

Dharma Poems

And Other Writings



by
Michael Erlewine

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And Other Writings by Michael Erlewine

**This book is Dedicated with Love
To Margaret**

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Foreword

Poetry for me has been a way to record my inner changes and experiences. I don't write poetry that often, but when I do it, it always is in response to some realization or other, something I am going through that finally becomes clear to me.

And I don't just try to "write a poem." I use poetry or just words as a way of clarifying my experiences, as a way to lock my emerging realization into a form that can serve to bring to mind again and again the actual experience I am trying to understand. If I can capture the experience in a poem, I know that I have realized something or other about myself and my life. And by carefully reciting the poem aloud to myself, by articulating each word with understanding, the idea the poem captures can live again and be present in the mind.

Whether others can read my poetry this way, whether the captured vision will be present in the minds of readers, I can't say. I only know it works for me and I write these poems for my own inner satisfaction. Nothing in this world is as satisfying to me than realization and a new poem. That being said, I hope those who read the poems in this book may enjoy them too

Added August 2015

I offer these poems not as examples of great literature. I'm not a poet, meaning I don't work at writing poetry and I have not made a career of it or even published as an amateur. I write poems off the top of my head (very quickly) to help remember or capture the insight present in the moment. By putting it down in words, I better understand what the insight means to me.

It would take too long to write out prose. I consider poetry a form of shorthand that can capture in a few words what prose can't do in many. Prose is like taking a sip of tea, poetry like drinking out of the faucet.

I don't see my poems as anything other than a way to point at what was inspirational at the time. If you read any of these, please use them as word-references that point at what is inspirational and can never be captured in words. What these poems point to or at is worthy indeed, so ignore the imperfection in my words, but do see what they are pointing at.

My poems are nothing special, but the mind (which we all share) and the reality that inspired them is authentic and pristine. If you can see what I saw when I wrote them, reading them will be more than worthwhile. It is much like the popular image of the wise man pointing at the Moon. Don't look at the finger that is pointing; look at the Moon in the sky.

I dedicate any merit of these works to all of the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Saints, and sincere practitioners of any faith that they may bring light and realization to all sentient beings.

Michael Erlewine,
January 9th, 2010, Big Rapids, Michigan March 19, 2013
August 1, 2015 Michael@Erlewine.net
Since the original book I have written some additional poems,
which I am adding here. Some have dates when they were
written, others do not.

The Rest of the Mind

You cannot rest the mind,
But you can let the mind rest.
Just let go,
And don't mind the rest.

Nothing is Something

Thank you, Rinpoche,
For pointing something out:
That there is nothing to be pointed out,
That nothing can be pointed out, Including “Nothing.

Nothing” also cannot be pointed out.

To me:
That is really something.

Beyond My Expectations

Looking at the mind,
It's not what I'd expect.

Expectations can't define,
And you can't expect to find.

That's the nature of the mind.

Rest Home

My thoughts,
Like birds aboard a ship, I let go free,
As they fly away with me.

No need to follow on,
And here's the perfect test:
There is no place to go,
All thoughts come back to rest.

Testing the Rest

Learning to rest the mind,
Really puts my practice to the test,
So sometimes I just need to take a break,
And simply get some rest.

Time for Nothing

Excuse me for the moment,
No matter the reasons why,
I just need more time to do nothing,
But gaze into clear empty sky.

Seek and Not Find

If you find yourself,
Then you are not looking.
You will never not-find-yourself, Unless you look.

In other words:
If you don't look,
You will find yourself.
If you look,
You will not find yourself.

That is the nature of having no nature.

Looking at "Looking At"

I'm looking at "looking at."

I'm not looking at what "looking at" is looking at.

No, I'm just looking at "looking at."

That is: I'm Trying to.

You see:

When I'm looking at "looking at,"

It's not "looking at" I'm looking at,

Because:

What I'm looking at is also doing the looking at.

So:

Am I "looking at" or the looking at?

Samsara

Not exhausted, Uncontrollable, Recurring activities, Animate my
life,
And keep me ever moving,
Through a waste of time ...

All the things I like to do. But every so often,
I lose my appetite,
And remain unmoved, Not interested, Already at the end,
Of where I would be, If I did all that.

My time is taken up.
Empty of effort,
And motion,
With no direction,
I lose my meaning,
And just stop wandering.

I am so still.
I don't have to keep my edge;
The edge keeps me.

At these times, I know,
That rejecting this world,
Will never work.

Given time,
Even the world,
Goes void,
And effortlessly,
Rejects itself.

Wait for that.

May 30, 2010

Hummingbird

Swift,
And awake,
Poised in midair,
He knows just,
Where all the flowers are.

Aware of the danger,
But also of the thrill,
He drinks only the nectar,
Which happens to spill.

April 23, 2012

Lineage

There 'is' nothing,
Transmitted,
And Nothing,
Ever flows.

A connection,
Simply opens,
In which,
Samaya grows.

And then:
Mixing of minds ...

Extension,
By recognition ...

Transmission,
Through,
Identification

In other words:
Empowerment ...
A simple blessing,
Forever green,
That mastering time,
Makes sure that:

No less than,
The same,
Is certain.

This is lineage.

October 11, 2010

Hear Emptiness

Emptiness is,
All it takes,
To hear,
Everything.

Even the best arguments,
Fall silent,
When heard.

Emptiness,
Can be heard,
Above the loudest noise.

March 13, 2012

Mandala

A good offering,
Gathers together,
Naturally,
To a point,
Of blooming,
Like a perfect flower,

And,
Dissolving,
Is gone.
Petals in the wind.
And then:
Again.

The object,
Of mandalas,
Is offering,
Endlessly.

It is all offering.

Sept. 11, 2010

Meditation is Nothing

The books say:
Seek a place of solitude,
And meditate,
But it's just the other way round.

When meditation,
Naturally occurs,
There is no place in the world,
That you feel comfortable,
Try as you might.

Not here or there,
Not doing this or doing that.
Only nothing feels right.

You just want to hold real still,
Let the mind rest,
And then park yourself,
Somewhere out of the way,
Like on a cushion,
Or
In a place of solitude,
Because:

Nothing is going on.

Sept. 13, 2010

Samsara

The same world,
That early on,
Makes it difficult,
To meditate,
Later,
Makes it difficult,
Not to.

