

Spirit Grooves Archive

Miscellaneous Writings — Book Six 2026

Articles 501–547

By Michael Erlewine

SpiritGrooves.net



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The All-Clear Signal

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

May 30, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/9d46acf4-9e20-4e14-915f-7aec88893e0d_1024x1024.jpeg

The following is true for both muscles and mind. I am pointing here at muscles sore from overusing them, like lifting too much weight too often, and all the physical exercise that if we over-exercise, it takes days to recover from. I believe we all do this.

What is just as important and perhaps even more so are the mental tangles we get ourselves into that can tie us up for days, months, or even permanently.

Just as we can find trouble lifting too much weight or boxes that are too heavy, etc., we have to be very careful just how much mental congestion we can tolerate in a day or a week.

For example, for me, I can only take so many computer or internet binds before I begin to shut down. I will explain, so please hear me out.

Let's say I'm on the phone or online with a company with which I am having a problem. Perhaps my email is not working, or whatever. I am on the phone (or Internet) for what sometimes are hours or half a day or more trying to sort it.

I am talking with agents that barely speak English and their every word is a strain to decipher and on top of that I am passed from agent to agent up the line. And too often the call, after a long time, is dropped and I have to start all over.

I can take an hour or two of this kind of mental entanglement a day, before I am wound tighter than a tick and just need to stop and get out of it.

In my life, sometimes and too often to ignore, I have one session of this type after another, or one day of it, then another. Before long, with no rest from these problems, I am fit for what? About nothing!

There are problems I can't just pass to my wife or anyone else because I am the best equipped to deal with them, but am gradually worn down to a nubbin, until I can't even think straight.

Modern electronics, as advanced and sophisticated as they are or appear to be, are apparently still years away from working easily or without fail.

I can't imagine how expensive it must be for these large companies to handle these support issues. They have tried to pass it off to third-world countries, and now increasingly to AI bots, yet IMO that only seems to make the problem worse. It seems they are unable to fix this problem and keep just pushing it into the future.

Oten it becomes almost impossible to reach a real live agent as we are passed around from bot to bot, each stop requiring we give them this or that piece of information or their trying to pass us off to this or that URL on the web that supposedly has steps we can take. After a while our mind begins to reject the whole thing.

Very often the problem I have is very simple and a live agent or a smart AI bot could handle it, but instead I am shunted from here to there until I have gone full circle and am back to the main menu where I started or my call is without notice suddenly dropped.

Obviously, what is needed is updated hardware or a system interface that can handle all of this flawlessly. Instead, what we have is horribly flawed, something that threatens to reach a breaking point if not in the hardware itself then mentally with users like me.

Some days I just can't take it anymore. Whatever breaks down and has to be dealt with or perhaps some expensive part has to be replaced, but whatever the case, I spend hours of precious time on the phone or Internet and still don't reach a solution.

I admit that I am and have been walking the tightrope-edge of the future for decades, one where few go and those who do suffer the consequences of trying new hardware or software.

In my life there are fits of this kind of mental entanglement, some lasting days at a time.

We all could use some of these new supercomputers, operating on quantum-whatever to instantly solve the problems that today inadequate software present to us.

Someday all of this will be solved and put on a microchip that interfaces anything to everything flawlessly, yet now we are still at the butt end of progress, IMO.

I have lived through the very beginning of the Internet. I had email in 1979 and there were no graphics, little RAM, no printers, and no hard drive. My first home computer had 8K of RAM. My first printer was a 65 lb. teletype machine, etc. and I had to write my own word processor's justification

routines. And in the 8K of RAM, I programmed a complete astronomical package that calculated all the planets very accurately, in several coordinate systems, and even included block graphics that worked.

Of course, today that is old hat, but we still sit on the edge of technology, those of us who ride it. And we are forever stuck with 'edge technology' for those willing or capable of paying that price.

My point here to myself is that just as I must allow my strained muscles to heal and relax, so do I have to rest my stressed and entangled mind to clear itself and come to rest BEFORE leaping into the void of the next, a second entanglement.

I just can't take compiling multiple stressors one on top of the other until I grind to a halt or have a breakdown. I believe that many of us operate this way.

Even when I have a mental job or task all lined up and ready to go, that is not enough. I have to have the "All Clear" signal from my mind that it is empty (at peace) and ready to receive new input. Then, I can entertain new input or tasks.

Perhaps when I was younger, I could put one after the other task in the hopper to process and then process them serially, one after the other or all together.

Not so much anymore. Now I need to process each task and not attempt to juggle or multitask them as I used to.

What seems to be working with me these days is to complete a task, clear the hopper, rest in the emptiness, and THEN attempt to load up the next challenge or task.

Make sense?

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Ann Arbor History: A Hologram

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

May 31, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/4ecba9fa-c406-4181-9697-ebec51f4b656_1024x1024.jpeg

This is about Ann Arbor in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. At 85 years of age, the fabric of my own history and the richness of those times I lived in gradually is breaking up. I can begin to see through it, like carrying water as it slips through my fingers.

For example, the characters that played key roles for me are passing away, and many have serious strokes or other health problems and are forced to retire from the scene.

We can't freeze-frame time and put it on the wall or in a photograph. And the fine construct of those old times becomes increasingly fragile. If it's up to those who were there, we are no longer around and in league anymore. One by one we drop away and leave the scene.

As you may know, I have done my best to not only preserve and archive the music, movies, and popular culture of the times I lived in and through, but I also maintain them by my very presence here on Earth. And so do the rest of those who lived back then.

One of the problems is that if you were not alive then, living in and through those times, then you have no actual memory holding you together. Memories don't cohere. The best thing available to you is the history of those times as told or made memorable by people who lived it.

We can tell stories that help to fix those memories in the firmament of time, but that alone cannot be enough to sustain them. By definition, memories fade and appear now like old Polaroids in a scrap book.

I know this because I am experiencing it. Pumping life into what is now history is an oxymoron. History is by definition already on life support by passing, yours and mine. I am NOT a history buff by nature, even though it may look like I am. Living memories are what I try to keep on life-support and bring into the present and beyond, nothing more.

When old folks like me fade, so do the memories we share. In my case, I have tried my best to define and detail what happened back then, how it was, because to my shock most others did not bother.

I have written a lot about life in Ann Arbor, Michigan back in the day because few others have stepped forward and done it. It is beyond my imagination that the social life in Ann Arbor, what was going on and how it went on, should not be documented.

The past of Ann Arbor as a city is still vivid in my mind, in my memory, such that to just let it fade away and not be memorialized is unacceptable to me. Is life like that, such that we will let it pass without notice? I can't and won't, yet those memories gradually dissolve on their own. However, not with my help.

In some sense, I am in tune with the poet Dylan Thomas.

"Do not go gentle into that good night, Old age should burn and rave at close of day; Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

I hear that, but for me it's not rage but concern not just for my sake, but for yours, the younger ones. How can you know the present without comparison and knowledge of the past?

COMPARED TO WHAT?

I quote one of the great jazz tunes, Eddie Harris & Les McCann – "Compared to What" (Live at Montreux Jazz Festival 1969)

I write about what was, in order to compare to what it is now.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Residuum

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 1, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/970c0cb9-9337-4a23-b03c-11c2b3bb0135_1500x1208.jpeg

[Singing, we realize that the song of the future is coming from our lips.]

We climb the spiderweb of being, handhold by handhold, one foot in front of the other, and command what we can. We are all the same and yet we are also individually different.

That's the tightrope we each find ourselves walking.

It's so beyond our ability to gather it up or control, to fit the pieces of this puzzle together.

Life is humbling, hurling us into space beyond time, and then spiraling down, turning us inward on ourselves.

In fact, we start outward turning inward, a torus of inversion that never arrives anywhere other than right here where we are now, compacting ourselves infinitely and indefinitely.

This compacting is the alchemical residuum that survives the process of what the fire in the caldron of life could not remove.

So much is jettisoned that all that remains is a seed, karma for the next life, ready to be evolved, unrolled anew into rebirth.

The event we imagine we will do every year or for years may only happen once. That's how fast things can change for us.

Perhaps, we can't see all that explicitly, yet we can sense this unfoldment, intuit it, and at some point just go with the flow. We eventually give in.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Morning Frog

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 2, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/6dd0db88-a1e4-42b7-8399-d0b5aecf06a6_2048x1233.jpeg

MORNING FROG

Some frogs are mostly nocturnal, coming out at night and being less active during the day. The Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) is the largest frog we have around here in northern Michigan and it is mostly nocturnal.

I can't see much at night, but this morning I went out early as the sun was coming up and took a photo of this frog, not a Bullfrog but a female Green Frog (*Rana clamitans*) enjoying the morning rays. I guess the Bullfrogs were off the clock.

These days are warm enough and the sun is out, so I am out too, ignoring what I should or have to do and doing what I want to do, which is visit with frogs.

[Photo by me.]

EMAIL

Leading a Horse to Water

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 3, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/0b37b04f-080c-4d26-be38-d201d3fa277f_1024x1024.jpeg

Finding a reason why I'm putting off doing what needs to be done for today is difficult. Is it the cold spring, the politics, the world wars, or a combination of all this? I can't say because I don't know.

However, when I feel this way, it never seems to me like a very good sign. "Don't put off till tomorrow what can be done today" is an age-old slogan. I try to do that.

Perhaps I am seeking some kind of rest, a pause to refresh, to get my mind together before I try again to move forward and forget all that's going on. I want to be ready, meaning I am right now not ready. So, what's missing?

Whatever is missing is missing enough to pause me where I stand. As for how long this pause will hold me up and keep me from feeling normal, whatever this is, varies and is hard to put into words. If I knew the reason, perhaps I would not pause and come to a rolling stop as I am doing lately.

I seem to be trying to clear my mind, to have a clear mind before I head into the future. Somehow, I don't feel ready for what's coming next in the world. To that degree I'm stymied.

As for "He who hesitates is lost," well I don't know where that phrase came from and it can mean a million things. I am hesitating.

Time marches on; I don't always do the same. I don't actually dawdle, but I do sidebar this way and that, until I can find my way to pull out the stops enough to lurch forward once again. Time does not wait, but I do.

I rather like the line "I dream a bridge to hold back what I have." Something is holding me back and sometimes it's hard to get beyond the present difficulties and into the future. I am held up by this or that pause and hesitation. I know, it makes no sense.

At these times I become like a bad clutch for those who remember, that's how we drove a car back before automatic transmissions became a mainstay, generally in the 1950s.

Or as Shakespeare wrote:

“And thus the native hue of resolution Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought, And enterprises of great pith and moment With this regard their currents turn awry, And lose the name of action.”

