photos, and artwork by:

- Feb 1, 2016 for Spring edition
- Aug 1, 2016 for Fall edition

Articles should be no more than 400 words, and may be edited by the newsletter team.

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SIT WITH OUR EXTENDED SANGHA

Connect with community in your local area

AUBURN

Canyon Spirit Yoga Center
Mary Helen 530-887-9400
maryhelen@mtstream.org

CARSON CITY, NV

Dharma Zephyr Sangha
www.dharmazephyr.org

CHICO

Heart of the Lotus Sangha
www.skycreekdharmacenter.org

DAVIS

Davis Insight Group
www.davisinsightgroup.org

DIAMOND SPRINGS

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O2 Yoga and Wellness
Karen 775-267-2424

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Your Place Too
Bruce 530-277-3470
bruce_pardoe@yahoo.com

PLACERVILLE

Sierra Insight Sangha
sue@boegerwinery.com

RENO, NV

Dharma Zephyr Sangha
www.dharmazephyr.org

One River Sangha

(LGBT and Allies)
www.oneriversangha.org

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SACRAMENTO

Sacramento Buddhist Meditation Group
www.sbm.org

Sacramento Insight Meditation

www.sactoinsight.org

THE LABYRINTH IS READY TO WALK!

by the Facility Committee



Photo credit: Nick Swartzendruber



Photo credit: Susan Solinsky



Photo credit: Nick Swartzendruber

The Mountain Stream Facility Committee is pleased to announce the completion of the labyrinth at our Nevada City Insight Center on Zion Street. This was truly a group effort – from a collaborative design process to construction by a sangha work party on May 23rd. Our committee discussed and vetted the labyrinth size, pattern and location. We met with John Travis on several occasions to receive his input. And we dedicated it as a community on Monday evening, June 22nd in a moving ritual led by Heather Sundberg where 55 of us walked it together.

Labyrinths go way back in time to Greece, Asia and pre-Columbian Americas. A prehistoric petroglyph of a labyrinth in Goa in West India has been dated to 2,500 BC. They are associated with various mythologies and come in a variety of shapes and layouts. The laby-

rinth pattern we selected is based on the design used in the Chartres Cathedral in France. That one was built circa 1220 AD and has eleven rings with a 42 foot diameter. The cathedral is a popular destination for pilgrimages as it is thought the labyrinth represents the long journey of a pilgrim.

Our Mt. Stream labyrinth is 34 feet in diameter with nine rings. The full length to walk in and back out is 1,100 feet (2/10ths of a mile). Brick was used to reflect the Center's exterior and keeps the labyrinth flush to the ground so it can be used for a variety of purposes. In the center is an Archimedean spiral pattern from the 3rd century B.C.

The labyrinth is a gift from the sangha, to the sangha. Funding was generously donated for this specific

purpose. The cost for materials was \$2,600 and all labor was volunteered.

We hope that it will be well used and enjoyed as a way to deepen meditation practice in a wonderful setting. We invite everyone to stop by the Center between 10am and 6pm to walk the labyrinth. May we all experience the peace of walking in nature. ☸

MT. STREAM FACILITY COMMITTEE

Rick Dondro, Chair
Marcia Craighead
Betsy Gosselin
Dan Skeahan
Steve Solinsky
Otis Wollan

CELEBRATING OUR NEW LABYRINTH AT THE CENTER

by Heather Sundberg

On the day after Summer Solstice, we held a Blessing Ritual for our new labyrinth.

The meditation hall was packed and overflowing into the foyer. After our weekly meditation, we journeyed into the backyard for our labyrinth walk and blessing.

Imagine 50+ people standing in a circle around the labyrinth. We called in “all benevolent forces” with a chant. We offered a water blessing for our drought-stricken land at the Japanese lantern stone water cairn.

We entered the labyrinth, one by one, setting our intentions, walk-

ing the path, each step blessing the earth, each step being blessed by the earth, sending Metta to each other, humming a Metta song together.

At the center of the labyrinth, each of us paused to ring a bell, listening to the whole sound of the bell, sending intention and blessings far and wide.

The best moment was when a young girl rang the bell. Our entire community spontaneously paused in our walking and looked on in delight.

We ended standing in a circle around the labyrinth singing

together, dedicating the merit, and sharing company together in the twilight of the Solstice time.