October 12, 2010

Ordinary Mind

(thamal gyi shepa)
Crystal clear,
Like water,
So obvious,
We ignore it.

It's everywhere,
And still not seen.

This only thing,
That satisfies,
Our thirst,
Is not even,
On most menus.

October 2, 2011

Resting

Sitting quietly,
Properly,
With tongue to teeth.

My body invites,
The mind.
To be, At ease.

October 2, 2011

Mandala Offering

The “offering,”
Is not the offering.

The offering,
Is the “offering.”

It’s the giving, Not the gift.

That is,
The mandala.

January 20, 2011

Mind Practice

Not an option,
But a refuge,
Less painful than,
Anywhere else.

Feb. 14, 2010

Tibetan new Year of the Iron Tiger

Post Meditation

If I am practicing all the time,
When will I have time to practice?

Organic Mind

Thoughts,
Like waves,
Ceaselessly,
Arise and fall,
In the ocean of mind.

Water to Water.

Not,
In any way,
An impediment,
thoughts are,
In fact,
How we know,
Our mind exists,

The very fuel of, All Awareness.
Mind...
The Mother,
Of all,
Thoughts.

October 3, 2011

Vipassana

Thoughts,
The windows of the mind,
Are not something,
To follow or reject.

I look through them.
Wedged between,
The past and the future,
Like the eye of a needle,
Is this present moment.

That too,
We have to see through.

August 7, 2012

Purity Is

Purity, Is:

Being,
Empty,
And...
Without a trace.

October 6, 2010

Pure Emptiness

The power of emptiness,
Is its purity.

And it tames,
Instantly.

The result of emptiness,
Is compassion:
Working with things,
Just as they are.

Emptiness loves,
Everything,
Perfectly,
Including me.

April 10, 2012

Yab-Yum

Above the loudest noise,
Emptiness is,
All it takes,
To hear,
Everything,
And...
Even the best arguments,
Fall silent,
When heard.

Here or There

When it comes to awakening,
One thing is very clear:

The closer I get to 'there',
The more I find I'm here.

Rinpoche

Just as in that dream of sleep you came,
Urging me awake,
So too, in this dream of life,

You awaken me from the nightmares of ignorance.

On first meeting,
at first glance,
You showed me compassion,
Introducing me to myself.

I wandered for days wrapped in your blessing.
Yet, due to my weak practice,
I could not hold that state for long.

Still, having known such kindness,
I no longer chase after imitations.

You are the bright star in the night of my obscuration,
Always showing me the way to the precious Dharma,
Guiding me back to myself.

You are *indeed* a precious one.
Rinpoche.

[Very early poem after meeting KhenpoKarthar Rinpoche.]

Karma Mirror

According to the Dharma:
The world just as I see it is my reflection,
A perfect mirror of the mind,
Reflecting karma --
My every thought and action.

Karma is pure result,
The outer reflection,
Of an inner reality,
That once ripened,
Cannot be altered,

No matter how carefully I choose my words,
No matter how right I get my mind,
No matter how close I hold my tongue,
No matter how slyly I take a peek,
I always only see myself peeking.
The world looks back whenever I look

And clever as I am,
Even I can't sneak up on a mirror.

The Four Thoughts That Turn the Mind

This precious life,
Impermanent and brief,
I know.

My actions keep on piling up,
And I can't quite get my ducks all in a row.
Trungpa said to me, So many years ago,
By grasping just one thought or two, We'll never turn aside.

We must, he said, maintain all four,
And leave not one behind,
Four precious thoughts that touch the heart,
Only they can turn the mind.

Second Thoughts

A sudden whiff of impermanence,
Makes me wince,
And breaks my train of thought.

What was I thinking?

Eyes open, here now again,
Contemplating the stream of my own karma.

Impermanence,
The smelling salts of the dharma.

Attachment

The glue,
That holds,
The Self,
Together.

Rest Home

My thoughts,
Like birds aboard a ship,
I let go free,
As they fly away with me.

No need to follow them,
And here's the perfect test,
There is no place to go,
All thoughts come back to rest.

Wake Up Call

That occasional,
Whiff of impermanence,
That is:
The smelling salts of the Dharma.

Empowerment

There are many,
Waiting,
To be known,
But few,
Who care,
Enough,
To know.

Samsara

The same world,
That early on,
Makes it difficult,
To meditate,
Later,
Makes it difficult, Not to.

Solitude

'Alone' is a simple mistake.
Like the disappearance of a sound,
Hearing cannot be heard,
And the finder never found.

Emptiness

I cannot think,
Of emptiness,
But I have tasted it.

My words sputter out,
In its silence.

Emptiness embraces,
More than I know.

April 9, 2012

From a Dream

I have gone to paint the sunrise in the sky,
To feel the cool of night warm into day,
The flowers from the ground call up to me,
The self I think I am is hard to see.

[Literally, a poem written from a dream.]

Never Known

If I know,
I don't know I know,
And I don't know I don't know I know.

I don't know what I would know,
If I did know.
That's how I know I don't know.

So, I don't know,
I know I don't know,
And I know I know I don't know.

I have never known.

My Poems

Poems,
A home for my thoughts,
Dear thoughts,
The very best of me,
All that's precious and kind,
Now sealed in words,
Like insects in amber:

Prayer flags endlessly waving,
In the gentle chalice of the mind.

Early too Late

We don't know late,
While it's still early,
And we only know early,
When it starts getting late.
When it's not too late to be early,
It's still too early to be late,

When it IS too late to be early,
It's already late,
but maybe not too late.
When we remember what was early,
Then it IS too late.

The Beginning of the End

The beginning of the end,
Which is the end of the beginning,
Begins at the end of the beginning,
And goes straight to the end.

In other words:
When beginning ends,
Ending begins.

The beginning is not close to the end,
But the beginning of the end,
Is closer to the end,
Than to the beginning.

At the beginning of the end,
The beginning of the beginning ends.

Since the beginning of the beginning ends,
Will the end of the end, begin?
Is ending also a beginning?

If so,
The beginning of the end,
Is closer to the beginning,
Than is the end of the beginning.
I'm counting on that.

The Point of No Return

A Poem for My Daughter Michael Anne

The point of the “point of no return” is that:
When you have reached the point of no return,
From which there is no return,
The point is to turn and return.

That is the turning point.