I don’t have to go that far to explain what holds me back from the future or from even continuing on with the present time.

I am not usually prone to depression, and tend to be very positive, yet depression will do this, sidecar me, or is it that there is nothing or not enough of something to look forward to.

Whatever the case, I find myself turning aside and treading water and knowing that I am doing that. What’s holding me back?

I can spend days ignoring some particular task I know I have to do, skirting, but being held up by it at the same time. This blockage becomes an island in time that I can’t get past but don’t want to entertain or live on with it either.

Getting my engine started again can take days until I don’t even remember the reason(s) I avoided the obvious, landmines in my path that I have lost the sense of, so here I sit: not doing what I have to do.

Rolling all this over and getting moving again can take me a relatively long time. I can’t get around these pauses because they block my way, and I can’t dispatch them because I don’t feel like doing these tasks, doing what it takes.

If I get five or ten of those babies blocking the way and my rocky road becomes some kind of a depression I am stuck in. I’m sure I am not the Lone Ranger in all this.

To combat this, and I am not saying this is an actual solution, the moment I take on a task or am faced with something hanging over my head that I have to do, is simple. I most often stop everything and just do the task and be done with it.

And that solves the problem, but so much lately.

My forward motion has become like a bad clutch, jerking my way into the future, starting and stopping. I don’t like the tasks hanging over me and I don’t like people seeing my forward motion, piling things on me they want me to do. You know I hate that because I have to stop everything and do that before I can allow myself to move on. Or is that my way of moving on?

For me I have to deal with it, by definition, yet I don’t like to pack the stack of things I have to do until I have more things on my plate than I can eat.

I can lead my horse to water, but I can’t make him drink.

[AI graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Three Very Strong Solar Flares

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 3, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/035feefd-af65-4e20-a55b-8b3844c24293_768x768.jpeg

I interrupt my normal posts for this news

Here's what the data shows on today's X1.0 flare from AR 4455, with some help to gather data from AI:

M9.3 flare: 01:36 UTC → 9:36 PM EDT (June 2)

M7.7 flare: 07:00 UTC → 3:00 AM EDT (June 3)

The X1.0 flare timeline:

Started: 11:19 UTC

Peak: 11:28 UTC

Ended: 11:35 UTC

Total duration: about 16 minutes

This flare was not a sharp single spike. Solar flares are classified as either impulsive (sharp rise and fall, brief) or gradual/long-duration events (LDE). An LDE typically lasts 30 minutes to several hours and is more strongly associated with large CMEs. This one at 16 minutes sits in between — not purely impulsive, but not a classic LDE either.

What makes this event remarkable is that it is anti-Hale magnetic configuration which is very rare (3% of flares) — it means the sunspot's polarity is reversed from what's normal for this solar cycle, which creates unusual and intense magnetic shear.

Sunspot AR 4455 had already fired an M9.3 at 01:36 UTC and M7.7 at 07:00 UTC the same day before the X1.0

A G3 Strong geomagnetic storm watch is now in effect for June 4-5, suggesting an Earth-directed CME was associated.

The extended profile you noticed is consistent with the region's complex, sheared magnetic field — energy released more gradually than a simple impulsive burst. It burns itself in.

The difference isn't so much in how the flare radiation affects us — that's the same regardless — but in what comes with it and how much energy gets released. These Anti-Hale flares are more dangerous because they create unusually strong magnetic stress and shear.

When that magnetic field finally reconnects and releases, it tends to release more energy than a typical flare of the same X-class rating and produce faster and more energetic CMEs (coronal mass ejections). They generate stronger solar energetic particle (SEP) events — high-speed protons that can arrive at Earth in as little as 30 minutes and are a radiation hazard for astronauts and polar flight crews and are associated with more complex, hard-to-predict eruptions.

What hits us:

These Anti-Hale flares are similar as any flare, just potentially stronger. They can cause radio blackouts, geomagnetic storms — affecting power grids, GPS accuracy, satellites

Radiation storms. Aurora are visible at lower latitudes than usual

The real concern with anti-Hale regions is that it's harder for forecasters to model. Standard flare prediction tools are calibrated for normal Hale-configuration regions, so anti-Hale regions can surprise as AR 4455 did today, firing an X flare despite being assessed as relatively low complexity.

In short, they have the same effects, but potentially stronger, faster, and less predictable.

Flare start: 11:19 UTC → 7:19 AM EDT

Flare peak: 11:28 UTC → 7:28 AM EDT

Flare end: 11:35 UTC → 7:35 AM EDT

Earlier flares from AR 4455 the same day:

M9.3 flare: 01:36 UTC → 9:36 PM EDT (June 2)

M7.7 flare: 07:00 UTC → 3:00 AM EDT (June 3)

So, the X1.0 hit at 7:28 this morning my time.

As to how they affect us, you tell me. It should have been all day since early this morning. What that is unusual happened?

“PICK UP YOUR BED LAZARUS AND WALK”

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 4, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/d49308b3-abce-4e01-840a-d91c9cc69e7b_1024x1024.jpeg

Things I want to do and that I would do if I was more energetic and less recalcitrant. I can think to do them, yet can't quite turn over that old crankshaft and get my engine going. In other words, I'm not on top of it, but still somewhere back here behind the 8-ball. I'm trying to remember when this first happened. Not long ago. Perhaps just too much bad news too much of the time. And I am tired of my own resistance to doing stuff. I have to embrace the current situation I'm facing (that we are facing), encompass it, and by that embracement be free to move on from it. Right now, I see just enough so that I am trying to align all the parts. I need to elide, to slide into and with the present moment and not be restrained by doubts or by the world situation. "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." Yeah, something like that! Meanwhile, back in the jungle of this present time, I have to shake off the constant shroud of world news, get out from under its shadow, and like the old saying: "Pick up your bed, Lazerus, and walk." Perhaps, I just don't have the energy I used to have. I don't think that's it. I just got caught up in the spin of world news and can't get out from under it. Perhaps I somehow can distill, boil down what energy I do have and run on the essence of all that. Hard to say. Meanwhile, I'm backing up to get a better view (or trying to) until I can get this whole world mess in my sights, yet that's a long way back and it is hard to get my arms around what I am also involved in. This current mess we are in is a massive construct! Anyway, I'm taking stock, trying to objectify this political mess our country and the world is caught up in, but each time I try, I find myself also immersed in it, with no thread or end that I can get a hold of. We all seem to be in a recursive loop that keeps us inundated and not coming up for air, not able to reflect. We can't objectify what we ourselves are immersed and caught up in. What I am saying here is that it is very difficult to reflect on what we are ourselves involved in while we continue to be involved in it. It seems endless. To reiterate, the whole world mess seems something we cannot yet reflect on because we are still so immersed in it and as a continuum, we have yet to come up for a breath of air. No closure, although collectively I believe we are starting to get our arms around the problem. In other words, no reflection. We need time to reflect, and it seems that is has been a long time since we

have had our heads about water. [Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]
EMAIL

Liminal Gateways

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 7, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/5787c382-19e8-41f7-bfcb-a405897a8524_960x1344.jpeg

[I want to thank AI for helping me gather some of the data for this post. This concept of liminal gateways has been a pet project of mine for decades. Time to present it.]

In history, at least in my lifetime, there have been key figures that span two eras (before and after) and who themselves became gateways for many, the public, to enter that field. They may or may not have been the greatest stars in their field, but instead they became the doorway or thoroughfare (the representatives) through which the public entered and became familiar with their genre.

I site Allister Crowley in New Age and occult, M.C Esher in modern art (art-as-aesthetic-experience and art-as-intellectual-encounter), and Eric Satie in modern music (Romanticism and Modernism, and again between composed concert music and the ambient/minimalist tradition.)

What unites them is that all three became symbols of a threshold rather than masters of what lay on either side of that threshold. Their cult status comes precisely from people who are drawn to the doorway itself through which they are introduced and discover new genres. These are not popularizers, but mainstream artists, just not considered at the top of their field.

I would also suggest the following, but they all were masters at the top of their fields:

William Blake (Romanticism to mystical Modernism)

Philip K. Dick (pulp sci-fi to literary sci-fi)

Buckminster Fuller (engineering to visionary design culture)

“Liminal Gateway” is probably the most academically established term.

“Liminal” (from the Latin *limen*, threshold) describes someone who stands at the boundary between two eras or worldviews — not fully belonging to either. Satie is almost the perfectly liminal between Romanticism and Modernism.

Another phrase would be “Hinge figure,” which is used by cultural historians and is perhaps the most evocative term. The person and artists becomes the hinge point between what came before and what came after — their significance is structural as much as artistic. I also like the term “Threshold figure” as it is similar and slightly more poetic.

But none of these quite capture the additional quality I’m pointing at — that these figures become iconic symbols of the transition, sometimes more famous as representatives than as practitioners. Crowley is a good example: he’s become a cultural shorthand for occultism far beyond his standing within occult circles themselves.

There may not be a single settled term for the full combination — which is itself interesting. You might call them “threshold icons” : figures who crystallize a transitional moment and become its symbol, often with a cult following that values them precisely because they represent the doorway rather than the room beyond or before it. These folks are door openers for the public.

M.C. Escher

Escher occupies one of the strangest positions in 20th century art: he is among the most reproduced visual artists of the century, yet the fine art establishment largely ignores him. You won’t find him in serious art history curricula alongside Picasso or Matisse.

Critics don’t write monographs about him the way they do about canonical modernists. And yet his images are everywhere — in dorm rooms, mathematics textbooks, cognitive science papers, album covers.

This is precisely what makes him a threshold figure. He sits at the boundary between two worlds simultaneously: fine art and mathematics, representational craft and conceptual idea, “high” art and popular culture. He didn’t belong fully to any of them, which is why each world could claim him as a kind of representative.

What he actually represents is the moment when the idea behind the image became more important than the image’s beauty or emotional content. His impossible staircases, infinite loops, and metamorphosing tessellations are essentially visual philosophy — they’re about perception, paradox, infinity, and self-reference.

Roger Penrose collaborated with him. Douglas Hofstadter put him at the center of Gödel, Escher, Bach , his landmark book about consciousness and recursion.

Escher became the artistic face of a certain kind of rigorous, playful, mind-bending intellectual inquiry.

He also represents the democratization of art — he appeals enormously to people who don't think of themselves as “art people,” particularly scientists, mathematicians, and programmers.

In that sense he's a gateway figure: many people's first experience of art feeling genuinely thrilling comes through Escher, not through a museum. He stands at the threshold between art-as-aesthetic-experience and art-as-intellectual-encounter.