DEDICATING THE MERIT

In relation to the “Good News, Bad News, Who Knows” story, in addition to celebrating our new place of practice on the land at the Center, we also raised almost \$2,400 for Nepal Relief on the two-month anniversary of the great earthquake. Gratitude to all who have offered support of all kinds to those in difficulty in Nepal.

You are welcome to come and practice at the labyrinth. Enjoy! ❁



Blessing Ritual for New Labyrinth

Photo credit: Marcia Craighead

ABOUT TIME

by Jennifer India Scott

Driving to Wheatland, I know two things: I am very late. And I miss my kids. They are with their dad all week...therefore I will visit friends in Wheatland. So I am not alone.

I like driving but I hate being late. The Sutter Buttes shimmer in the distance. HOT.

Where am I going? I prod myself mentally. What is my big plan? My eyes fill with tears. I can't even get to my friend's house on time these days.

Recently I took a workshop with Joanna Macy. My fifth. Joanna is brilliant and calls us all "my dears." She is 80-plus, a Buddhist and environmental activist. She speaks lovingly, stridently about "The Radical Interconnectedness of All Phenomenahhhh." Her workshops are sweet, uncomfortable interactive gatherings where...WHOA...

Stretched across the road ahead, I suddenly see a large furry animal—unmoving.

Oh dear.

To stop feels very sudden. Probably a lot like what happened to this creature: Phenomenahhhh Coyote.

Cautiously I approach. No clear signs of wounds—only bright blood in her mouth. Green eyes open, but no life.

A blue car comes. I place myself in front of Coyote. The driver slows

to ask, "What are you going to do?"

"I have to get this dear friend off the road," I say and then I know it.

"Do you have a plastic bag?"

She shakes her head, speeds away.

A plastic bag? I wonder at myself. Was this Coyote my dear friend OR was I too scared to touch her skin to skin?

Did the animals and natural world just appear on Tarot cards and Deep Ecology t-shirts or would I show up for them? Now.

So I begin to pray:

O Coyote

This is new for me

And probably new for you, too

Help me

Help me help you

Together may we.....?

Leaning in...I am surprised to recognize worn foot pads.

Radical interconnectedness!

Reaching out, lifting her hind legs—heavy—I move backwards and begin to pull. Coyote's back legs stretch toward my grasp. Her entire spine arches in release before she is in motion.

Together may we...? Yes.

As I pull, her front paws kick forward saluting everywhere she has ever been.

And I hear myself saying:

Look at you. Jumping backward... backward in slow motion off this hot road to what is next and right for you.

And so was I. Moving, with help. Not alone. To what is next and right for me.

One coyote spirit—sky-sprung.
One woman—grateful.

No plans.

Just here now. About time. ❁



John Travis in Japan

Photo credit: Yuko Abo

HOME

by Susan Solinsky

Just standing there, waiting
you missed him even before you
left,
while sorrow pulled your arms -
already strained
with bags and luggage -
head numbed, worn thin
by children and no real sleep.

It would be days
'til your reunion, so you
asked if he was sad, swallowed
sharp tears
tasting a small death-like
separation, though brief,
seemed long
and as old as your life.

Suddenly a softness came,
a stirring and gratitude
for anything, any feeling,
then a knowing
how Time simply holds us
in her hands, gently,
as you held his, accepting
it all, and that you missed him
already
and boarded the train for home.



Photo credit: Kathy Schwerin

EXCEPT

by Kathy Schwerin

It was a crisp autumn morning,
and I was worried. My client, who
had been doing well recently, came
in very depressed and possibly
suicidal.

Fortunately, I thought to ask him
this question, “Have there been
any exceptions to these thoughts?”

He brightened and said, “Oh yes!
I took my dog for her morning
walk to a park we love. This is my
favorite time of year. The geese
were flying in formation overhead,
and the leaves on the trees were
dancing, looking at each other and
asking, ‘Is it time to let go?’ It was
a beautiful walk.”

Phew, I thought, he’s going to be
OK. He was able to shift back into
a relaxed and happy state, from
which we could then look more

clearly at what was upsetting him.

He’s depressed—except when he’s
not. I’m worried—except when
I’m not. I’m shy—except when I’m
not. I’m mad at her—except when
I’m not. I’m happy—except when
I’m not.

When we’re staking a claim on any
particular quality, it’s so helpful to
notice the exceptions, even with
positive emotions or thoughts, so
that we can truly enjoy them with-
out expecting them to last forever.
And with the painful ones, to give
them a little space so we can work
with them skillfully.