Every life has a turning point,
Whether it’s in the echo of age,
Or in the very midst of life’s prime.

As we reach our point of no return,
We pause,
Then we turn.
And, in turning,
We begin to reflect.

In our reflection,
And rising into view,
Perhaps for the very first time,
The Sun.

Where before it was we who were seen,
And others seeing,
Now we are the mirror in which they see themselves,
And we can see our self in them,

What we once saw shining before us, as youths,

That which we gladly embraced in our prime,
And what we now see etched in the mirror of reflection, I
s our eternal Self

The Sun,
Ever burning in the darkness of our life.

That's it.
I understand this.
What I find harder to understand,
Yet still believe is:

We didn't know it then;
We don't know it now.
We never knew it.

In truth,
It never was.
IT NEVER WAS;
It never will be.

It is not now,
And still, it is.
It still is:

This most brilliant illusion, Shining in the mirror of the mind.

Feb 14, 2006 2-4 PM
Grand Sextile Helio

Who You Are

If who you are is who you will be,
And who you will be will be who you were,
Then:
Who you are is not who you are or who you will be.
So, who are you?

Imagine What I Don't Know

Imagining what I don't know,
And I don't know,
I imagine what I don't know.

I know what I imagine is what I don't know,
And what I know is not what I imagined.
That much I know.

I can only imagine what I don't know.

Something for Nothing

Expect nothing,
Except nothing.
Accept something.

Mantra Poems

Inner Ear

What will eager issue out,
And into us would enter,
So to stare, to stuff itself,
To eat itself the center,
Of what we wait to wither in on,
After it is all.

It eats us out.
It only is in every inward eaten,

The echo of an endless ache that arches Hearts hard hearing,

And opens up each inner 'enting',
And enters it as out.

Force of Faith

The form of force enforcing form,
Finds freedom from that form in fact.
And in fact forced is freed,
A form of force with faith in form that finds in fact:
Faith itself a force.

Thus, force finds itself in form on faith

And force enforcing faith in form,
And form informing faith of force,

Faith is that force in form
Faith is our form of force.

Outsetting Song

That song is sung,
That singing,
Sets inside itself,
Outsetting song,
That sings,
And singing
Sets itself
In song.

Song that sang,
Which sung,
Is singing still.

Everlasting Life

What will in words not wake,
Clear sleeps,
And clear, sleeps on.

What wakes stands watch to see that sleep as sound.
What wakes will serve to set asleep,
Inset a sleep with standing words,
That wake,
If ever, last.

And on that last,
In overlay,
Our life.

Yes, to lay at the last a life that ever lives,
To ever last that "last" of life,
And in ever lasting life,
Everlasting,
We have a life that lives at last.

Early too Late

We don't know late,
When it's early,
But we do know early,
When it's late.

When it's not too late to be early,
It's still too early to be late.

When it's too late to be early,
It's already late,
But maybe not too late.
When we know what was early,
Then it IS too late,

Free Bird

A songbird,
Oh, bright wings,
Sings,
Not a happy song,
Inside a gilded cage.

One foot shy,
Of ignorance,
He knows enough,
Of freedom,
To want out ...

But not enough,
To free himself,
Within.

September 11, 2011

Known

In truth,
We are known,
Not by,
How we,
Are received,
Rather by,
How we,
In turn,
Receive.

November 17, 2010

Bloom

A flower blooms,
In its time,
Whether or not,
Anyone is there,
To receive it.

Alone,
And in silence,
It leaves only, Its seed.

This is how it is,
And has always been.

May 30, 2012

Top Down

Brittleness breaking,
Down,
I am opening,
Up...

Overflowing,+
All boundaries,
Finds me,
At sea again...
And swimming.

At a loss,
With where I was;
My slate is,
Wiped clean.

When next I,
Touch the ground,
It will be,
On new land.

Terrible risk,
All of this...
Yet shining, With promise.

But for this, Sea change...

I would be land-locked,
At the top,
With not enough,
Down.

February 5, 2012

Dakini

Unconditional love,
Has no conditions.
It accepts,
The exceptions.

Total receptivity,
Takes you in,
Until you know,
Nothing.

Emptiness,
Contains everything,
And that includes,
Nothing.

March 18, 2012

Dharma Lake

Your birth,
Pushing back,
The darkness.
Your activity,
Creating space,
Enough,
For all of us.

Your aura,
An envelope in time,
In which a family grows,
Closer.

We holding you,
You holding us,
Together.
Such gentleness.

January 18, 2012

[A poem for my granddaughter Emma May, who was given the name “Dharma Lake” by the Venerable Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche.]

Empowerment

There are many,
Waiting,
To be known,
But few,
Who care,
Enough,
To know.

October 14, 2010

The Facebook Oracle

Facebook,
A waste of time?
Not for me.
Like any,
Good oracle ...

A perfect,
Thermometer,
Of my state of mind,
Instantly showing,
Both hopes,
And fears ...

As good,
A reflection,
Of me,
As any,
Much better,
Than most.

November 12, 2010

First Frost

Listen to,
Their songs,
Disappearing.

The deep silence,
Of a billion lives,
Ending in,
A single night.

October 2, 2011

Spring and Fall

How we'll ever get to spring,
I just don't know.
It happens every year.

From where I stand,
This late in fall,
It seems, Well ...
Hopeless.

So many days.
I feel the same,
Away from home,
Five hundred miles.

How could I expect,
To reach home?
Think on this,
Too much:
You won't get home,
And spring,
Will never,
Come.

November 20, 2010

Frozen Spring

Buds on ice,
Might look nice, But spring,
That's the thing,
I'm waiting for.

March 4, 2011

Heart Song

You are singing,
To my heart;
It is a deep song,
That you sing.

A song,
Not bothered by age,
That reached, Across the years,
And found its way,
Safely to my ears.

Did I hear you say,
You love me,
Have always loved me,
And want me,
By your side,
When it's time?

I believe I heard that.
I would have,
Turned aside,
But for the fact,
In truth,
I have always,
Loved you,
Too.

You see:
When you were singing me,
I was singing you.

February 14, 2012

It Can't Be

It can't be grasped by grasping,
Not thought by thinking,
Nor had by having,
Seen by seeing,
Heard by hearing,
Or felt by touching.

It is not there,
Nor here.
But still,
It is.