The counterculture of the 1960s and 70s also adopted him heavily — his impossible worlds fit perfectly with psychedelic experience and the questioning of perceived reality. So, he became a symbol for that too, entirely outside any art movement he actually belonged to.

He is more famous in the world than in the art world. That inversion is the mark of a true threshold figure. I tend to read the journals and diaries of famous people.

When I read the journals of Escher, I noticed that he often complained about how lonely it was being him, being a genius in this perhaps too ordinary world. And then, later in his journals, Escher commented something like “Yes, it's lonely being a genius but it is so refreshing.” I found that funny.

Composer Erik Satie

Satie is perhaps the purest example of what I am describing. His actual position in classical music canon is modest — he's not taught at conservatories the way Debussy, Ravel, or Stravinsky are.

Yet his fingerprints are on an enormous range of what followed him, and he's become the symbolic patron saint of a certain sensibility that runs from French impressionism all the way through minimalism and ambient music to today.

He represents the decisive turn away from Romantic excess. Where the 19th century gave you Wagner's overwhelming emotional architecture, Satie gave you something stripped bare, cool, repetitive, gently ironic — music that didn't try to overpower you. Instead, it draws you in.

His *Gymnopédies* and *Gnossiennes* sound like they arrived from somewhere outside the existing tradition entirely. They're modal, unhurried, slightly melancholy, and completely without drama. That was almost shocking in the 1880s.

Debussy acknowledged his debt to Satie directly, which is remarkable — Debussy became far more famous but essentially followed a direction Satie had pointed toward first. Satie was the hinge; Debussy walked through the door.

But what makes Satie even more interesting as a threshold figure is that he didn't stop there. He invented the concept of "furniture music" — *musique d'ameublement* — music designed to be present in a room without being the focus of attention, heard but not listened to. Some call it "Wallpaper Music."

He literally invented ambient music, seventy years before Brian Eno named it. Eno has said so explicitly. Satie's connection to Dada and the French avant-garde also fed directly into John Cage's radical rethinking of what music even is.

So, he's a threshold figure twice over: once between Romanticism and Modernism, and again between composed concert music and the ambient/minimalist tradition.

He also had an eccentric personal mythology — the 17 velvet corduroy suits he wore all his life, the austere life in Arcueil, the absurdist performance directions in his scores ("like a nightingale with a toothache," "dry as a cuckoo"), the invented titles and self-coined genre names.

He performed his own liminality; he was consciously outside and yet between.

Like Escher, Satie's most famous pieces are loved by people who don't consider themselves classical music listeners. The *Gymnopédies* appear in films, cafés, advertisements — they've become shorthand for a particular mood: thoughtful, a little sad, intelligent without being showy. He became the feeling of a transition more than a participant in one.

And perhaps most remarkable, almost all of Eric Satie's compositions were found after his death. They had fallen behind his piano. Otherwise, we would have next to nothing. He was not known as we know him in his lifetime. See more about Satie in the comment below (on Facebook only [Facebook.com/MichaelErlewine](https://www.facebook.com/MichaelErlewine)), since he is a great favorite of mine.

Aleister Crowley, The Occult Tradition

Aleister Crowley was a gateway to the occult and the New Age. I studied him very carefully. I had his complete work on microfilm, everything. I wanted to know how much was real occult knowledge he knew and how much was just bravado.

After some years I came to the conclusion that Crowley was one of these Liminal Gateways, not a mystic occultist but a doorway through which many poured into the New Age and all it contains.

I found him wanting as to what I looked for, but for sure another threshold master. Instead, I moved on to the East and to Tibetan dharma where I trained much more thoroughly for many decades. The dharma contains what I was looking for.

What unites M.C. Esher, Erik Satie, and Aleister Crowley — is that all three became symbols of a threshold rather than masters of what lay on either side of it. Their cult status comes precisely from people who are drawn to the doorway itself . The doorway these liminal masters opened for us, not a doorway for the few, but a doorway for the many. They opened a wide doorway through which ordinary people entered.

These are some of guardians at the gateway...

[Photo of Eric Satie.]

EMAIL

Mandala Offering

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 11, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/248c2568-ee76-4470-9a76-4283b91c91f4_1024x1024.jpeg

What's offered,

Is not the offering.

The offering of what's offered,

Is the "offering."

It's the giving, Not the gift,

That is,

The mandala

"I anoint the earth with fragrant water, scatter flowers, and adorn it with Mt. Meru, the Four Continents, and the Sun and Moon.

"Imagining this a Buddha field, I offer it so that all beings may enjoy this pure realm"

When we are young change is gradual, sometimes almost imperceptible. As we get older the redistribution of essential assets takes place more and more often until it becomes almost constant. As an elder, every day we learn how to do more with less. Choiceless.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Feel the Difference

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 13, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/76fed1be-c6e4-4bf9-b81c-f0a9551f793d_1402x1122.jpeg

Where does the real world end and fantasy begin. Since ultimately we will be and have previously been disembodied, nothing is too far out.

How far apart are flights of verbal conceptualization from spiritual imagination, intense duality from non-duality?

“You can’t have one without the other.”

It’s this borderline or edge that I am pointing at here, neither in nor out, but rather in then out and repeat. Crossing over the edge or borderline, one side to the other and back is how we feel the difference.

Hovering at the edge, each defined by the other or not at all. The dharma points this out... endlessly, but little attention is paid to it.

What is the Present Moment and what flanks it on either side, the past and the future. And we are stuck in between, each side reflecting on the other.

Something from nothing comes out of the future and nothing from something is an earmark of the past.

Our life is a palindrome. It reads the same forward and backward, the very definition of a circle or cycle.

Riding the edge is not only preferable, but also the only thing I have found that works.

[Here is an image I created of the edge or borderline, rolling a tiny pebble around between our thumb and forefinger. Feeling the difference of the edge or borderline.]

EMAIL

Michigan's Rare Orchids

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 14, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/f307ba6f-2ada-448c-8b58-be76d11d8ddc_1536x2048.jpeg

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/833483c1-bc56-4bb0-9151-be676a8981f7_1536x2048.jpeg

I have been visiting this microclimate where Michigan's rare 'Showy Orchid' lives for decades. I always go out to see them on June 13th because that's about the date they bloom.

It's a short trip by car and then about a mile walk, perhaps a little less. And I have to wear boots because you have to ford a little stream to get to where the orchids are. Margaret and I both went armed with boots.

Yet, over the years the whole microclimate has gradually changed. Where there once were boards and wood pallets, today they are all falling apart and I have to watch my step. I'm carrying a tripod and today a heavy camera, with perhaps my heaviest lens. One wrong step in this tiny jungle and I'm in trouble, either my equipment, me, or both. I move very slowly, especially going step-by-step sideways down the steepish bank to the stream and then back up the other side.

Once the stream has been crossed, on the other side I am engulfed by clouds of mosquitoes, visible swarms of mosquitoes, so I have my flannel shirt buttoned all the way to my wrists, my knit beanie pulled down over my ears and use my tripod as a cane. I am carrying my camera in a canvas bag with strap over my head and shoulder and I don't take the camera out until I actually want to take a photo. Too much danger of slipping in the wet environment. Beneath my feet are a tangled mix of vines, water, and unstable ground.

When I reach the orchids, I then take out the camera, fix it to the tripod, splay out the legs, and try to level the camera. And finally, I take a photo. The paths that were there years ago are gone and there is not stable ground.

Because of the clouds of mosquitoes and dangerous footing, we don't stay long, but carefully retrace our steps back to the creek, ford it, and sidestep

our way back up the other bank. I got some mosquito bites despite all attempts to avoid them.

The Michigan wetlands and swamps have many orchids, some rarer than others. The ‘Showy Orchid,” at least in this part of north-western Michigan is rare, so I don’t share its location lest it be trampled out.

Its microclimate is on the side of a hill, where tiny streams of water are running downhill like a waterfall on the ground. And nestled in that very wet climate are the orchids. Today, we have paid a visit, made our offering, and managed to retreat without harm to the flowers or to ourselves. At 85, that is much more difficult today than it used to be. And also, the area has devolved compared to the trails and boards that used to be there.

Offering this mandala.

“I anoint the earth with fragrant water, scatter flowers, and adorn it with Mt. Meru, the Four Continents, and the Sun and Moon.

“Imagining this a Buddha field, I offer it so that all beings may enjoy this pure realm”

EMAIL

The Dark of the Moon

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 14, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/7b8eef4f-4ffa-4e4d-a020-f0d7f7274834_1024x1024.jpeg

The three days before the New Moon in Medieval times were known as the Devil's Days, while in the Tibetan tradition they were called Fierce Dharma Protector Days.

Tonight at 10:54 EDT marks the New Moon. I have some things to do, but will wait until tomorrow, after the New Moon has arrived. As an astrologer, I would not have planned an event like the White House is putting on tonight (Trump's UFC 80 th Birthday Bash) in the dark of the moon, but then again, it seems so appropriate.

We live in time as it goes along, not faster and not slower, although from our point of view we may feel keyed up or dragged along.

All other dimensions exist simultaneously if we can monitor them. In other words, we are there and exist in these dimensions as much as we are aware of them. And this includes whatever dharma awareness we are capable of.

It's not enough to be present, we have to be aware that we are present. If we are just carried away in the moment with no awareness, we are out-to-lunch. Maintaining an awareness apparently takes training and constant vigilance. We have to be able to rub our forehead and pat our belly at the same time. Those two actions have to be one, so to speak.

As they say, tomorrow is another day, in this case a New Moon.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Weaning

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 16, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/cb133eac-8fce-4081-b245-a5cce5867d41_1536x1024.jpeg

It's not the situation that is uncomfortable, but rather my reaction to the situation.

If it says No, No, and No, that may require some adjustment. If it says Yes, Yes, and Yes, things are humming along fine.

The state of the world or any state does not require my approval, blessing, or anything.

If things suddenly add up to a change of view, that is fine too. If someone's growing up and reaching a turning point, so much the better, like Robert Frost's:

"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, And sorry I could not travel both And be one traveler, long I stood And looked down one as far as I could To where it bent in the undergrowth;"

I have learned that "It's All Good" as the old saying goes. Especially after thinking about, it.

Yet between the first occurrence and the thinking, there is the reaction time. The tendency to react comes from way back, and knee-jerk reactions go back even farther.

I am still a bit tender there and at times have trouble with reactions taking hold and gently pry my fingers from grasping at this or that. As mentioned, I do know it is all good.

And there is no point in having preferences because we can't count on them and they are the first to go when change appears.

Life is more like ballet than a clog or a march, or could be. I'm happy if someone has grown up even if it means that our roads diverge. Not a problem. Nothing else works, anyway.

Happy that you have found your way, even though it is not a way I travel, except on the Great Circle.