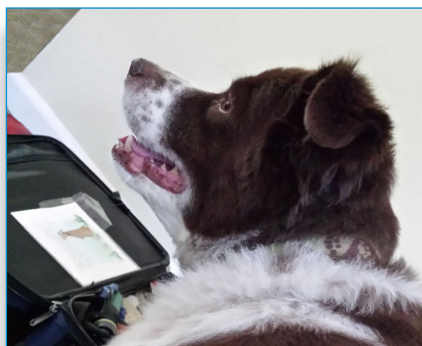
Thanks to therapists Stephen
Gilligan for teaching me this and
Stephen Nicholas for reminding
me of it. And thank you to the
client who gave me permission to
tell his story. ❁

*This entry was posted Kathy’s blog,
AMindfulBreath.com.*

CHARLIE IS GONE

by Susan Marcus

Charlie is gone, killed about two weeks ago in a hit and run. I'd only known him for three days, but we'd become fast friends.



Charlie

The day after I moved here my landlord, Bruce, had me over to pick up some extra keys and meet him and his wife, Melissa. Charlie greeted me at the door. Bruce explained that his barking was not aggressive, he was just excited to have company. So was I. As I sat with them at their spacious kitchen table, Charlie came right over to be petted: my welcoming committee.

Bruce and I had numerous interactions over the next few days—sorting out this and that, being neighborly, helpful, and Charlie was always in tow. When Bruce hung my new address sign on the narrow tree trunk out front, Charlie invited himself upstairs and joined me on my living room floor, where I sat rummaging through a yet-unpacked suitcase. While Bruce cut a nearby branch that hung too low

for my neighbor's Airstream, Charlie visited me on my porch. And he greeted me more and more eagerly each time I stopped by his house, the promise of a grand friendship to come.

So when I got Bruce's text that fateful Friday night, letting me know that Charlie had been killed, I was devastated. I had come to love this dog, already. I cried the grief of loss, the tears of sorrow, the pain of impermanence.

Maybe at some other time, when everything wasn't already in such upheaval, when I had not just lost my own dear cat to cancer, had not just four days earlier left my home, my job, my friends, even my partner, maybe then I might have taken the news like a "good Buddhist," with understanding that life is simply like this.

...Last year I came home from a retreat where I'd been greatly impacted by a meditation on impermanence. I remember looking at my dining table and really seeing it as already gone, like Ajahn Chah's famous teaching on his drinking glass. Foolishly, I thought, "I get it." Sure, I'd "gotten" that everything decays, that we will be separated from all that we love, that death is inevitable. But until you know this so deeply in your being that when tragic change like this happens, it's just like everything else: the present, you cry. ❁

POEMS

by Jan Tannarome

on the edge of a cloud shadow
here
on the two-lane winding road
to Colfax

rain
like feather of light
soundless
down
from a bright blue sky
a swarm of diamond light-bee
raindrops

not falling

flying

+ + + +

too late for poems
I have already made tea
my thoughts have scattered

found another ghost
turns out it was only me
no one else but me

with these kinds of things
I have to sit very still
to stop the movie

+ + + +

May 29

baby robins
in madrone nest, racketing
fresh sweet morning breeze

May 31

no more baby birds
green trees stand as still as night
ravens ate them all



GAS AND WEATHER

by *Corey Hitchcock*

“What about these clouds? Are we in for some weather?” asked the vacationer from L.A. “Well, look at it this way,” said the patient ranger. “You’ve got an 80 percent chance the weather will hold, and a 20 percent chance it won’t.” The man’s anxiety was not alleviated. He needed to know that this would be a good vacation. The ranger sent him to another ranger who would hopefully help him achieve his camping desires.

“I don’t care what the weather brings,” I thought. It was close to 90 degrees in the high desert that day. There were a few clouds drifting over from the northeast. I got my camping permit and headed off to set up my tent, just before sunset, beneath a rugged peak in the eastern Sierras.

On an upward winding trail the next morning, I marveled at the profusion of wildflowers, and the healthy flow of the high-country waterfalls I could see originating well above me among barren peaks. The moment I got back to my car, heavy drops of rain slogged down on my windshield.

The gas gauge was insistent, but I did not want to pay exorbitant prices at the nearby lake resort. I remembered finding very cheap gas to the north. I decided to risk the drive. When I got there, the station had changed its prices from 2.74 several days before to over 4 dollars a gallon. Was this possible, legal? Was this the same station? Not at all what I expected. As I purchased my expensive gas, a glance through the windows behind the register

revealed the darkest sky I had ever seen in daylight hours. A man next to me in line commented that this had “come out of nowhere.” The girl behind the register looked at us placidly.