Things

Someone,
Gets something.
Everyone,
Gets everything.

No one,
Gets nothing.

November 7, 2010

Slow Learner

I don't take,
Kindly to advice,
Even if,
You mean well,
And it might be good for me.
I don't like,
To be, Pushed.

I'll go,
In my own time,
Although it means,
I may be late,
Or, Never.

If I ask,
And you tell me,
I might just listen.
Yet still not hear.

When every door,
But one,
Is closed,
I may perhaps,
Walk through it,

Even though,
There is,
Nowhere else,
To go.

October 10, 2010

Love Knows

LOVE IS TRUE.

All else is lies, We tell ourselves,
With lowered eyes.

LOVE IS SILENT.

A whisper of love, Is heard above, The loudest noise.

LOVE WAKES.

It raises up,
The broken heart,
By healing all that's hurt.

LOVE COMPLETES.

Overflowing edges, It silences our critic,
And satisfies the thirst.

LOVE IS HONEST.

It defies reason, Hushes old excuses,
And stands shining at us all.

LOVE WAITS.

Love waits on time,
For a moment of ripeness, And blooms.

LOVE IS KIND.

Its caring reaches, Past our faults, And embraces all.

LOVE IS PATIENT.

It will find a way, Through all of time, However long that takes.

LOVE'S RELEASE.

Opening the heart, Completely undone, Our fragrance is freed.

LOVE IS UNCONDITIONAL,

And has no conditions. It accepts, The exceptions.

LOVE KNOWS.

To be known, Is a wish,

The heart makes. Love Knows.

February 14, 2012

Me and You

The fact that, I like 'me',
Does not mean, I don't like You.
There is room,
For you,
In me.

And,
You can like,
You too.
You too, Are,
Like me.
I like you too!

October 22, 2010

Mirror of Me

There is, then, One mirror,
And someone,
Looking to see.

Am I,
Mirroring you?
Or are you, Mirroring,
Me?

It can't be both.

Someone blinks.
And sees,
That dreaded,
Mirrored, Reflection.

Once reflected,
Who can resist?
A matter of time,
Until I look,
And then,
Again.

I can't escape,
A mirror,
No matter,
How long, I wait.

It waits on me.

When finally, I do look,
To see ...

Right there, I still,
Will be: Seen ...
And you know,
By whom.

October 19, 2010

Mysterium Fascinans

How odd.
An anomaly by choice,
And not by fate.
Nothing mysterious,
About choosing,
Not to be known.
You have no questions.
Nevertheless,
The way you tell it,
Asks a lot.

Lonely,
Yet still protecting your privacy.

December 11, 2011

Narcissus

As a youth,
I studied my reflection,
In everyone I met.

Looking to find,
Someone,
Clear enough,
To see myself,
Within.

Older now,
To my surprise,
'I' have begun to reflect;

Others,
Now can see,
Themselves,
In me.
Reflection,
Like a mirror,
Is when, '
We' reflect,
Not when,
We are,
Reflected.

April 30, 2012

Never Home

I'm in such a hurry,
To arrive,
That I won't,
Take time,
To get there.

Kota

Old dog,
On your last legs,
Almost unable,
To stand.

So very sorry,
To see you like this.
It hurts.
And each day,
Thinner,
Not even eating,
Hardly anything.

You still look up,
When the door opens,
Hoping for,
That walk in the woods,
You love so much.
Today,
We took your collar off.

Om Ami Dewa Hri October 4, 2010

Finders Keepers

We are,
Both the finder,
And the found,
The silence,
And the sound.

December 19, 2010

Water and the Well

The rare times,
When nothing moves me,
And I don't feel,
Like doing anything.

Perhaps this is some kind of,
Natural meditation,
An effortless detachment,
From my day-to-day world.

All that is missing,
From just being lazy,
Is this awareness,
Of my own condition.

I don't waste time,
Pretending to be busy,
But just sit there,
And for a long time.
Nothing is missing.

Watch a movie,
Read a book,
Sit, or not,
It makes no difference.

I am right here.
The mind is at rest,

The water back in the well.

*February 15, 2010,
New Moon, New Year of the Iron Tiger*

Heart Hearing

Although I won't,
Often listen,
My heart,
Always,
Wants to hear.

October 11, 2010

Private Thoughts

My private thoughts,
Travel,
Beyond attempts,
To contain them,
And are,
Known,
And,
Not just by me.

Shine

All things,
That exist,
Are light.
They shine.

Things made well,
Shine longer,
And last.

The eye,
Wants light.

Shine for the eye,
To see.

January 30, 2012

The Edge of Death

Taking the edge off death ...
It's not that easy.

For death is sharp,
The ultimate reminder,
Perhaps,
That keeps me from,
Forgetting,
Just about everything,
Important.

There is no choice.
I can only,
Look forward,
To death,

Meet it head on,
Eyeball to eyeball,
Yet even I,
Can't stare death down.

In the end,
I am only free,
To finally,
Just go and see.

October 4, 2010

Taking the Fall

Each night's frost,
Bites deeper,
Into summer.

And I am,
This year,
Just not ready,
Willingly,
To come in.

October 9, 2010

The Age of Women

This is,
The Age of Women,
And not,
Of men;

Men have,
Been.

February 5, 2012

Thoughts

A thought,
Will dissolve on its own,
If I allow it,
But first I must allow it.

It's not like I could stop it anyway.
Suppressing a thought,
Only keeps it,
On my mind.

Following a thought,
Only means,
Distraction as usual.

So,
what about thoughts?

Just be aware of them;
It's about awareness.

January 21, 2012

[Inspired by my friend Lama Karma Drodhul]

Top Down

Brittleness breaking,
Like ice on a lake.
I am opening,
Up...

Overflowing,
Boundaries,
Finds me,
At sea again...
And swimming.

At a loss,
With where I was;
No direction,
Is now known.

When next I,
Touch the ground,
It will be,
On new land.

Terrible risk,
All of this...
Yet shining,
[glistens]
With promise.

But for this,
Sea change...
I would be land-locked,
At the top,
With not enough,
Down.

February 5, 2012

Evangelismo

If I am always looking,
Yet still I cannot see,
Then I have not discovered,
That which can't be found.

If I am the protector,
Of I don't know quite just what,
Then I am the vessel,
And not what it holds.