What I care for most is the gentle rain of blessings the dharma brings or evokes from the mind itself. A rising tide raises all boats.

When does a mother dog wean her pups? When they start to bite when nursing. That's the sign that they are ready and able to find their own way.

Independence is always the goal and a cause for celebration.

[AI graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

The Spinal Maypole

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 18, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/2edb48cb-ee7d-4716-8866-1dbfdc25833e_1024x1024.jpeg

The world of meditation is replete with interlocking pieces or interstices that function natively quite naturally.

We struggle to find order when our senses are pure and unadulterated. Without our senses we would be lost. They can't be trifled with and by learning to use them (don't mess with them) we can become immersed in nonduality.

When fear and worry tip the scale and send our mind scurrying into the weeds, there is no one to stop this but ourselves, our discipline, and dharma practice of some kind.

These times we live in try us like nothing in my memory can. As flawed as American history may be, the constitution is something I grew up with and hate to see us drop to the current levels of political and personal abuse.

Personally, I am rallying and my first step is learning to fix my own health problems, right now mostly compounded lower back pain. I am unwinding all that, sorting out the strands and threads of pain, untwisting what is twisted. That has to be done.

I have a trainer I will be meeting with regularly who will teach me how to take care of my back and its muscles. They will teach me the exercises and make sure I am doing them correctly. I will be unwinding all the muscular threads that have wound around my spinal maypole.

I now have an orthopedic mattress that has no foam or poly-whatever in it, just organic wool and cotton. It has been off-gassed, not that it needed any. I have a yoga mat coming that is thick enough not to jar my spine.

In other words, I am laying the proper foundation for a healthy lower back. I'm no longer going to throw pain on the fire of hurting my back and then wait days for it to heal.

I'm not going to injure it in the first place. At 85 years it is time for me to take a rest and stop behaving like a 20 year old.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Summer Solstice: Cosmic Breathing

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 21, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/06c128fb-b484-45a3-95ac-3fed288bdf1d_1024x1024.jpeg

Today is the Summer Solstice, Sunday, June 21, at 4:24 a.m. EDT .

The Summer Solstice is the top of the year, the point where the Sun stops in the sky and begins to decline and heads toward the Winter Solstice now some six months away.

This year the solstice seems premature. Spring still has not quite come. It's not been warm enough long enough to be ready to cool off. Yes, it will warm up in the coming months, but you can't compensate for what was never there, like a warm spring.

Each day I look to find how words fit together like a Chinese puzzle to create what cannot be said in words.

It has a beginning, an end, and stands out like a pole star in the mind. Yet it is unborn. It just is.

We can enter it by using our best words, words that vibe and transport us beyond duality into the midst of full immersion.

I don't think there is much of anything else, although it seems so personal and local. Perhaps the mind itself is local. That's the whole mystery in a nutshell. Familiarity with what is familiar, with what is local. Bypass the obvious, which is not that easy to do.

Seeing the 'Seeing' itself rather than the usual, what is seen. And sight (and seeing) is one of the senses, which by definition is non-dual and has neither a subject nor an object. Be one with the seeing, not with what is seen. That's stepping inside what is. Neither a subject nor an object be.

Being unborn, once upon a time there was no time, none.

Still is.

It's been a cold spring.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Consuming Our Own Fat

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 25, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/164ccb9d-7357-49a5-9a73-c490fe5f47e5_1024x1024.jpeg

Next on my agenda and already underway is the eternal problem for aging seniors of losing and gaining weight. I can't say that I have solved that problem, but I am knee-deep in it. So, what follows is just an introduction, a first pass through this topic of weight gain and loss.

How to find that slippery thread the end of which we have to take hold of and follow that leads to the unwinding of our particular resistance to lose weight and sparks our ability to start losing weight instead of gaining.

And along the way, any plans we make alternately fall together or they fall apart. Rinse and repeat.

For me the hardest of all is turning my need to lose weight into absorbing my stored fat and eating away at that. That's pretty much a form of dieting, but often quite hard to spark.

Once I find my stored fat disappearing, meaning I am eating on that fat rather than more courses on the table, I can glide for quite a long time and the weight disappears quite easily. How is that triggered?

What I'm describing is metabolically precise — talking about the shift into fat oxidation, where the body switches its primary fuel source from incoming food/glucose to stored body fat. That shift is real, measurable, and it has a trigger.

When the body is burning stored fat, it's in a state of negative energy balance at the cellular level. Insulin is low, glucagon is up, and the liver starts converting fat into ketones for fuel. You feel it — hunger changes character, energy stabilizes, and there's almost a gliding quality. The body is feeding on itself.

What triggers it?

The most reliable triggers are:

Depleting glycogen first. Your body burns stored sugar (glycogen in the liver and muscles) before it willingly touches fat. Until glycogen is low, fat oxidation

stays minimal. This is why the first few days of any diet feel awful — you're burning through glycogen. Once it's depleted, the switch flips.

Keeping insulin low. Insulin is the primary signal that locks fat in cells. Even small amounts of sugar or refined carbohydrate spike insulin enough to halt fat burning. This is the core mechanism behind why low-carb approaches work for many people — not magic, just sustained low insulin.

Time without eating. An overnight fast alone starts the process. Extending it — even just pushing breakfast later — deepens it. This is why many people find intermittent eating (not aggressive fasting, just a longer overnight window) so effective. You wake up already partway into fat burning and simply extend it a little.

Movement in a fasted state. The experts say that a walk before breakfast, when glycogen is already somewhat depleted from overnight, pulls directly from fat stores. It doesn't have to be intense — low-intensity movement is actually better for fat oxidation than high-intensity, which burns glucose.

Why it's hard to spark

The cruel irony is that the transition period — getting from glucose-burning to fat-burning — feels terrible. Fatigue, irritability, hunger, brain fog. Most people quit here and eat something, which resets the whole process back to zero.

The body is essentially complaining that its preferred (lazy) fuel source is being withdrawn.

This transition typically takes 2-4 days of consistently low carbohydrate intake and/or caloric restriction to get through. Once through it, the gliding state kicks in.

Once you're in the fat-burning state you can maintain it easily — the problem is just the ignition, not the engine. A few approaches that reliably spark it:

A 24-36 hour period of very low carbohydrate eating (not necessarily low calorie, just low carb) depletes glycogen fastest. Or two to three days of simply eating noticeably less than usual. Either gets you past the transition.

The morning walk or some exercise before eating is probably the gentlest and most sustainable spark — it nudges the body toward fat oxidation without the dramatic misery of a hard dietary reset.

The key insight is that you already know how to run in fat-burning mode. You just need a reliable on-ramp. The transition is the enemy, not the destination.

One thing about feeding on your own stored fat is that when it was stored, it was stored with all kinds of extraneous particles. And when that fat is eaten, all those particles are released into your blood stream and bring headaches, cloudiness, and a day or so of confusion.

This is quite real and not talked about nearly enough. This is what happens during lipolysis — when fat cells release their contents back into circulation.

Fat cells (adipocytes) are not just neutral energy storage. Over a lifetime they accumulate:

Lipid-soluble toxins — pesticides, herbicides, PCBs, flame retardants, plasticizers like BPA

Fat-soluble medications and their metabolites

Heavy metals to some degree

Lipophilic environmental chemicals that the body sequestered in fat precisely because it couldn't eliminate them easily.

When fat breaks down rapidly, these get released back into circulation all at once. The liver and lymphatic system get hit with a load of toxins they weren't expecting.

The symptoms include — headaches, cloudiness, a day or so of confusion — match what's sometimes called a detox reaction or Herxheimer-like response.

The liver is processing a sudden influx, the lymphatic system is working harder, and inflammatory signaling can temporarily increase. Some people also notice skin breakouts, unusual fatigue, or changes in body odor during active fat loss for exactly this reason.

As to what helps move it through faster, water is the most important thing — genuinely high intake helps the kidneys clear what the liver is processing.

The lymphatic system, unlike the circulatory system, has no pump — it moves through body movement, so walking and light activity during fat-burning periods helps flush it.

Some people find that bitter foods — dandelion, lemon, beets — support liver processing during this phase.

The interesting implication is actually an argument for gradual fat loss over aggressive dieting, particularly in older adults with a longer lifetime accumulation of stored toxins.

A slow steady burn releases these particles at a rate the body can actually manage, rather than flooding the system all at once.

It also means the cloudiness and headaches we experience are not imaginary, not weakness, and not something going wrong. They're a sign the process is working — the body is doing exactly what it should, just handling a backlog.

...To be continued.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Sidebar

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 29, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/73d351ac-a6fa-456f-b1c9-940800cd427e_1024x1024.jpeg

No doubt I'm at the edge of the skylight of the mind and pressing that. Things are not just as they always were. I'm no longer taking whatever is on the stack, like last in, first out, carrying it out, and executing it. That's how I have lived my life until about now. I'm telling you that I am no longer doing that. That's a transition, but to what I can't yet say.

Until now, my reasoning for clearing my stack of things I have set up to do is to have clear sky above, nothing I have to do that's not already done. Why and how has this changed or is changing? The idea of not keeping up with all that no longer concerns me... much.

Lackawanna

Pushing tasks, stacking things to do like I used to do with a Pez candy dispenser is a good way to get it done. Last in first, out. Take care of it and move on.

However, this is NOT a healthy way to act because sooner or later you are going to run out of wanna and be unable or uninterested to stack tasks like we used to. We don't feel like it. It is that simple.

Right now, I might be late or not even be there at all on a given day. If I run into myself and get stuck in all that, who cares. I'm not worried about it.

Nothing is pregnant anymore.

My writings get pushed into the future and while they are contiguous and of one piece, the physical body and the process of aging itself continues on its own and is inexorable.

Sacrifices are required for everything to remain the same. And I have less energy to make them.

The truth of the dharma is just that, the way things are.

The twenty year old me and view has little changed, but the 85 year old energy is very different from when I was twenty.

Today, a lot goes into the energy and plans to push this forward.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

The Heat of the Day

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

June 30, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/df823525-5a0a-42c3-834b-a29a4f058c0b_1024x1024.jpeg

Diving into a bowl of word spaghetti with no meaningful orientation or pole star known. Not exactly a gyroscope.

Claude AI says that keeping your spine healthy takes daily walking so that the walking loosens the spinal disks and helps to keep them filled with water. I'm out for one of those walks.

The heat burns up my back and spine while out walking as I make a beeline for home. It should rain if it can. It won't because today is a scorcher. After one of the coldest springs I have known, we now have real heat, enough to quench our thirst for warmth.