The drive back began with a clap of thunder and slow progress up the pass, while spectacular forks of lightning attacked a nearby peak that looked more and more sulfurous. When I finally pulled into camp, it was abuzz with wool-capped campers shouting storm stories around soggy fires, and a dashboard thermometer registering 40 degrees. I had missed the cold heart of the storm, but there was a substantial mound of melting snow behind my tent, thankfully still reasonably dry. Everything else was soaked. I scrambled to get into warmer clothes.

Gas and weather I thought, laughing at myself. ❁

GONE

by *Rick Rowan*

You could pull the shades down,
spend your whole life watchin’ TV
You could eat a lotta donuts, gain a
lot of weight, it’s easy
Or you could pump some iron,
and do a lot of reps
You could get some definition in
your pecs
But either way you go, someday
you will be GONE

You could be a banker, worship the
almighty dollar

Watch your bank account grow,
while your personality gets smaller

Or you could give away every dime
you’ve got

You could never have a single self-
ish thought

But either way you go, someday
you will be GONE

You could be a monk, take a vow
to never marry

You could eat a lotta brown rice,
never leave the monastery

Or you could hit the bars, every
single night

You could put the moves on every
girl in sight

But either way you go, someday
you will be GONE

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(ASCAP) and Rick Rowan*

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TITLE: Gustav Spoke to Me

SIZE: 11" x 14"

MEDIUM: Acrylic and Collage on Wood Panel

By Mary Helen Fein



RESOLVING ANY QUESTION OF PERMANENCE

by Steve Solinsky

For the past several years, I've had a deep fascination with recent findings in quantum physics. Science, unnoticed, has quietly tiptoed into the arena of my spiritual longings. What's interesting is my sense that many of the most brilliant of these explorers are conspicuously spiritual, and sound almost Buddhist in their language.

And, they support the view that the material world "out there" just doesn't exist, at least in its own right, as we've been taught, not without the key participation of an "observing consciousness." It now appears the mysterious and confusing Eastern conundrum of Emptiness and Form has the firm understanding and backing of solid science.

Wow! In the Buddha's day, these training wheels for on-the-path awakening practice simply didn't exist. Of course this was before the distortion of modern science's adherence to Newtonian space-time physics with its denial that consciousness has any influence upon matter. But, Quantum Physics has corrected the ledger now, freeing us from this limiting prison of belief and handed us a "Get out of Jail FREE" card, if only we take it and investigate what it really means.

The great minds of the quantum world tell us that the physical universe arises out of the emptiness of the underlying quantum vacuum—which is really a conscious universal field seething with infinite potential. Out of this sea, Form arises as the product of awareness like a holographic projection. But in this case, aware-

...the mysterious and confusing Eastern conundrum of Emptiness and Form has the firm understanding and backing of solid science.

...Form arises as the product of awareness like a holographic projection.

ness itself is embedded within the hologram and, as within a dream, everything is experienced as absolutely concrete or real.

So, whatever we think of as having inherent, or lasting materiality or form, is in fact empty ... or "the stuff of dreams."

In accepting the new science, we must conclude there is no actual inherent substantiality to our world, and if we do, the question of permanence itself dissolves. Things simply arise and pass away with my shifting awareness. This includes the BIG ONE: that deeply embedded experience of my own precious separate self.

This holographic view of reality is not about believing, or not. Bucky Fuller spoke as a Zen teacher when he said, "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

The holographic model is to be tried on and tested, and one I have found helpful in transforming my own life into more spaciousness, calm and joy. I highly recommend it as a tonic for thinning out that persistent, pesky problem of "selfing" with its heavy burden of ego.

One helpful source I've used to explore these ideas is Steven Davis's free e-book, "[Butterflies are Free to Fly.](#)" ❁



IMPERMANENCE

by *Perissa Busick*

“He who binds to himself a joy does the winged life destroy. But he who kisses the joy as it flies lives in eternity’s sunrise.”

When I read this quote by William Blake, I think that living in the moment, in presence, is

what eternity means. Loving what is, without grasping or clinging, without pushing away what can’t be changed, with an open heart to what arises, an acceptance to what is and what was.