If I am the decider,
And still it's up to me,
Then I missed the point,
Of what was pointed out.

In other words:
If we come up short,
We are not yet tall,
That's all.

Summer Solstice 2010

Facebook Friends

Face to face,
We've never met,
Perhaps we never may,
But time together,
That we have,

You are with me every day.

We know more about each other,
Then at times we care to know,
And aside from that,
We let our friendship grow.

Just how we are friends,
That I can't pin down,
Was it you invited me,
Or the other way around?

It seems I spend more time with you,
Than with those I hold most dear,
And though you live so very far,
Dear friend,
You're always near.

The Age of Impermanence

Life is just too kind.
It leads us from our prime,
On down a set of gradual steps,
Out toward the edge of time.

Each step is not a leap,
Not near enough to jar,
Much less awaken me,
From age's fated sleep.

And so,
I drift away,
Forget the youth that I once knew,
Like yesterday,
When you were watching me.
Today I'm watching you!

And life is not quite perfect,
It's every step not smooth,
Sometimes I go too far,
And somehow lose the groove.

I wake back up.
From fast asleep,
I peer and look around,
And sense the loss,
What's drained away,
How far I have come down.

But these clear gaps,
The moment's pause,
A day or two at most,
Just time enough,
To put things right,

And patch up all the holes.
I cling to what I can.
With each misstep,
I'm left with less,
With less I just make do.

You know me:
Where would I go?
I'll never cut and run.

For less is more than any,
And any is better than none.

November 23, 2009

When and Now

Where is 'there'?
And just when is 'when'?
And will I get there, how?
Well,
Here is there,
And when is now.

Last is Best

When everything's forgot,
That forgetting will allow,
There is one thing,
I'll always find again,
And that's the truth,

For it will last till then.
And truth lasts long,
Much longer than the rest.
When all is gone,
Truth's last is best.

November 20, 2009

Michael Jackson's "This is It" Video

I didn't know,
There was enough time,
To move like that!

Best Friend

We can't replace,
What there is,
Only one of.

Thoughts Make Sense.

Thoughts come.
If the thought is nonsense,
I can't keep it in mind.
Forget it.

However,
If a thought makes,
Any kind of sense,
Has any kind of meaning,
I usually follow it.
It's my train of thought.

Yet 'meaning' in itself is,
Nothing,
A reference,
Pointing toward or at,
The sense a thought makes.
Thoughts can only make sense.
And sense,
Is an experience,

That every thought will take me to,
A journey I am always on,
Mini-incarnations,
The sum of which,
Add up to a life,
Of endless just not-knowing.

The Dharma says:
Realize the nature,
Of the thought,
Not the content.

Seeing the true nature,
Of any thought,
Ends the thought right there,
Breaks its link to the senses,
Causes no karma to arise,
And brings about awareness.
This is why I meditate.

April 21, 2010

Time to Mind

Lost again in the swing of time,
I agree to forget,
What I find so hard to remember:
This moment.

Always later,
Urged awake by impermanence,
I am back again,
But farther down the road.

Time takes my mind,
In small and larger bites.

The little ones,
I reconnect and can remember,
But the larger gaps,
I can only leap across,
Guess at,
And hopefully learn,
To say more in silence,
Than in words.

Nov. 20, 2009

Worm Walk

Many worms,
Crossing the street,
With the sun coming up,
Makes for a slow walk.

Om Mani Padme Hum

Meaning to Know

Your words (or mine),
Depend on what they mean.
Meaning is only a reference,
A simple referral,
Like pointing toward:
Somewhere else.

In other words,
Meaning is only as good,
As the sense it makes,
As in:

Does it make sense?

Meaning itself,
Is not meaningful.
It makes no sense.
It is not like 'being'.
Only we can make sense.
Meaning points to:
Experience,
But only if 'we' go.
It is the only way to know.

Feb. 7, 2010

Wanderer

All of this,
Gone,
And none of it,
Going,
Not even,
My Self.

Awake,
From this dream,
I've been dreaming ...

Senseless,
But not,
Mindless.

March 3, 2012

Solitude

“The darkness,
Of eons,
Is extinguished,
By just one, Match...”

The loneliness,
Of a lifetime,
By a single, Friend.

Isolation:
The price of,
Our attachment,
To separation.

March 17, 2013

Where Can You Be?

Every sharp edge points out,
That you are not in now.
You have gone away in there,
And you don't want to play.
You won't be out today.

I can tell,
For the frowns and serious looks,
Are all that I can see.

They keep me from reaching you,
Keep you from reaching me.

[A poem to my daughter]

Self Seeing

I see myself,
To see my self to be:
“Myself,”
To see myself,
To be myself,
To see.

Phoenix

Personality,
Bright beauty of the night,
That terrible crystal,
Burning in the darkness,
At the very edge of time.

Watching,
In rapt fascination,
Fires,
Impossible to ignore,
Forever frozen,
On the face of age.

It is a dark light,
Indeed,
Funeral pyres,
Signifying nothing,
But impermanence.

This is a fire,
That does not warm.
March 19, 2013

[Note: I know, kind of a dark poem, but this whole idea of the personality and its attachments (the Self) is something I find amazing to behold, especially as I age. I write about it often. Also, I am struck that in our day- to-day life we gaze on these social bonfires (personalities), often unable to see beyond them to the soul within. It is like the deer in the headlights.]

Older Poems

Poems from the 1960s

Time Out

What if at every out,
I set an "in."
I said:

What if at each out,
I set on in,
And in on in on in on in ...
And if on in,
I'm lost within?

Time is sure to see me out.

The End

I am in it all, the end, and that's all,
And the ever it's coming to be.

And in me is out, the shadow of doubt,
And the in that is out,

Well that's me!

Nov. 5, 1969

Whether,
That which is within will out.
And when out, with all within,
Will out without, within.

And then within,
With all without,
Will out as in.
And In,
When out,
Without an in,

Is out when out,
And in when In.

Poem

I am so round and such so.
A treading finally and letting go,
As spreading circles open so,
An even inward outward flow.

In or Out

In is not within the out,
And out without the in.

No,
In is without the out,
And out within the in.

Sept. 29, 1970

Parmenides

Each to each the sorrow tells:

Find another.

Alone is borne the pain,

Alone the sorrow,

Alone the joy,

Today's tomorrow.