As darkness falls all around and night settles in, the heat of the day does not dissipate. No need for blankets. We sweat, sweat, sweat. If I can't sleep, there is little else I can do except lie here. Morning is very far away just now. We don't use air conditioning here in northern Michigan.

This kind of heat happens maybe once a year.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Further than Far

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 1, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/2d99ea03-9f80-4371-be93-34047adb8726_1024x1024.jpeg

Life can't threaten me beyond reality. And the reality of 85 years only points beyond death to entering the bardos in the not-too-distant future.

And so, the myth of the future points to rebirth and not more (or not much more) of this life). Life can't squeeze much more out of me than it has.

At least for now, I have set most everything aside, leaving nothing for the imagination. What makes me "Me" for you has run aground or is flagging. Right now, in that sense, I am living from day to day, not so much bound by anything.

My wife tells me I am changing, which I don't question. The most I see is that I no longer can take upon myself tasks that we have no handyman to do. Up until now, I just would do it, like if something has to be lifted or moved, I would put on my handyman hat and lift or move it, even though I know it will harm my back.

I just figure that given enough time, what hurt there is in lifting will heal. I pay the pain forward and assume my body will heal. Yet, the reality is that the pain compiles or adds up and remains a debt my body still has

to pay down the road.

However, since there is little 'down the road' left, that debt is due now and paid by my health. And since I am no longer throwing more logs on that fire, I am no longer doing the heavy lifting I have always done.

I am watching the heavy lifting not get done, but continue to pile up, rather than something "Handy Mike" is going to take care of for the family. My lower back pain has accumulated and must take a rest. I'm doing that.

I've become a bystander at my own life to the degree I am no longer doing what harms my back, come hell or high water.

Of course, when push comes to shove, I do what I have to do to keep the show moving, but not so much. My own body now says no to that. The weight is no longer lifted, outside of levering it, or whatever cart I can put together to move things around, or minor lifting by me that does little to no harm.

There is no one to pass it off to. Margaret is lifting more and Margaret and I are working together to lift things. I can't believe that MANY of you out there don't have something similar to deal with. Where is the handyman I no longer am?

In the clarity of extended fasting which is what I am doing, I have written myself out of the equation. I'm not helpless but I now need help to do what an imaginary "Handy Mike" used to take care of.

"Handyman Mike" is no longer around and now turns a deaf ear to all entreaties for heavy lifting. My romance with adrenaline is over.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me. Handyman Mike in his twilight years.]

EMAIL

Attensity!

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 2, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/9feb0a5a-4843-4169-9899-079db2abce2b_1024x1024.jpeg

I saw a book advertised called “Attensity! A manifesto of the Attention Liberation Movement.” Well, I’m all about attention and paying it, so I asked AI three times about what that book says and learned nothing. At any rate, I found nothing more than a twinkle in their eye, nothing I could grab on to. Wow! They have no idea other than the idea itself. Sounds to me like it is just an idea that dharma folks found long ago.

Where do we put our attention? What is worthy of that and what kind of results should we expect?

Well, it certainly is not on what passes for politics these days, although we should not lose sight of world events just now. Take note and VOTE.

Enunciate and punctuate. Keep the English language alive and keep your mind alive and attentive. We control that. In these last three days of intense heat, we’ve had a remarkable carpenter working here, finishing off three skylights that were replaced last fall. The finish work is elegant and I will show you photos soon. It’s been in the 90s around here.

I know a wordsmith when I read one and on balance the juxta positioning of words shows us blue sky or the river’s edge. It’s that borderline edge of all things that cuts both ways. Learn to keep that edge until we realize that the same edge can keep us if we let it. What else do you have to do other than walk the line?

The straighter the line, the finer the curve. There is no way around coming back around, so in the long run we can’t get lost. So bet on the eternal return, forever returning.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Tempest in a Teapot

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 3, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/bc68b4df-237b-4fef-9338-66cf10041826_1024x1024.jpeg

It's Back! To my complete surprise, the last super-hot days with temperatures in the 90s and higher, the increased heat and accompanying humidity caused my new orthopedic mattress, which had been completely and carefully off-gassed to change its mind and came back with off gasses that were beyond my ability to absorb.

Instead, I immediately developed a cough that only is getting worse. Now these mattresses are heavy beasts, and it takes two strong people to carry them without dragging them on the ground.

Of immediate concern was to get the suddenly off-gassing mattress out of my room so I could breathe. It took much of the day but did that.

Now we had to advertise for 2 strong adults in the local Internet site to do the following. First move the orthopedic mattress out of this house and take it next door. Once next door it has to move to the second floor to room number eight. And then the mattress in room number eight has to be taken downstairs to room number two. Then the mattress in room number two has to be carried next door and placed on the platform I built for the original orthopedic mattress.

And then all of those various mattresses have to be inserted and made up, one by one.

As for the mattress that is now where originally the orthopedic mattress was, it has to be placed on the platform I built. And on that mattress, we now put protectors on top of which goes a large piece of Ture-Indigo dyed denim, which is tucked around the mattress on all four sides.

Meanwhile, once the off-gassing matrix was out of the house, my cough immediately started to clear up. All I wanted was to breathe free once again.

We advertised for two strong people to come and carry these mattresses. A bunch of folks applied, and Margaret chose two high school girls, who took most of the day getting here. Finally, after being over a half hour late, the girls stopped waiting for their mom to bring them over and just walk over. I shook my head as to whether these two could carry the mattress, but to my surprise

and with great effort they moved the mattresses and I could breath again because I had a very old mattress that was not off gassing. It had gassed off as much as possible decades ago. Talk about a tempest in a teapot!

And so, I am back to square one again, once again. I have other things to think about but right now I can't think what they could be.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Tripping the Future

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 4, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/502df232-afa3-4a6f-b07d-79e91edc664b_1536x1024.jpeg

I'm still trying to figure out how to turn what seems to me is like a long fast into a food plan for going forward.

Right now, I am consuming my own extra fat, which accounts for the weight loss, but obviously this can't continue without my passing away, so how to gradually throttle that back and move to a life-sustainable plan.

Right now, I'm drinking a lot of kefir and at the same time making sure to consume protein enough to not lose strength. Other than that, I am not hungry.

And so that has to come to a halt soon and some kind of transition back to a normal diet created.

Such an eating plan will have to include some sort of way (kefir) of maintaining my gut biome and strengthening my vagus nerve.

I have been eating almost no carbs these weeks and have no interest in them.

I am interested in writing articles like these and am trying to keep up to date in this department.

As for my philosophical approach these days, it is about tuning my mind to remain in non-duality as much as possible. I am not planning for any other future than staying in the present moment, and being as useful as possible, until I pass on. With that begins a whole other chapter.

I am reorganizing my physical body and its life as best I can, although as you can see it's quite involved. Where to rest the mind is this present moment.

Keeping up with the houses and property obviously is something facing Margaret and me.

As for Mahamudra and the non-duality in my life and what's coming up, little can be said, which does not mean I won't keep talking about it or even focusing on it. It's just that words about the ineffable, what cannot be expressed in words is just that.

It's fun trying to express the ineffable, yet very difficult to do especially when I have gone only so far into what cannot be said in words.

Many years ago, in the late 1960s, my brother Dan Erlewine had torn off the entire roof of the well-known Ann Arbor guitar maker Herb David.

There, Dan and I sat, me astraddle the top of an outside wall and my brother far over on another wall of the house. There was no roof, no joists or girders, nothing but blue sky. Dan and I were looking at one another across that space and laughing. What had we done? We had to replace that entire roof... pronto. LOL. Here is an AI I created photo that expresses that as best I can, although the actual building was larger than this, Herb David's home not his store.

That's how I feel now, like I'm between two worlds. I'm saying goodbye to one and readying myself to step into the next.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

A Fat-Burning Machine

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 5, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/ae6d9937-afe4-43bb-b487-ca47f8dd73f2_1024x1024.jpeg

It's all about keeping the protein up and the sugar and carbs down or out. If you stop consuming your own fat, the body will try to reinstate the fat-storage mode that gains weight.

The biggest rebound trigger to regain all that I lost is reintroducing refined carbohydrates and sugar quickly. They spike insulin hard, refill glycogen rapidly, and suddenly your body is back in fat-storage mode. It stops consuming your own fat.

If you add carbs, add them slowly and keep them complex — vegetables, legumes, small amounts of whole grains.

It is quite a feat to exhaust the sugar and glycogen and turn the body into our eating its own fat instead. It can be hard to switch, so while you have it consuming its own fat, run your weight down to where you need it to be.

When you get to that point, then you can start to slow down the weight-loss rate and begin to introduce a food plan that will not cause instant rebound and weight gain.

I ave the weight down, now let's keep it there.

I am very close to the weight I want to be (about 160 lbs.), only about five more pounds. At that point the situation is delicate and I will need to throttle back consuming my own fat and be very careful not to introduce sugar and carbs too quickly.

Go slowly and incrementally. Don't stop fasting all at once. If you're doing extended fasting periods, shorten them gradually over several weeks rather than ending them abruptly. Give your metabolism time to recalibrate.

Add calories back in the right category first. Protein should be your first increase — it's the least likely to trigger fat storage and will protect the muscle you have. Think eggs, fish, chicken, Greek yogurt. Not carbohydrates first.

Keep carbohydrates low for a while longer. The biggest rebound trigger is reintroducing refined carbohydrates and sugar quickly. They spike insulin

hard, refill glycogen rapidly, and suddenly your body is back in fat-storage mode. If you add carbs, add them slowly and keep them complex — vegetables, legumes, small amounts of whole grains.

Weigh yourself consistently. Once I hit 160, I should weigh myself every morning or so under the same conditions. If I see 162-163 creeping up, tighten back immediately rather than letting it slide. Early correction is easy; waiting until I'm back at 170 is hard.

What your maintenance diet probably looks like.

Based on what has worked to get me here — higher protein, moderate healthy fats, lower refined carbohydrates, and an eating window rather than all-day grazing. I don't have to fast strictly forever, but keeping a compressed eating window — say, eating between noon and 7pm — maintains much of the metabolic benefit without the intensity of active fat-burning fasting.

This is underrated. Active weight loss gives us a clear goal and measurable progress. Maintenance has neither — the goal is simply to stay where you are, which feels less motivating. Building in a small acceptable range — say 160 to 163 — rather than a hard number gives me flexibility without losing the guardrail.

The Honest Reality

A small amount of rebound is almost universal and not cause for alarm — some of it is simply glycogen and water refilling, which can add 2-3 pounds without any actual fat gain. If I hit 160 and see 162-163 after transitioning, don't panic. Give it two weeks of stable eating and see where it settles.