And then there is—as in all summers—wildfires. And we are faced with the truth of impermanence—in a way more dramatic than the leaves falling from the oaks in the Autumn, more dramatic than our

changing bodies and our faces in the mirror—which happen so slowly, we may not notice it until, suddenly, we say to ourselves, “When did that happen?”

But the smoke carries it home to us. Wildfires! Intense, unpredictable. In a moment our attachment to our homes, our possessions is revealed. What can I take? Should I take? Leave? Facing my fear of loss in the face of catastrophe, knowing it is all impermanent and still, loving it.

Maybe, because it is impermanent, it is all the more precious. Those I have loved, who exist now only in my memory, in the pages of my photo album, friends, family—now making me realize that the moments I am given are all the more cherished, all the more treasured because they will soon be gone.

The love we feel for this fragile Earth, the people we care about, the beauty of that moon in the sky, the fragrance of the Daphne flowers, the joy of my dog running on the sand towards the ocean waves—this life—all a fleeting moment... a gift to be held lightly—soon to be blowing in the wind. ❁

TRUE NORTH

by *RJ*

Facing True North

The Dipper pointing the way
Full moon rising over Five Lakes Basin
A night’s solo retreat in the woods

Facing True North

Mysteries of the universe inviting the way
Beginning steps on a spiritual path
A journey long considered, but only just begun

Facing True North

The Dharma providing the way
Lessons rising in my awareness
Guide my heart and mind

Heading True North

July 31, 2015

TANGLED ROOTS, SWEET FRUIT

Translations by Zara Houshmand

I'm working on a book of translations of Rumi's short poems and am intrigued by many that echo Buddhist thinking. It would be far-fetched to claim that Rumi studied Buddhism. The monasteries that once flourished in Balkh—Rumi's birth place in Afghanistan—were gone before he was born. But many of his poems hint at the cross-fertilization between Buddhism and Sufi Islam in the centuries they coexisted in that part of the world.

Here are a few:

Drunk, I asked my teacher, "Please, I need to know

What it means to be or not to be."

He answered me and said, "Go!

Relieve the suffering of the world and you'll be free."

The messenger brings sad news,
But words cannot obscure the truth:

Write "prison" on the garden gate—

That word does not a prison make.

A few flies are brawling over sugar
Like it's treasure. Why should the
sugar care?

A bird lands on the mountain, flies
again.

Is the mountain bigger or smaller
then?

I'm content with this way: nonex-
istence.

Why so much advice about exis-
tence?

The day I die by that blade,
Non-being,

I will laugh at whoever cries for
me.

Seek the wisdom that unties for
you this knot.

Seek the way forward that takes
your whole life.

Leave that nothing that looks like
it's something,

Seek the thing that looks like noth-
ing—it's not.

On truth's path, wise is mad, in-
sane is wise.

In love's way, self and other are the
same.

Having drunk the wine, my love,
of being one with you,

I find the way to Mecca and Bodh-
gaya are the same.

***Author's Note:** I confess that I've taken a slight liberty with the last poem. A more accurate translation is that the Ka'bah (in Mecca) and a temple (literally, "house of idols") are one and the same. But the Persian word for idol—bot—has its origins in the word Bodhi. Even the etymology hints at the history of cross-fertilization. ❁*





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MOUNTAIN STREAM MEDITATION is an Insight Meditation community, serving as a resource for Buddhism in the Sierra foothills of Northern California. Our vision is simple: to inspire one another in developing an open heart, spacious mind, and kindness toward oneself and others for the benefit of all beings. This is a core teaching of the Buddha.

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FOUNDER AND GUIDING TEACHER John Travis is dedicated to teaching the Dharma so it remains accessible to all. He began teaching in 1986 after studying in Asia with teachers in both the Theravada and Tibetan traditions. John is a senior teacher at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, has a private practice as a meditation counselor, and was trained in Hakomi body-centered psychotherapy.

RESIDENT TEACHER Heather Sundberg began teaching in 1999 after completing a four-year teacher training at Spirit Rock Meditation Center under the guidance of Jack Kornfield and Joseph Goldstein. Heather teaches at the Nevada City Insight Center and nationally in association with several other meditation centers.

GENEROSITY is foundational to meditation practice and sustaining the Buddhadharm. Together we invest in future generations by sharing the gift of a generous heart. Buddhist teachings are offered freely and are available to all levels of practitioners. Opportunities to contribute include financial gifts, service, time, and energy.

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