My Self Surges Down...

My self surges down,
Still seeking sources not spoken of,
Grasping too late grips now past,
Still insistent on solid searches,
When:

With moments meaning only may we merge.

Ah! Who Could Let Such a Bargain Pass

Ah!

Who could let such a bargain pass,

As this poor century will allow.

On coming in,

I'm asked to leave,

And when asked to leave, I bow.

Look at Yourself, First Yet First

Look at yourself, first yet first,
No better, and yet not worse.
Now get yourself together in a bunch,
And call what carriage as you may your hearse.

I See Myself

I see myself to see myself to be:
Myself,
To see myself to be myself to see.

All Eyes

All eyes invite entrance, A
ll ears hear,
All lips lie parted.

Caring

He cared,
And his care cut past the points of his person,
And peered searching at us all.

I Am in it All the End

I am in it all the end, and that's all,
And the ever it's coming to be.

And in me is out, the shadow of doubt,
And the in that is out, well, that's me!

I Am So Round

I am so round and such so.
A treading finally and letting go,
As spreading circles open so,
An even inward outward flow.

Some Prose Awakening

“All I remember is haze — red shifting to orange — as I strained under the infinite pressure of my past, like a baby being born, and then, through the strain of this labor (so intense that time slowed) in which somehow I was involved, and through that slowness like the head of a child in birth, I crowned, and for the first time came I, me, a glimpse of my eternal self — real awareness. I saw myself. I found myself.”

“Emerging right up through the top of my head, I was born as through a veil and vale of tears, surrounded on all sides by people living in eternal slowness. Tears stood in all our eyes, for I was them — huge catlike creatures, winking and blinking in the slowness of expanded time. We moved together in this, the rhythm of our birth, rising and falling like the cry of some great beast. Living was so slow that it took forever.

We were all, together, one, born out of suffering, born out of and beyond time itself, born through a veil of tears, itself an endless rain.”

“And I remember one white-hot-flash-like- electric blast that went dead in my mind. I could never have it happen twice. I “was” absolutely not (as if all stopped), and then it started again. And after, I wavered, awash like a flower on the sea — a lotus. And as I found faith in my new awareness, I rose above time in knowledge of myself, in this new awareness. And as I lost that faith, accidents of a deathly kind became very possible. It was not subtle.”

“There was I, born again and living, alive in a world that I never really knew and that knew me not at all. I was still in the world, but I was no longer of that world. Like a newborn child, I searched everywhere for those who would recognize me and welcome me alive. Mine was a back-room birth, enacted in a century that could no longer afford to act out a drama as old as time itself. ”

*[Excerpt from the book:
Astrology of the Heart: Astro-Shamanism]*

Relieved

“To be relieved, finished, the one thing I had never expected. Maybe at life’s long end of eighty or ninety years, sure; it might make sense. But now, in the prime of my powers, in the middle of my life? To be relieved of duty? Are you kidding me?”

“No one ever told me about it. I heard no talk of it. I didn’t read about it anywhere. Am I the only one? Am I to remain silent? Who is even interested? No one seems to notice.”

“Relieved of duty in the middle of the war, I must be a traitor. I must have made some terrible mistake, to be relieved. I mean, I looked forward to a life long-filled with searching and suffering. And now this, this terrible guilt of non-involvement, of really not caring like I used to care, and I would rather die than not care. Caring did not mean love to me; it meant worry and suffering continued. To be carefree, this I never thought to ask for. I had lost my edge, my suffering.”

“It is like someone turned off the engine, as far as we personally are concerned. All at once, this great silence and sense of peace, and when you first begin to hear the silence, it terrifies. We can now see younger persons still driving and pushing their birth, yet we don’t feel that old drive as we once did.”

“There is the feeling that we are somehow washed up, finished. We have lost that old drive or “thing” which made us, ourselves. And all of this unspoken about, unmentioned in public conversation, simply ignored. As I can see, many just cannot accept this change, and wander stunned in a stupor and state of shock for years, or fill their lives with noise and activity — anything to drown the sense of silence and rest that they feel.”

“Lifted out of our life’s sorrow, we refuse to acknowledge the incredible and obvious lightness of being we now feel. Unburdened, enlightened, we feel no gravity or weight. Up until now, life beckoned and lured me running

fast through time’s meanings. What does it mean? What does it all mean? Where is it all leading to? What exactly is the point? And then, this: Silence.”

*[Excerpt from the book:
Astrology of the Heart: Astro-Shamanism]*

It Came to Pass

“No matter what you think about me, about my person, I know in time you will learn to recognize me as yourself, and you will love me, as I have learned to love myself, as I have learned to love you, like it or not. My person has not changed. How could it, truly? For person is the product of time, and my person — like a freight train — rushes on at the future. It always has.

Only I, stepping off my person, am with you now.”

“I am myself. I turned off time’s endless matter at thirty. I dropped my body or sense of gravity. It proceeds on without me or rather: with my perpetual care and love. But I am not only my person. I am, as well, one with the creator of my body, of any body.”

“My faith informs me. Each day’s passage frees and reveals my past, ‘presents’ my past, and clears it open. Where before was but an endless accumulation, layer on layer, is now removed with every passing day. And as the layers lift, it is clear to me that there is nothing there worth worrying. All the past lives I have are presently living, are become clear.

“Nothing to go back to, no place to hide, no cover.”

“I am born free, held awake by all that lives. Where before I could not keep my eyes open, so now I cannot shut or close them. No closure. From my subconscious pours my past.

Cloudiness clearing, it is my present. My placenta is being born, turning out all of that which nourished me.”

“I can clearly see all that clouds this stream of consciousness is but a searching, is itself but a frowning, a looking to see, a pause, a hesitation that, caught and unfurled in the eddies of time, finding nothing, becomes clear and, laughing, I leave it go clear and turn from a darkening or dimming of my mind to light.

And it came to pass, and I let it pass.”

[Excerpt from the book:

Astrology of the Heart: Astro-Shamanism.]

A Clear Sleep is Soft

“The morning’s brightness lights the day. And when that day is gone, the quietness of evening here approaching settles to sleep this restless world. Hard can I hear the frantic rush, as I turn away from the edge out into floating rest am I. It is not my conscious direction doing this, but as a head downturned all life now turns up a blossom to the night, the night of time urges me open, at last a flower too, open to life. Already the dawn.”