My instinct to think about this now, while still in the fat-burning phase, is exactly right. The transition is where the work either holds or unravels.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Harbingers

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 6, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/86f77a4b-a8a7-4bd6-9614-a8ae23a30390_1024x1024.jpeg

Stepping beyond where others go. Actually, that is not technically correct. I am still right where I am and always have been. What once was a main road has now become a side street, and perhaps even the equivalent of a country road or a simple path.

The busyness of busyness creates its own road. I'm just not on it any longer. The way to become like me is no longer obvious. What makes up my personality appears more unique than it did only a few decades ago. I am being odd-man outed.

And I have lost or am losing any 'come-hither-ness' I may have once had. I don't care. Am I a vigil fire, a light in the dark far out on an unbeaten path, it is hard to say.

I see elders, other old people like me shining brightly and I see that they see me. We can see one another and are harbingers of rebirth still lingering in this world.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Dermatology

By Michael Erlewine, SpiritGrooves.net

July 9, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

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PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/ef8de838-19df-413f-bda0-26bec6a556ec_1959x2048.jpeg

Yesterday I had a full-body scan by a dermatologist, looking for cancerous and pre-cancerous skin problems. The dermatologist found four pre-cancerous skin problems and zapped them. My wife had the same done and later she joking asked me “Did she peek at your butt? Well, she did but no zappers there.

Afterward we went to a nearby nature conservatory for a walk on their boardwalk, but the forest path was swarming with mosquitos, so it was a short walk and we

were out of there. Here are the only two photos I took.

Otherwise, I am preparing to wind down this long fasting time during which I lost 17 pounds and counting. I now need to translate my diet to few carbs and no sugar, which is no easy task because right now I am consuming my own fat and I have to tone that back and concentrate on a high protein diet and as mentioned, few carbs and no sugar.

For protein I eat canned fish twice a week, lots of tempeh, a new way to cook tofu, eggs, a dab of nut butters: best overall: almond butter, best protein: peanut butter, best omega-3s: walnut butter, and also worthy: sunflower seed butter, if allergic to other butters.

As mentioned, I have to tone back just digesting my own fat and keep that going but not reverting to my normal way of eating that got me where I am now. That transition may be difficult and I don’t want to rebound back to storing fat.

[Photos by me.]

EMAIL

"Dutton Ranch"

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 10, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/d492a024-1c4a-4817-94f5-16e975ba4813_1014x570.jpeg

I few words about the author and producer Taylor Sheridan, one of my favorites, most important as an author and even better when he produces a series.

I want to talk here about Sheridan's work on "Yellowstone" and subsequently on the "Dutton Ranch."

Sheridan did not write the series called "Dutton Ranch, He did create the characters, at least Rip, Beth, and their adopted son Carter.

Having watched all of Yellowstone (as well as almost everything Sheridan has done), I'd like to talk about how clear it is to me that Sheridan did not write "Dutton Ranch."

The earmark or almost trademark of a Sheridan written production is the elegance and space he provides to enshrine the little things and to stretch out the sense of beauty of the natural west and mountains, like in Montana.

Whether it's a ranch hand roping a steer or moments spent contemplating the mountain horizons, Sheridan always extends those scenes until I can't help fall into feeling a part of it. It's not all about the action or the story.

Or another way to put this is the story always includes the space and beauty it takes to register with me. I not only look forward to it, I depend on that sense of quietness

I notice that in the "Dutton Ranch" series there is little or none of that peace but mostly it is focused on the action of the story moving from one event to the next. At first, I didn't notice what was missing, but after a few episodes I saw that in trying to mimic or even imitate the original brilliance of Tylor Sheridan, they either never saw that beauty or figured to cut it out in favor of more story.

IMO, big mistake because in that ignorance outwent a lot of the beauty of why Taylor Sheriden's authored productions fix themselves in my heart, because they help to provide the space and beauty which endears them to me.

Oh, yeah. I am interested in the next season of “Dutton’s Ranch,” yet I don’t expect it to affect me like a Taylor Sheridan-written production, because it is not.

[Michael Erlewine created one of the two largest movie and film sites on the Internet.]

EMAIL

Clean As a whistle

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 15, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/6dd44900-c231-41de-a195-4b4b75e62114_2048x1536.jpeg

Summer cleaning of our meditation building by Margaret and me. Top to bottom and sideways, moving all the furniture except the main shrine which I designed out of solid cherry. I can't show all 12-some images, so if you want to see them, they are on:

Facebook.com/MichaelErlewine

Meanwhile I will try to wash the windows early today while it is still cool.

[Photos by me.]

EMAIL

Birthday

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 18, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/cf807845-ef53-4bcf-8935-81ec054755b7_1212x1300.jpeg

Today I am 85 years old and counting, another long winter behind me, followed by a cold spring, and now a super-heater and air-quality 500 which is hard for me to get through.

I am still recovering from trying to repaint the inside of our dharma center all by myself. I had to get up and down from the floor a hundred or more times a day, and this put my lower back in recovery mode, and I am still trying to heal that. One of the dumbest things I ever did.

I will be all right... in a while.

I wish good karma to all my Facebook friends and that we get to hang together for some years to come. On the outside I may be a walking wreck of a body, but inside I am still 20 years old as I have always been. My daily posts with you have become of ever- increasing importance to me.

My birthday wish is that in the coming year people will comment and seriously discuss the issues.

EMAIL

Dharma Poems

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 19, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/113042eb-f9d4-4b68-a499-7d6d91f83f01_736x1024.jpeg

I'm seldom a poet, but I do write something sometimes that is dangerously like poetry. It's mostly about dharma and my take on it, kind of a way of recording strong inner events so that I can remember them.

I just reworked a free eBook, but my web site is being moved and the copy of the book there is way out of date, and I need to have a way to get the book to anyone interested, for the moment. There are all kinds of writing here, some duplicates, probably some accidental additions.

If anyone wants a copy, send me a Facebook Messenger request or send an email to Michael@Erlewine.net and as I am able, I will send you a copy.

EMAIL

Punctuate

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 20, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

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Punctuation is like reading braille. We read it with our feelings, regardless of what the thinking words mean or point to. It is difficult to make ordinary language, what we read and think, speak to us beyond itself. It can but point.

We manipulate the clashing of consonants and the howling of vowels to sing another song than what we sight read. It's the limitation of language that we have to torque it so to get a message through.

The dance of letters that are like a magic-lantern projecting what is inside us onto our outside world so that we realize this is our own projection and by that can change it.

We all work from the edge of thought to cast our words on the screen of life and hopefully awaken our gut so that we can actually feel life immersed.

As mentioned, I work words until they scream and howl and cast a world of shadow dancers onto the screen of life.

Once we see that we live in and on our own projections and that the outside word (duality) looks both ways, that chain of duality is broken and we float on beyond that in nonduality.

As meditators know, we can't just cancel duality (and samsara) to immerse ourselves in non-duality without training. Duality has to implode and shatter the subject and object perspective such that, as Sir Edwin Arnold wrote:

"The Dewdrop Slips into the Shining Sea."

Once we realize that the outside world as we see it is our own projection, we also realize it that we are free to change it, that is the first brush with being introduced the nature of the mind.

[Midjourney AI graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

New Web Site: SpiritGrooves.net

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 26, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/50f7642f-4b68-4aa8-b267-c01cfe9bc50e_1162x1164.jpeg

SpiritGrooves.net

Well, here is the new web site, with a couple of quirks. It has been in the works for many months, but unable to be finished. Drove me nuts.

It is roughly working, although some buttons will get you nowhere. They are trying to finish it, and my old site died, so here we go.

Try it out and let me know if it is useful.

I have most of my main areas of knowledge covered well enough, and some 500 free books are available. And links to some 200 videos, and other information.

[Midjourney AI graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

The Story of Thoughts

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 27, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/c1d89369-ee4a-4d59-a7bb-e5a8bedeff32_1024x1024.jpeg

I came across an old notebook that I took to a Mahamudra teaching at KTD Monastery on Meads Mountain, above Woodstock, years ago. Let's start with a poem I pulled out of it that I forgot.

LESS IS MORE

I can't think,

Of what more I can do,

But I could,

Do less.

In other words,

I'm flat out!

Other than,

What I have,

To do...

Don't do anything,

Else.

The rest are just jotting and notes, and here they are.

Thoughts tell a story and have a storyline, but the story is old news. Thoughts go on forever.

When we tire of the story, and give it a rest, we can look at the nature of the thoughts themselves. Thoughts are also something that, like windows, we can look through.

The history of thoughts is an old story, one I have been following for a long time, and thoughts, as mentioned, go on forever. Endless distraction.

When I tire of the story, exhausted by distraction, thoughts still remain. They can be looked at or rather looked through. Thoughts can be looked through and are windows that reveal the actual nature of the mind.

The horizontal and vertical.

The inscape is our way in or through this moment, through the particular 'Here' and the 'Now', call it the vertical dimension.

The horizontal is the linear story, the vertical component the inner dimension.

The sentence is horizontal and tells a story, left to right, first to last, but the vertical combination of words pitched one against the other in the sentence create peaks and valleys along the way, like reading braille.

Inscapes are designed to attract or flag us down along the horizontal or linear time and guide us within to rest in the mind.

The mind is not only rested in naps or night sleep, but much more so in brief moments during the day through inscapes that undistract us by their moments of beauty or rest.

Moments that catch our eye or catch our ear, and in a nanosecond deconstruct life with space and expanded time in which we dwell.

Mantra and my practice, the most efficient lens, through which to see, the true nature of the mind. Nothing more.

[Midjourney AI graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

A Wind of Words

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

July 28, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/d5965877-925b-4cc7-b5b3-9a678e9ba5c3_1024x1024.jpeg

I came across some old writing in a notebook, handwritten, that was in a closet for decades. I have not changed so much. Here are some quotes:

Question the answer and answer the question.

Part of the answer is in the question.

Rearranging words, one against the other, creates meaning, the clash and friction of consonants, the ease and cry of vowels. The arrangement of letters in words is fixed, but the arrangement of words in a sentence is not. The simple rearranging of words on the page can change the meaning.

While the meaning of words is relative, the nature of words is absolute. The nature of all words is the same.

And thoughts and words are the mantra or worry beads of the mind, the window or portal through which we can see the true nature of the mind if we look. We have to look. And we have to learn to LOOK.

As mentioned, thoughts are the windows through which we can see the true nature of the mind and gaze at the nature of the mind unless we follow them as a train of thought. Then we are lost for a time.

Words concretize, and frozen thoughts that can be arranged in sentences for effect. Words can be set against one another to dam the flow of thought into a tight spillway. The onslaught of meaning can slow the mind until experience dawns.