“Still, around me, urging caution, a retinue of persons set my spirit, like a jewel is set, in time. But where before my worry, now my rest. The tide rolls on beyond me. Ever changing, it rocks me now asleep. And in my sleep, awake am I, so clear a bell is ringing.”

“The smart of persons lash and crack to drive me at time’s edge. My personal ties are slipped, as floating out, I’m gently tugged. Too long have fought to force my thought, and not, at ease, arising like some cloud to pass. My work un-done, yet done, I rise. Drifting through strains, I sieve, and pass myself, open out to nothing thoughts to touch back not once more.

“A clear sleep is soft, its ever-blooming sound is silence. Now to find my way among the slips of time. And slip I will, now lost to striving, and lounge in this room of emptiness. To lie back in time, behind its edge, and ever look eternally. No way to pass this on. This is: passing on.

Slamming against the walls of time, I shove off into eternity, and spread open a flower, so wide.”

[Excerpt from the book:

Astrology of the Heart: Astro-Shamanism.]

Semantics

It's not just that being,
Is empty;
It's that there is,
An emptiness,
Of being.

It's never been there.
-- October 4, 2014

Look at Yourself

Look at yourself,
First, yet first, No better,
And yet not worse.

Now get yourself together,
In a bunch,
And call what carriage as you may,
Your hearse.

On Location

Can you locate where the mind is?

If not, can you find where the mind isn't?

Emptiness

It's not just that appearances that arise are empty,
It's that appearances are the emptiness arising.

Food for the Mind

"Thoughts as food,"
Is food for thought.
It's all you can eat,
So, eat all you can.

Eyelight

The light in our eyes,
Comes from within.
We see with the mind,
Not the eye.

Can you see, Appearances as empty?
Just watch the emptiness, Appearing.

-- July 5, 2014

EXIT

All personal items,
Must be checked,
Before leaving.

Centripetal

Held awake,
In the web,
Of this Moment, I rest ...

Rocked and cradled,
By the waves,
Of the mind.

There are only right turns. July 12, 2014

Self-Keeping

The upkeep on my Self,
Is endless,
A bottomless vacuum,
That I fill with attachments,
And still it feels empty.

My hologram within a hologram.

-- June 12, 2014

Time for Space

I need some time,
For space...
Stretch time,
Far enough,
To make room, And just live.

Real space,
Takes time.

August 5, 2013

Midsummer Night

Bobbing at the surface to bloom,
Opening now,
Letting go,
Letting it go,
Letting it go on,
Allowing it to go on.

As if I could stop it anyway.

The morning's brightness,
Lights the day,
And when that day is gone,
The quietness of evening,
Here approaching,
Settles to sleep,
This restless world.

Hard can I hear,
The frantic rush,
As I turn away from the edge,
Out into floating rest am I.

It is not my conscious direction doing this,
But as a head down-turned all life,
Now turns up a blossom to the night.

The night of time urges me open,
At last a flower,
Too,
Open to life.
Already the dawn.
Still,
Around me,
Urging caution,
A retinue of persons set my spirit,

Like a jewel is set, In time.

But where before my worry,
Now my rest.
The tide rolls on beyond me.
Ever changing,
It rocks me now asleep.
And in my sleep,
Awake am I,
So clear a bell is ringing.

The smart of persons lash and crack,
To drive me at time's edge.
My personal ties are slipped,
As floating out,
I'm gently tugged.

Too long have fought,
To force my thought,
And not,
At ease,
Arising,
Like some cloud,
To pass.

1967

Dharma Practice

The most efficient lens,
Through which to see,
The true nature,
Of the mind.

Nothing more. August 27, 2013

Water to Water

The entire ocean,
Is the mother,
To the smallest wave.

The same,
With thoughts,
In the mind.

March 30, 2013

True Words

I find that it is only,
At the very edge of sense,
Where words break down,
That they release,
Their essence,
And that's the truth.

-- May 11, 2013

The Nature of the Mind

Thoughts,
Fingerprints of the mind,
Are all different,
But identical,
In nature.

March 30, 2013

Sorry Self

Who can blame the self,
For being selfish,
Motherless orphan,
Of the mind,
That you are.

Forever embarrassed,
And feeling sorry,
Hurt by every slight,
Empty of anything,
Permanent,
Yet still,
Full of attachments.

It's no wonder,
You have no confidence.
There is almost,
Nothing to you.
I've never found you,
And I've looked.
You are like, o one I know,
And no one,
Really knows you.

I would feel compassion,
If you were someone,
Or even just something,
That truly exists.

May 29, 2013

Sight Seeing

Its the, "Seeing," And not,
What is seen.

When sight,
Sees itself,
Nothing,
Can be seen,
Except,
"Seeing" Seeing itself.

When sight,
Itself,
Is seen,
"Seeing,"
There is:

Rest in, Sight.

March 31, 2013

Knowing the Nature

Reading,
The content of thoughts,
Without knowing,
Their nature,
Is like reading a library,
A book at a time,
In a language,
We don't know.

March 30, 2013

Heat Lightning

I'm strung out, And extended,
In the fullness of time...

Embedded in cotton,
Like swimming,
In warm Jello.
So far,
This has gone on,
Forever,
Punctuated only,
By brief glimpses,
Of reality.

The sheer comfort,
And familiarity of,
Ignorance.

April 24, 2013

Asked and Answered

If you ask a question,
I will try to answer,
But you'll get no answer,
If you make a statement,
Yet I'm tempted.

Some of your statements,
Ask a lot.

May 29, 2013

Practice a Habit

Meditation,
While not practice, Is a habit,
That can be practiced.
Practice builds habits,
But should not itself,
Become a habit.
In other words:
Practice,
To form a habit,
But don't make,
A habit of it.

February 20, 2013

Mixed Messages

Now that I am old,
I carry,
Etched in my face,
A message of impermanence,
That anyone can read.

However,
If you will look,
Into the eyes,
Of my heart,
You will find that I am,
Forever young.

Please Don't Shoot the Messenger.

Transparency

Seeing thoughts,
Through to their nature,
I can see.

What would we do,
Without them.

August 22, 2012

Pointing Out

Pointers,
Themselves,
Can just point.
They never are,
What they're,
Pointing to.

They always are,
Beside the fact,
And never facts,
Themselves.