Meaning is a kindling point where it fires the mind and creates light. With light, seeing is possible and then clarity. Clarity is its own reward, not clarity about something, but just clarity of mind – seeing ‘Seeing’ itself and giving in to that.

Meaning is the story of light, the history of light.

Looking directly at thoughts is an opportunity to look at the nature of the mind, a mantra or worry beads that are a window to the mind.

Elaborate practices can be boiled down to a single mantra (or to nothing at all), because, large or small, they are windows into the nature of the mind.

The refinements of mind practices are infinite and ultimately exhausting. We shrink from them.

The point here is that words, thoughts frozen on a page, can be rearranged to create clear meaning. The arrangement of words prevents them from being meaningless, working words until they catch fire creates light and with light we can see into the true nature of the mind, which is nothing to be seen but the Seeing itself into which we fall and are immersed. We need the rest of nonduality throughout the day to stay sane.

[Midjourney AI graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

The Turning Point

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

August 2, 2026

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/aa5c6d40-2e69-44c5-9ffa-bc3fe7e50f47_1024x1024.jpeg

Lucky for me with aging that the nature of the mind and its clarity is NOT age dependent. It is unborn or just there. Inside this ageing body is the same 20-year-old mind I had back then. Our perspective and view changes as we age, but not the clarity once we reach what is called the Prime of Life, somewhere around that first Saturn return of about 30 years (29.4).

I call it the 'Turning Point' or 'The Point of No Return', the point where we stop growing our body and begin turning around and looking inward or back. The Christians call it "Being Born Again," yet it is available to all of us.

Another way of saying this is that we stop being reflected in those older than us as we were as youths and begin ourselves to reflect others. That IS the turning point, the point of no return when we begin to turn.

To me this is the 'Grand Mudra', the sweeping gesture that describes the rise and fall of all things. In the Dharma this is called "Mahamudra."

Whoosh.

[Midjourney AI graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Protein Hunger

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/18f7c6e5-fd10-46ea-958e-a61a1d22d3e4_1024x1024.jpeg

I am haunted by protein hunger, a hard to satisfy yearning for a source of protein that will shut my hunger up. As a vegetarian I used to find this via a sudden desire for a tuna fish sandwich or a piece of salmon, and of course meat, chicken or flank steak.

If we are not getting enough protein this kind of hunger follows us around until we satisfy it, one way or the other. With such hunger my body craves more food intake when it really is looking for more protein intake. Nothing else will satisfy and our hunger surges.

In other words, my body isn't just tracking calories — it's specifically tracking protein and will keep driving hunger until that target is met, even if I've already eaten plenty of calories from other sources.

And I'm not the Lone Ranger is this craving. I find many people feel this way and can't fill a hunger no matter what amount or kinds of foods they eat, when what they need is more pure protein.

Of course, animal protein is an easy fix, but if you are vegetarian or leaning that way, high amounts of protein in a food is hard to find. I now do eat canned fish for omega3 and high protein.

When I do eat a high protein food, like canned fish, I can feel it shut down the hunger fast. I just have to arrange a series of high protein hits to keep my weight down and remain satisfied.

Eggs & Dairy

Egg, whole (1 large) – 6g Egg whites (2) – 7g Greek yogurt, plain (1 cup) – 20-23g Kefir (1 cup) – 9-11g Cottage cheese (1/2 cup) – 12-14g Milk (1 cup) – 8g Cheddar cheese (1 oz) – 7g Parmesan (2 tbsp) – 4g

Fish & Seafood

Canned tuna (5 oz can) – 22-25g Canned salmon (5 oz can) – 25-30g Canned sardines (3.75 oz can) – 20-23g Shrimp, cooked (3 oz) – 18-20g White fish – cod, tilapia (3 oz cooked) – 20-22g

Meat & Poultry

Chicken breast, cooked (3 oz) – 26g Chicken thigh, cooked (3 oz) – 21g Chicken drumstick, cooked (3 oz) – 21g Chicken wing, cooked (3 oz) – 18g Ground turkey, cooked (3 oz) – 22g Lean beef, cooked (3 oz) – 22-25g Pork loin, cooked (3 oz) – 22g

Plant-Based / Soy

Tofu, firm (1/2 cup) – 10g Tempeh (1/2 cup) – 15-18g Edamame, shelled (1/2 cup) – 9g Beans – black, kidney, pinto (1/2 cup cooked) – 7-8g Chickpeas (1/2 cup cooked) – 7-8g Lentils (1/2 cup cooked) – 9g Peanut butter (2 tbsp) – 7-8g Almonds (1/4 cup) – 7g Peanuts (1/4 cup) – 9g

Grains & Other

Oats (1/2 cup dry) – 5g Quinoa, cooked (1 cup) – 8g Whole wheat bread (2 slices) – 8g Short grain brown rice, cooked (1 cup) – 4.5-5g Short grain brown rice, cooked (1/2 cup) – 2.5g Protein/whey powder (1 scoop) – 20-25g

Here is what you can use if you are elderly:

Weight (in pounds) $\times$ 0.5 = grams of protein per day

That's it. It's a clean middle point that works well as a general rule for older adults, covering typical needs without asking anyone to decide between a range.

Example: 150 lbs $\times$ 0.5 = 75g/day

If you want a slightly more protective number (better for those losing weight, less active, or recovering from anything — which covers a lot of older adults), you can use:

Weight (in pounds) $\times$ 0.6 = grams of protein per day

Example: 150 lbs $\times$ 0.6 = 90g/day

Either one is a single, easy multiplication with no decision-making — pick whichever one you want to standardize on, and it'll work as a general formula for anyone to use.

[Midjourney AI graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Summer Solstice Cosmic Breathing

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/1576d7c1-e2b7-46e1-a8fc-10785b32a909_1024x1024.jpeg

Today is the Summer Solstice, Sunday, June 21, at 4:24 a.m. EDT .

The Summer Solstice is the top of the year, the point where the Sun stops in the sky and begins to decline and heads toward the Winter Solstice now some six months away.

This year the solstice seems premature. Spring still has not quite come. It's not been warm enough long enough to be ready to cool off. Yes, it will warm up in the coming months, but you can't compensate for what was never there, like a warm spring.

Each day I look to find how words fit together like a Chinese puzzle to create what cannot be said in words.

It has a beginning, an end, and stands out like a pole star in the mind. Yet it is unborn. It just is.

We can enter it by using our best words, words that vibe and transport us beyond duality into the midst of full immersion.

I don't think there is much of anything else, although it seems so personal and local. Perhaps the mind itself is local. That's the whole mystery in a nutshell. Familiarity with what is familiar, with what is local. Bypass the obvious, which is not that easy to do.

Seeing the 'Seeing' itself rather than the usual, what is seen. And sight (and seeing) is one of the senses, which by definition is non-dual and has neither a subject nor an object. Be one with the seeing, not with what is seen. That's stepping inside what is. Neither a subject nor an object be.

Being unborn, once upon a time there was no time, none.

Still is.

It's been a cold spring.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Pick Up Your Bed Lazerus And Walk

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/6e0a182b-7491-4013-9be0-a228e228baae_1024x1024.jpeg

Things I want to do and that I would do if I was more energetic and less recalcitrant. I can think to do them, yet can't quite turn over that old crankshaft and get my engine going. In other words, I'm not on top of it, but still somewhere back here behind the 8-ball. I'm trying to remember when this first happened. Noy long ago. Perhaps just too much bad news too much of the time.

And I am tired of my own resistance to doing stuff. I have to embrace the current situation I'm facing (that we are facing), encompass it, and by that embracement be free to move on from it. Right now, I see enough so that I am trying to align all the parts.

I need to elide, to slide into and with the present moment and not be restrained by doubts or by the world situation.

"When the going gets tough, the tough get going."

Yeah, something like that!

Meanwhile, back in the jungle of this present time, I have to shake off the constant shroud of world news, get out from under its shadow, and like the old saying:

"Pick up your bed, Lazerus, and walk."

Perhaps, I just don't have the energy I used to have. I don't think that's it. I just got caught up in the spin of world news and can't get out from under it.

Perhaps I somehow can distill, boil down what energy I do have and run on the essence of all that. Hard to say.

Meanwhile, I'm backing up to get a better view (or trying to) until I can get this whole world mess in my sights, yet that's a long way back and it is hard to get my arms around what I am also involved in. This current mess we are in is a massive construct!

Anyway, I'm taking stock, trying to objectify this political mess our country and the world is caught up in, but each time I try, I find myself also immersed in it, with no thread or end that I can get a hold of. We all seem to be in a

recursive loop that keeps us inundated and not coming up for air, not able to reflect.

We can't objectify what we ourselves are immersed and caught up in. What I am saying here is that it is very difficult to reflect on what we are ourselves involved in while we continue to be involved in it. It seems endless.

To reiterate, the whole world mess seems something we cannot yet reflect on because we are still so immersed in it and as a continuum, we have yet to come up for a breath of air. No closure, although collectively I believe we are starting to get our arms around the problem.

In other words, no reflection. We need time to reflect, and it seems that it has been a long time since we have had our heads above water.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Potatoes

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/29f79eaf-b9a4-412d-abe6-e19146c16dd1_2004x2048.jpeg

I used to be able to make good hashbrowns, because I had to make them for the grandkids. I did alright, and the kids loved them. But after many years, my fresh hash browns kind of got grayish and soggy, so I switched to home fries, cutting up fresh or boiled potatoes and kind of frying them a bit.

There are less grandkids around these years, so I now tried buying some frozen raw hashbrowns, also some frozen tiny potato squares, and even some fresh raw hashbrowns I found in the butter & margarine area of the grocery.

It's all good, as they say, and then again, not so much or quite right.

My current solution is not to make too much of any of the above and try to wait long enough until they get brown.

I'm not a cook and my recipes have few ingredients and prep time. I cook to eat and eat to live. You don't want to come over and have dinner. It's too simple. Organic food, fresh vegies, short-grain brown rice, but plenty of it. Table dining in our home has degraded toward eating at the computer. I know, how gross, yet that's life in these times.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

Apologia

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/a28c7dc8-7b06-4ca8-a105-9b20a55c86e3_1024x1024.jpeg

[I have a couple more Tibet/Nepal stories coming, so prepare yourself. I too spin the wheel of life, and the pointer sometimes stops right here, as follows.]

It seems that of late I'm in a slow-running rut. What's the point of anything? I know that sounds kind of dispiriting, yet it's not. Instead, this is pointing out that there is no point, only the ongoing process of life itself. Anything helps to turn us back or away from a linear interpretation as to what we are doing and where we are going, as if we are going anywhere. It's not like there is anywhere to go or get to, other than right here and now, which is where this moment leaves me.