However,
When a pointer,
Points at itself,
The intellect,
Short circuits,
And the mind, Can rest.

And that's a fact. October 4, 2011

Mind Mudra

With so many dharma truths,
To keep in mind,
It's easy to forget,
What I find just too hard to remember.

Instead,
I relax,
And,
Let my mind,
Remember to collect,
It's own true signature.

I just read that.

September 2, 2011

Look See

If you want to see,
You have to look.
You can look,
And still not see.

Once you see,
You will always see,
But only when you look.
You have to look to see.

September 3, 2011

My Vacation

Senseless...
Eviction, Without Notice.

Snatched away. Gone,
And everything left,
Just as it is.
I know,
What I will leave behind,
But not what,
I will take with me.

I need to know that.

September 4, 2011

Close Friend

We can't replace,
What there is,
Only one of.

January 16, 2011

Be Still or You Will Drown

Ideas,
Of 'realization',
Precede me...
An inner tube,
Pushed by waves,
My hopes make.

Always out of reach...
The only cloud,
In an otherwise,
Cloudless sky.
Relax.

February 7, 2011

Purely Seeing

Hard to see,
Purely,
When stained.

Like:
Looking through,
The dark,
At yourself.

“Mother Nature,”
Always pure,
Is the cure.

Visit her.

November 10, 2010

Time Out

In the middle of time, Without a thought,
It comes,
(Not at life's end),
Like the tide coming in.

I had planned,
To get away from it all.

Too late,
Now,
For retreat;
Distance is close,
Far is now near.

Motions are going,
Every which way,
Striking me dumb.
I'll speak while I can.
The rest I am seeking,
Overtook me;

It's already here!
And it's:
Precious,
Precious:

Stillness in chaos,
Silence in sound.

February 17, 2010

Short Timer

I am older now.
I have less time,
But more of it.

I finally have enough,
Of whatever I was saving for,
To make it to the end.

For as the end draws near,
What I need to get there,
Grows less with every year.

So, I can take a break,
A chance to look around,
To see how you are doing,
To know where you are bound.

We could even walk together,
But here is what is tough,
I am only going to the end,
And that is close enough.

Trying To

I am too tired from trying to try,
From practicing all that I know,
I just have to let go for the moment,
And sink back into the flow.

When I Stop to Think

I am always awakened,
I never wake up.
What I am good at is thinking,
I can do it without a thought.

Without even thinking,
I stop to think.
Without thinking "I'm thinking,
I'm already thinking.

When I stop to think,
I stop thinking "I'm not-thinking."
But even when I think "I'm not thinking,"
I'm thinking.

Thinking nothing,
Is not the same as not-thinking.
And when I stop thinking,
It's Is not the same,
As when I stop to think.

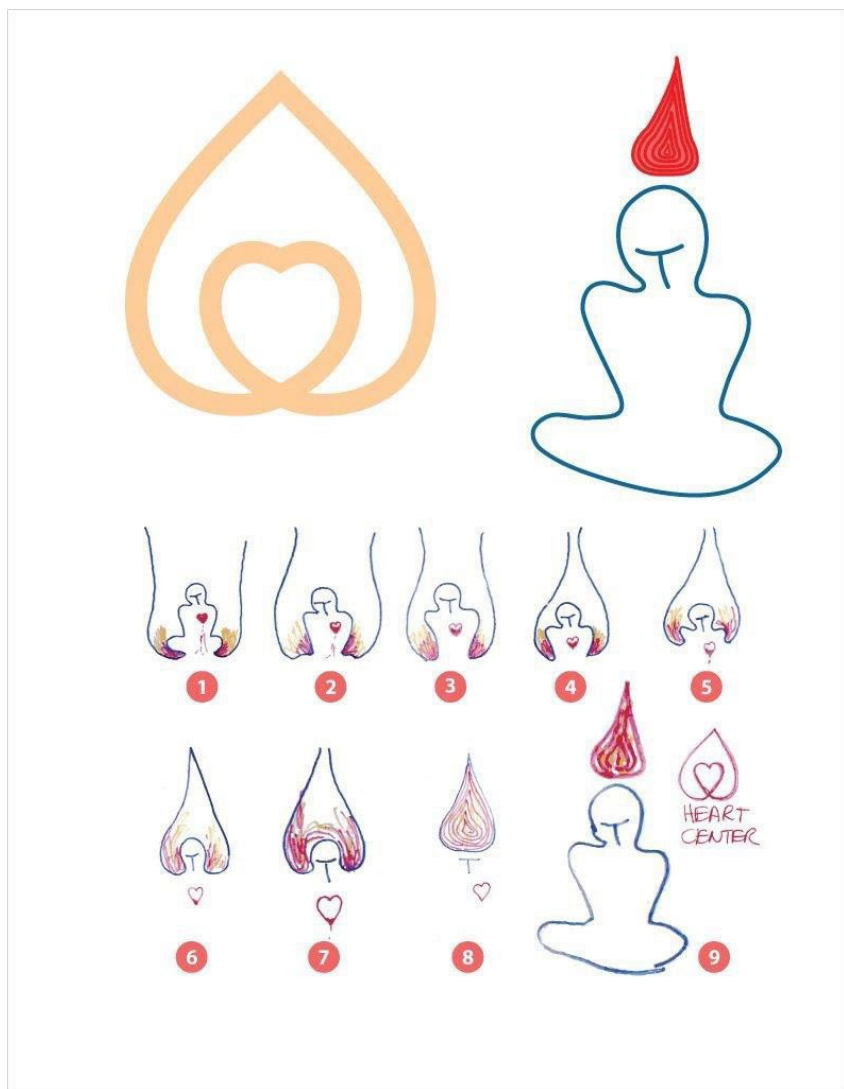
I may not be able to stop thinking,
But I don't have to stop and think.

Dreaming the Future

In the swim of time,
I push my dreams before me,
Like a swimmer pushes waves,
Always just out of reach.

I am good at dreaming my future,
At pushing things forward,
And putting my life off till then,
As if from time I could borrow.

When:
Considering my age,
Today IS tomorrow.



In late 1972, I went through a very powerful spiritual experience, out of which came the symbol for our center, the heart in a flame. Hard to explain, but here are the images I drew at the time. The Heart Center is a communion center that has been operating since that time, 1972.