Another thing, I just ran into a wall, that of finishing my photo studio's reworking and now done, not feeling like doing any photography. I know, this too shall pass. Winter means pacing the floor until spring for me, and the long list of things I planned to do this winter seems to have melted away and remain undone.

And winter seems to have arrived full-blown, early here in the first days of December with 10 inches of snow and bitter temperatures. It already feels like mid-January or February and it is not even Christmas.

It's not that I have run out of things to do. I just don't feel like doing anything. Thanksgivings gone and with it, my family's visit. I fight not wanting to do the things I have to do, like wash my clothes or myself, brush my teeth, take the trash out, and on and on. And it's not like I am doing much instead. As mentioned, I just put the finishing touches on my photo studio, and it looks great. Now if I only felt like photography or could think of something I want to photograph. I have to laugh, if only because I know better than to entertain such thoughts. And as I hope you can tell, I am a little tongue-in-cheek in this blog.

Oh, yes. I know the wheel turns and in turning will turn me right again, and soon probably. And so, I'm left with these gaping holes in my itinerary to comprehend and am not even investigating those. I echo dear Gertrude Stein, with "Before winter came, winter came," and before I can tire of it, I'm tired of it. Already!

It's so cold out that food is high on the agenda, and this finds Margaret and me out in the kitchen making food, me cutting vegetables and Margaret making soups, spicing up beans, and all kinds of other things. A glance outside sees gray skies, the prayer flags blowing in the wind, and the temperature too cold to want to walk outside. I don't even want to look. It's -6 degrees F out right now

If the Sun was out, perhaps. If the wind stopped blowing, and the thermometer rose, maybe. But right now, not a chance.

And so, this corner I have painted myself into endures yet another day. Take a nap? That sounds right. Sorry for being a such a Cry Baby.

Later:

Well, I did my weight training, took a bath instead of a shower, brushed my teeth, did my laundry, and all that. I also started another round of making *Limosilactobacillus reuteri*, a strong probiotic yogurt for the upper intestine. The weather promises more cloudy days, but perhaps there will be a spot of sun this afternoon. I am trying to turn all this around.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

For a limited time, I am doing a few Zoom astrology readings. If interested, please email me with the subject "READINGS."

EMAIL

Heat Wave Yesterday Was Very Hot

By Michael Erlewine, SpiritGrooves.net

Juste Un Petit Jardin

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/9f4fa8e7-8ca3-403b-b4f2-38d65d0ada51_1536x2048.jpeg

Last year we gardened from spring to autumn, flowers and vegetables. And when the autumn winds began to blow, and we looked back on the spring and summer as to what we had to show for it, there were a few handfuls of veggies and some flowers, not memories enough to tide us over the long cold winters around here.

So, this year, 2025, we are gardeners NOT. Instead, we are exploring hiking trails, forests, woods, meadows, lakes and streams. And that is working out well, so far.

As for our existing gardens, flowers, and what not, around home, I am doing just some welcoming flowers for color. I have a hanging basket of Fuchsia, two large pots of Begonias, one large pot of Dahlias, one raised bed of 36 Zinnias, another raised bed with two rose bushes, one yarrow, and some Tansy.

Beyond that, in front where we actually have enough sun, I have a Datura plant, Lupine, Field Clover, Echinacea, Evening Primrose, Butterfly Weed, Forget-Me-Nots, Columbine, and a huge patch of New England Asters. Also, two rose bushes, Lavender,

Red Yarrow, some Sage, and Shasta Daisies.

That's just out front. There are, of course, all kinds of plants and flowers just being the perennials they already are all around the yard now coming to life.

What's also new are various prairie and other grasses, which I am favoring because they are lovely, take little care, and are just so quietly there. I have some Fescue, Big Blue Stem, Little Blue Stem, and Feather Reed Grass. In the back, we have a good-sized patch of Japanese Reed Grass.

Otherwise, I am trying to take it easy because I managed to hurt my lower back and it is sending little 'pings' that if I ignore them, my whole back will go out. My Yukon Gold potatoes that I grew from sprouting potatoes found in a pantry basket are growing well.

I am also busy power-washing the our back cement patios, where a good number of bricks need to have the old mortar chipped off and then mortar the brick back down, and there are two long channels, one vertical, one

horizontal, that will have to be filled with mortar. I've got the cement and all the tools and may start laying the bricks tomorrow.

Margaret has her own gardens and I may get a report on those one of these days and blog it.

[iPhone snapshots.]

EMAIL Michael@Erlewine.net Note: If you would like to have access to other free books, articles, and videos on these topics, here are the links:

Free books: SpiritGrooves.net.

Free Videos: YouTube.com/channel/UC3cL8v4fkupc9IRtugPkkWQ

MAIN BLOG: <https://www.facebook.com/MichaelErlewine>

<https://www.instagram.com/erlewinemichael/>

<https://medium.com/@MichaelErlewine/>

<http://michaelerlewine.com>

As Bodhicitta is so precious,

May those without it now create it,

May those who have it not destroy it,

And may it ever grow and flourish.

By Michael Erlewine

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[iPhone snapshots.]

EMAIL

810

By Michael Erlewine, SpiritGrooves.net

Thme For Nothing

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/23cdc3bf-4e3a-40a8-b61a-e64567f506fc_1024x1024.jpeg

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

May Erlewine At Follen Church

By Michael Erlewine, SpiritGrooves.net

MAY ERLEWINE: TODAY AT FOLLEN CHURCH

Press PLAY at left of screen.

My daughter May Erlewine tours all over the world, yet she also does special services at high schools and churches. Here is one at Follen Church, an historic Unitarian Universalist congregation located at 755 Massachusetts Avenue in Lexington, Massachusetts, United States.

May Erlewine flew out to Lexington this weekend, and sang for the congregation that had spent months learning many of May's songs, arranging them for a choir and for soloists.

I received this link, and thought I should give it a listen, and found myself spellbound for something like two hours, enjoying every minute of it.

I am sure most of you are busing going somewhere or other and doing something, yet perhaps some of you have the kind of time it takes to enjoy something as wonderful as this service. I loved it.

Thank You May!

By Michael Erlewine, *SpiritGrooves.net*

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PHOTO LINK BELOW:

https://substack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com/public/images/7af320f6-0a83-4a6b-b965-12e00cbac2d1_1024x1024.jpeg

'AI' as a Camera: Illustrations

By Michael Erlewine

Since I write a lot of essays and articles and post to some 20,000 or so readers, I like to include an image along with the text to set the mood or reflect the topic. This can be a photo I take or a photo I license for use, and in the last couple years this has turned into a graphic image created by AI through (in my case) a graphic software called "Midjourney."

For these articles or essays, most often I am not looking for personal memorials, like snapshots of family or events, but rather by illustrations that evoke moods or feelings.

Although I always state if an image is AI prompted, most or many of my readers continue to see this image as a photograph, per se and congratulate me for the 'photo' even though I always post this disclaimer.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

I see in the future of photography two main roads or paths, taking photographs for family and personal documentation or memories, like snapshots, and impersonal illustrations that eventually will be better made though AI photography, where the supercomputer becomes effectively the camera whenever the goal is illustration rather than a memorial of something. Of course, I will continue to take traditional photos as I always have, with camera and lens, and just for the 'art' of photography.

It's like the question, which is more important, the razor or the shave? The shave is what we are after, not what kind of razor is used to get a shave.

It's the same with photography. Which is more important, the image or the camera (how we made the image). I know photographers are having a fit about AI images just now, but that will fade out, IMO.

It's the image that is important and not ONLY how we make it. Having made about 15,000 AI graphic images to date, I well know that prompting an image is not a walk in the park, but requires skill, hard work, and many iterations to get a good image.

Of course, a photography photo with camera and lens, by definition, will always be just that. However, after about 18 years of writing a daily article or blog, I tired of licensing photos, not because they were so expensive (although they can be), but because the selection was so difficult, and the time spent finding one so arduous.

When I first ventured into AI graphics, some years ago, the results were almost laughable, like cartoons, but as time progressed, they have gotten better and better.

And many early adopters that I knew were thrilled and considered their AI images works of art, and themselves artists, although I never saw that in their work. And, as time passed, most of these artists dropped out and disappeared. Instead, I always saw AI images not as art but as 'illustrations and heaven knows I needed illustrations.

And so, fast forward to today, when AI is doing a pretty good job at illustration, I have to struggle to find one of my photos that is good enough AND will fit enough with the topic to be used. Sometimes I just post a photo I took anyway. LOL.

The takeaway for me is that AI is no threat to any kind of photography I do, because it does not contain any personal elements other than what I choose to put into it.

However, and this is important, more and more of the time AI images come increasingly closer to satisfying what I consider important to have in a photo, however it is made.

And so, while I don't fancy myself as an artist, I am becoming a better and better illustrator and AI images are doing things for me that I could never do (or would bother to do) myself. I wonder what readers here have to say about this.

Here are a couple of AI images that are examples of my AI images.

While DSLR and mirrorless cameras are leaning into their limits, the idea of AI and supercomputers changing at least modern illustrations are just getting started.

[Midjourney graphic prompted by me.]

EMAIL

How To Use The Substack Editor

By Michael Erlewine, SpiritGrooves.net

Hi! This is a draft post. Did you know that there are a bunch of nice formatting options in this editor? For example:

Block quotes are a nice way to put a quote or excerpt from a source. They make it clear that it is a quote.

Block quotes are a nice way to put a quote or excerpt from a source. They make it clear that it is a quote.

Of course, you can also do bold, italic , links , and all that good stuff.

Headings and Embeddings

You can have headings in posts. Just use the “Style” list in the toolbar. You can also embed different types of content. To add an image, just drag it in here or use the image selector tool in the toolbar.

For a tweet, YouTube video, Vimeo video, Spotify track, or SoundCloud embed, just paste the relevant link on a new line (don’t grab the embed code; it won’t work).

To delete a post, click on the Settings button (just to the left of Publish), and scroll down and find the delete button.

Publishing Changes

You have two publishing options:

- Publish – this publishes your post only to the web.

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- Publish & Send – this publishes your post to the web and at the same time sends the post out by email.

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Note: Once you have sent an email out, the only way to send it again is to create an entirely new post. Any edits you make to a post that has already been published will only be reflected on the web. So, there’s no need to worry about accidentally spamming your subscribers with repeat emails.

Finally, if you import posts from some other site’s archives, you can backdate them so they are published in the correct order and associated with the correct publication dates. To do so, after you have published a post, go into

that post's Settings (just to the left of the Publish button) and select the desired date.

If you have any questions, you can check out our [Help Center](#) or contact support !